Automotive News

PACE Pilot

Pitch Session Guide

Preparing for your discussion with

your PACE Pilot Judge Team

PACE PILOT

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Table of contents

Background	3
Purpose and Objective of Pitch Sessions	4
Preparing for the Virtual Pitch Session	5
PACE Pilot Applicant Discussion Rubric	7
Confidentiality	8

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Background

This guide is designed to help you answer that question and prepare for a virtual discussion (i.e., Pitch Session) with members of the Automotive News PACE Pilot Judges.

As you may know, innovations recognized as PACE Pilot honorees are emblematic of early-stage innovations that have already changed or have the potential to change the basis of competition surrounding products, processes and/or business models in the business ecosystem of companies working on the movement of people and goods.

As an applicant, the pending conversation you will have with members of the judging committee is your opportunity to share why your innovation should be considered "game-changing" and answer questions that will help judges rigorously evaluate whether your innovation has reached PACE Pilot standards.

It's important to note the final selection of PACE Pilot honorees is done by a larger committee of independent PACE program judges. While the teams of two judges participating in this year's pitch sessions with PACE Pilot applicants are responsible for writing reports about each discussion (and are an important voice in final deliberations), all reports resulting from the virtual PACE Pilot pitch sessions are reviewed by a larger panel of PACE judges who then, together, assess the "game-changing" nature of this year's applicants.

Only a small number of innovations are selected following a thorough vetting of all applications. As such, being selected as a PACE Pilot finalist is an important milestone. This guide helps you prepare for that outcome.

Should you have any questions, please contact Nuha Mosa, Programs Specialist, at nuha.mosa@autonews.com.

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Purpose and objective of pitch sessions

The purpose of the pitch sessions with the judges assigned to further evaluate applications is to help prepare and arm them with information needed to write a post-session report that accurately represents the innovative content of the innovations and the "game-changing" impact on the company and the industry.

NOTE: The most common differentiator between PACE Pilot finalists and non-finalists is substantive quantitative and qualitative information on the innovation, why the innovation should be considered "game-changing," and compelling reasons articulating why the innovation is different than other competitors in the market. In the case of PACE Pilot, feedback from an OEM customer is *not* mandatory – but discussion of pilot, use case and customer acceptance is expected.

This virtual discussion provides the judges an opportunity to:

- Expand on/add information to the application material.
- Get answers to their questions and/or questions from the vetting committee.
- Examine firsthand the innovation (virtually).

At the same time, applicants have the opportunity to:

- Add or clarify information in the application.
- Explain the challenges/issues overcome in developing the minimum viable product/system and executing the pilot.
- Showcase the "game-changing" innovative content in the application.

This open and free exchange will help the judges participating in the pitch sessions to differentiate the effect of applicants' innovations and assess the impact on the competitive landscape and the industry more broadly.

After the pitch session, the team of judges participating should understand and have sufficient material to write a report explaining to the larger panel of independent PACE Pilot judges:

- The essence of the innovation (e.g., What is new or novel, what hasn't been seen before?)
- The potential of the innovation (e.g., existing issues in pilot are solvable, potential utilization, scaling beyond pilot)
- The attractiveness of the market opportunity (e.g., size of market, competitive landscape, targeted customer pipeline)
- How this innovation improves critical aspects of products, processes and/or business models in the business of moving people and goods vs. alternatives.
- The extent to which the innovation is being accepted and adopted over time by OEM customers. Not required for PACE Pilot, but discussion of pilot, use case and early customer acceptance should be included.
- How the innovation changes the basis of competition.
- How the innovation changes the company's business for the better.
- How the innovation impacts the industry.

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Preparing for the virtual pitch session

These pitch sessions supporting the PACE Pilot program are *the* chance to make the case as to why your innovation should be selected as a PACE Pilot finalist from this year's pool of applicants.

Following the confirmation of a date for your pitch session (coordinated by the team at Automotive News) and assignment and introduction of the judges selected to participate in your discussion, applicants will work directly with their assigned judge team to coordinate the activities during the pitch sessions.

Note: PACE Pilot applicants should plan for one hour for their virtual discussion: 15-20 minutes for the applicant to "pitch" their innovation and the remaining 40-45 minutes reserved for questions from the judges.

As your team prepares for the discussion with PACE Pilot judges, please review the preceding presentation rubric and recommendations in this guide. Focus on how well your application material supports achievement of the purpose and objectives. Identify where clarification or additional data are appropriate.

It is recommended applicants also:

- Check the list of past PACE Pilot honorees to identify similar or related innovations. Your material should distinguish how your innovation is different and/or more significant.
- Visit the PACE website and read the biographies of the judges assigned to evaluate your innovation to get an indication of their areas of expertise. You may want to adjust your material to be sure they grasp the innovative content.
- In preparation, the judges will review your application materials and conduct individual research. Most judges will have and/or develop supplemental questions that they will want to ask during the virtual pitch session. These questions will be communicated to you in advance as judges work with you on meeting logistics.

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- In developing presentations and other materials supporting your discussion with judges, take time to assess if those materials clearly showcase and communicate the essence of the innovation. Applicants frequently struggle with this area. Judges will dive deeper in their rigorous evaluation, so we suggest you consider the following:

    - Why hasn't this innovation been seen before? What made it possible now?
    - Do materials clearly tell the innovation story and the impact?
    - Is the essence and significance of the innovation understandable to persons outside your team, company or technical discipline?
    - Does the quantitative and qualitative data convey the game changing impact of the innovation?

PACE Pilot applicant presentation preparation

- PACE Pilot applicants should plan for a maximum of one hour to host the virtual pitch session with the judges assigned to assess their submission.

- Applicants should plan to use 15-20 minutes of the hour to "pitch" their innovation, with the remaining time reserved for questions from the judges. While this structure is somewhat flexible, applicants should not plan on "pitching" their innovation for more than 20 minutes, allowing judges ample time to ask questions for them to properly and effectively evaluate their innovations.

- In preparing their presentation and/or preparing for judges' questions, applicants should address the items provided in the rubric included in this guide.

- Applicants should work ***via email*** with the judges assigned to assess their submission to coordinate and host the one-hour virtual pitch session. Items to prepare for in advance include:

    - Communication of questions judges may have about the application, giving applicants time to prepare their response.
    - Testing of the platform (Zoom, Teams, WebEx, etc.) being used to host the virtual discussion.

Note: It is the applicants' discretion regarding what platform to use to host the pitch session. We understand not all companies are approved to use the same platform. As a result, we are allowing applicants to choose the platform that best serves their needs and relying on applicants to ensure the judges have the access they need to the selected platform.

- Applicants should share presentation materials with judges in advance for feedback and/or as pre-reads before the pitch session.

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PACE Pilot applicant discussion rubric

PACE Pilot applicants should plan for one hour to host the pitch session with the judges assigned to assess their submission. In preparing their presentation and/or preparing for judges' questions, applicants should seek to address the following:

Market Attractiveness
Distinct articulated competitive advantage
Defined accessible market
Size of market is substantial
Targeted market is growing
First to market opportunity exists
Meets an unmet need in market
Few competitors in market
No dominant competitor in market
Market partners or potential licensees are identified
Pilot partner is strong and engaged

Technology Potential
Functional prototype/minimum viable product exists and is being tested in relevant environments
Innovation is novel/unique
Existing issues confronting innovation's development are solvable
Technological viability has been demonstrated in pilot
Intellectual property is protected
Intellectual property is not disputed
Utilization on larger scale beyond pilot is feasible

Business/Commercialization Readiness
Business model articulated with identified revenue streams
Validation of business model in process with pilot
Early market feedback to verify uniqueness/customer acceptance/competitive position
Potential scalability of business model
Uniqueness of business model

Pilot Execution
Engagement/interest of partner
Pilot milestones being achieved
Identified learnings from pilot
Post pilot next steps articulated
Customer pipeline post pilot

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Confidentiality

Judges' ability to evaluate PACE applications and applicants' ability to effectively make their case for their innovation depends directly upon the free conveyance of information and evidence, some of which may be sensitive or confidential.

In filling out the application, each PACE Pilot applicant electronically signed a "Confidentiality Statement and Truth of Information Release". It is suggested that applicants review that prior to the virtual pitch session.

Specifically, the Confidentially Statement provides that "I have marked any sensitive information 'Confidential' and understand that it will be kept strictly confidential and will be available only to the Automotive News PACE coordinators and the judges."

It is vital that applicants and their PACE Pilot judging team agree on what information is confidential to this judging process.

This principle extends to the virtual discussions. Discretion and confidentiality are maintained as a matter of course in connection with the discussions. However, if secret or confidential information, materials, items or processes are being revealed or shown, the judges and PACE coordinators must be told that clearly and explicitly.

In the course of trying to develop all the intelligence necessary to evaluate a company and its innovation fully and fairly, judges should attempt to clarify what, if anything, is secret or confidential as the discussion proceeds.

It is the host company's responsibility, however, to make explicit what they regard as secret or to identify confidential matters explicitly.

Use this opportunity to clarify what has been presented, shown, or discussed that is secret or confidential. For purposes of finalist press descriptions, summaries, or possible citations.

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