**Social Entrepreneurship Bootcamp**

**FAQ**

We created this application FAQ to help you guide you through the Social Entrepreneurship Bootcamp application process. We strongly encourage you to read through these resources prior to submission in order to ensure that your application is successful. If you have any remaining questions, please visit our website (radical.partners) or email Alia at [alia@radicalpartners.net](mailto:alia@radicalpartners.net).

1. **Application Process**

**2. Application Tips**

**3. Application Questions and Tips**

**4. Document Upload Guidelines**

**5. Second and Third Round Interview Materials**

**Application Process**

**First Round: Application**

Due August 25, 2017 @ 11:59 PM EST

Please complete and submit the linked application by August 25, 2017 at 11:59 PM.

Remember that applications cannot be revised once submitted, so we recommend drafting answers to your questions in a word document first, then copying and pasting answers once you are ready to submit. This will help make sure your word counts are accurate, that spelling errors are corrected, and hard work isn’t lost!

**Second Round: In-Person Interview**

Notified by September 1, 2017

Applicants who are invited to the first round interview will be asked to prepare a 5- minute pitch for their organization. Please refer to page 9 for more detailed information. The purpose of this activity is to give our selection committee a sense for your venture's existing pitch. Keep in mind that a major goal of Social Entrepreneurship Bootcamp is to help you refine and strengthen your pitch. As such, we’ll be evaluating effort and presentation as much as quality. Interviews will take place between September 4-8, 2017.

**Third Round: Final Round Interview**

Notified by September 8, 2017

Applicants who are invited to the final round, one-on-one interview will be required to share one document (no more than five pages) that your organization already uses to give us insight into the essence of your organization. For example, this may include an executive summary, business plan, strategic plan, or overview presentation. Interviews will take place between September 11-15, 2017, and we'll ask that the document is submitted by Monday September 11, 2017 at 9:00 AM. Interviews can be done in-person, via phone, or Skype.

**Application Tips**

* Review the Social Entrepreneurship Bootcamp website. Get to know our program and previous cohort members to learn if bootcamp is right for you. The website is also a great source of answers to frequently asked questions.
* Don't wait until the last minute to start your application. We can tell how much time and effort applicants put in, so be sure to draft, proofread, and revise. Working on the application in advance will also help you avoid any unforeseen technical issues.
* Be specific. The main reason applications aren't successful is a lack of specificity and clarity. Trading vague generalizations and cliches for specific data and anecdotes will amp up the quality of your responses.
* Be straightforward. Avoid industry-specific jargon and terminology in your responses. Assume that the reader of your application may not have content-specific knowledge. Keep things simple.
* Draft your answers in Word before submitting. All of the questions in the application are included in this document. We highly recommend copying and pasting them into word to draft your responses prior to submitting online.
* Longer isn't better. While we don't provide word count requirements for many of the questions, we want to emphasize that longer answers aren't always better. Be clear and to the point when communicating your message.

**Section 1: The Basics**

1. Organization Name

**ThumbsUp International**

1. Your Name

**Kerry L. Gruson**

1. Your Title

**Co-Founder, Co-Chair**

1. Phone Number

**C: 305-439-0527**

1. E-Mail Address

[**kerrylgruson@gmail.com**](mailto:kerrylgruson@gmail.com)

1. Website

[**www.ThumbsUpIntl.org**](http://www.ThumbsUpIntl.org)

1. LinkedIn Page

**No Linkedin Page**

**Section 2: The Problem**

1. Describe the problem your organization addresses. Please include detailed information explaining the causes of this problem and why it persists.

**The problem ThumbsUp International is seeking to address is the low participation in sports of disabled athletes unable to compete on their own and the low expectation of integrating such athletes in their competitions.**

**ThumbsUp seeks to pair up adaptive athletes with able-bodied athletes willing to compete together as a team. Together they will set goals, work toward them and benefit from achieving what they set out to do together, demonstrating to the community the importance of inclusion in sports and sharing the benefit of sports.**

**ThumbsUp International also seeks to create a stronger mindset of inclusion of the disabled population in the community and does so by sharing their message and accomplishments with school-age children in schools.**

**While there is a small community of disabled athletes that do compete in marathons and triathlons under their own power, ThumbsUp focuses on those who cannot compete on their own. Currently the number of severely disabled athletes participating in sports competitions such as marathons and triathlons is miniscule, even less so for tandem teams. There is an organization in Wisconsin that services about 20 adaptive athletes and an organization in Cooper City that services a handful. Most other examples of severely disabled athletes in tandem with able-bodied athletes are isolated and usually formed by family members, but are for all intents and purposes few and far between.**

**South Florida has a very active multisport community and ThumbsUp seeks to leverage the existing calendar of endurance races to create teams of adaptive athletes and able-bodied athletes to compete alongside all other contestants.**

**ThumbsUp International calls their programs RACE and EDUCATE.**

A successful answer will provide evidence that the problem exists and a compelling explanation of why this issue is important to resolve. Provide as much numeric / statistical evidence as possible, evidence of the factors that create this problem, and why no one else has tried to solve or has succeeded in solving the problem. Listed below are all of the questions that you will be asked in the six sections of the application. For some of the more complex questions we have provided tips for how to craft a successful answer. For the questions that are more straightforward and/or personal, we have simply listed the question.

**Section 3: The Solution**

1. Describe the specific product(s)/service(s)/program(s) your venture uses to solve the problem.

**Thumbsup International seeks to facilitate the formation of tandem teams to compete in races that welcome this category of athletes. The organization will work towards pairing adaptive athletes and able-bodied athletes and provide the support structure to ease their participation in the various race events.**

**Alongside the racing component, Thumbsup International seeks to structure a school-visit program to expose students to the importance of fitness, inclusion, and teamwork in races and in life.**

**A successful result of our efforts will come in the form of witnessing an exponential increase in tandem teams competing in races in South Florida by both children and adults.**

A successful answer will provide the details of the solution your organization implements and evidence to support that the solution is effective.

1. How is your solution innovative compared to other ventures addressing the same problem?

**We are aware of a couple of other organizations in the United States who focus on assisting tandem teams consisting of adaptive and able-bodied athletes to race. In South Florida we would be the leading organization to work in this area and we believe that “if we build, they will come”. In essence we are trying to build a “golden bridge” that will spark the interest of disabled persons/adaptive athletes to engage in sports and the community with the help of able-bodied persons who themselves benefit tremendously from helping others achieve positive results.**

**In order to sustain the inclusion of disabled people in the community and in this case in sports activities, we feel we need to put together a robust program of school visits to encourage children to work towards a challenging goal and to “normalize” the inclusion of disabled children/adults in a variety of community activities, including endurance races.**

A successful answer will explain the current methods used to address this problem and why they have been insufficient. It will also explain why your organization will succeed where other organizations have not. Feel free to discuss other competitor organizations in your space, and describe how your approach is different.

1. Who is the target population that your venture serves?

**There are 3 distinct target populations ThumbsUp International serves:**

**1. Disabled athletes who cannot compete on their own and thus require an able-bodied athlete to race.**

1. **Able-bodied athletes who find a more purposeful meaning in competing in tandem with an adaptive athlete.**
2. **School-aged children specifically, but also the community at large, who will hear the stories behind the tandem teams and thus start to think of inclusion as a normal and ordinary practice in everyday life.**

**There is already demonstrable evidence of the positive impact on adaptive athletes to compete and reach their athletic goals. The families and friends of adaptive athletes Brett Atwood, Dwayne Hylton, and Kerry Gruson are witness to the positive impact ThumbsUp has had on their lives.**

**Interestingly, the impact seems just as strong on able-bodied athletes whose competitive instincts are redefined and elevated. This is palpable when the various able-bodied athletes speak of their experience helping their adaptive athlete reach previously unthinkable athletic achievements. This can be heard in the short documentary “May I Help You?”**

**4th grade students at Miami Country Day school have mentioned in their speeches at school that one of their defining experiences during the year was listening and interacting with Kerry Gruson and Caryn Lubetsky of Team ThumbsUp. Some students will be actively participating and helping ThumbsUp compete at Ironman Cozumel during Thanksgiving 2017.**

1. How will you track and assess the impact and success of your organization?

**The mission of ThumbsUp International is to expand attitudes about life’s possibilities by connecting people across all abilities to conquer athletic challenges together.**

**ThumbsUp International will track and assess the impact of the organization by:**

1. **Growing the number of adaptive athletes competing in tandem with able-bodied athletes in races. We currently have 3 teams that race with some frequency and our goal is to equip 10 separate teams by the 2019 Miami Marathon. We will seek race organizers to create a tandem category. Longer term we seek to establish chapters state-wide in Florida as a first step before contemplating national and international aspirations.**
2. **Make 10 visits to schools and 2 visits to community organizations in South Florida during a calendar year to spread the message of fitness, inclusivity and teamwork: F.I.T.**
3. **Achieve 5000 Facebook followers by the end of 2018.**

Your response will help us understand what factors you believe will define the success of your organization. For example, an organization focused on distributing a product may measure success by the number of products distributed and how those products will benefit their recipients. Please be as specific and numerical/data-driven as possible when describing your impact metrics.

**Short Answer Questions and Tips**

**Section 4: The Organization**

**Budget**

13-A. What is your current operating budget?

**The current operating budget is still very small at about $3,000. By the end of 2017 we hope to expand it considerably to $15,000 and by 2018 to $30,000.**

13-B. If you have an operating budget in Excel, Word, or PDF, please upload it.

**There is currently no formal budget, just $3000 in the bank account. We seek to increase five-fold our budget so we can strategically spend on marketing, equipment, etc in order to achieve our goals. At this moment, however, we as an organization still need to form a final consensus with respect to our goals and how we plan to achieve them.**

14. Describe how you expect your organization to grow over the next two years.

**Over the next 2 years we expect ThumbsUp International to grow considerably, albeit from a small base. We will be relying on donations and grants to increase our budget the first 2 years but our hope is that by year 3 we can find a way to generate 50% of our operating budget on our own.**

**Adaptive athletes and able-bodied tandem teams will grow from current 3 to 10.**

**Facebook followers will grow from the current 2000 to 5000 by end of 2018.**

**Visits to schools and community organizations will grow from 1 to 12 per calendar year (essentially one per month).**

**Purchase race carriers and bike accessories to outfit 10 teams.**

**Provide a web-centric information platform for tandem athletes to get information on race calendar, registration, etc.**

15. How much money do you anticipate you will need in order to reach the level of growth described?

**ThumbsUp currently has $3000 in the bank and is shooting for $15,000 by end of 2017, and $30,000 by end of 2018.**

**Team**

16-A. What is your current organizational headcount?

**The current organization has half a dozen people considered decision-makers:**

**Kerry Gruson, Caryn Lubetsky, Blake Starr, Stephanie Mejia, Christelle Caron, and Ricardo Cookson.**

**Aside from this small team there are close to 100+ supporters.**

16-B. If you have an org chart in Excel, Word, or PDF, please upload it.

**ThumbsUp International’s organization chart is attached, but we still need to review it in our next meeting to form a consensus regarding everyone’s roles.**

17-A. Do you currently have a Board of Directors?

**We have a small group of decision-makers, but not a formalized Board of Directors yet. It is one of the goals for the end of the year to formalize the organizational structure of ThumbsUp. Over the last two years ThumbsUp has had a number of willing volunteers, but the organization is only now formalizing the roles of a core group of people to propel the mission forward.**

17-B. If you have a list of your Board of Directors in Excel, Word, or PDF form, please upload it here.

**In process of organizing a Board of Directors.**

**History**

18. How long has your venture been in operation?

**ThumbsUp International was established in 2015, so has been in operation for almost 3 years.**

19. How long have you been the leader of your venture?

**Kerry Gruson is the co-founder and co-chair of ThumbsUp International since its inception. Most everyone in the decision-making team has been volunteering in some capacity with ThumbsUp for 2-3 years.**

**Media Coverage**

20. Have you ever been covered in the press? If so, please share links to coverage

**Yes, here are the links:**

[May I Help You? ( Documentary )](https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=s07-OaAA2M8" \t "_blank)

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[Kerry Gruson, left incapacitated after being attacked in the 1970s, brings determination to Triathlon](http://www.miamiherald.com/living/article1962211.html" \t "_blank)

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**Section 5: The Applicant**

21. If your are the founder, when and how did you come up with the idea for the venture? If you are the CEO, why did the mission of this organization inspire you to get involved?

**???????? Kerry to answer**

22. Describe an example of your ability to overcome challenges.

**???????? Kerry to answer**

23. Why do you want to become a part of this bootcamp?

**???????? ThumbsUp International has shown strong initial traction and is poised to grow and contribute to the community with more organizational and financial resources. The bootcamp is a perfect way for ThumbsUp International to hone its message, organize itself, its media outreach, establish sound achievable financial commitments, and help the organization be all it can be.**

24. If you could receive formal executive coaching in one area, what is the area you would want to focus on?

**How to transition from a grant-seeking and donation-based organization to a financially independent organization that derives its revenues from services or products of value to the community?**

25. Have you participated or plan to participate in any other professional development programs/fellowships? (i.e. Miami Fellows, New Leaders Council, etc.). If you are going to be participating in something in the future, please indicate the program and dates.

**Currently there are no plans to participate in other professional development programs/fellowships.**

**Section 6: For Previous Applicants ONLY**

26. Since you last applied for Social Entrepreneurship Bootcamp, what has changed about you and your venture?

**ThumbsUp International did apply for the Social Entrepreneurship Bootcamp Cohort #3 in 2016. ThumbsUp was asked to come in for the second round interview. At that time, some members of ThumbsUp did not feel Kerrythe organization was ready and thus it was decided to postpone our participation for at least another year. While we are still relatively small, we feel ThumbsUp is ready for the bootcamp this year and look forward to participating.**

Document Upload Guidelines

Throughout the application, there are three opportunities to upload files that supplement your application. While not required, if you do have these documents, it is highly encouraged to submit them as they help paint a more full picture of your venture. If you choose to do so, please adhere to the following upload guidelines.

• PDF, Excel, or Word files only

• Save As: Organization: Document Title

• Budget Document Title: "Budget"

• Org Chart Title: "Org Chart"

• Board of Directors Title: "Board of Directors"

**Example:**

Guitars Over Guns:

Budget Guitars Over Guns:

Org Chart Guitars Over Guns: Board of Directors

Second and Third Round Interview Materials

**Round 2 Materials: Five Minute Pitch**

The purpose of the 5-minute pitch exercise is for the selection committee to gain a better understanding of how you communicate the vision and purpose of your venture to others. You are welcome to use any supplemental materials (i.e. PowerPoint, Handouts, Digital Media) you want, but none are required. We don't expect you to structure your pitch in the following four sections, exactly, however we ask that you cover all of the following content in some way during your pitch.

1. **Introduction**: Tell us the basics about you and your venture.
2. **Problem**: What is the problem that your venture seeks to address and why does that problem matter/exist?
3. **Solution/Strategy**: How do you go about solving the problem? What is the strategy/structure you have in place to address the problem?
4. **Vision for the Future**: Tell us your vision for the future, and why we should want to come along for the ride.

**Round 3 Materials: One Supplemental Document**

For the final round interview, we will ask applicants to submit one document (no more than five pages) that your venture already uses to give us insight into the essence of your organization. It may be an executive summary, business plan, strategic plan, overview presentation, or any other existing document. Again, we do not want applicants to create something new for the purposes of this interview. We'll ask that the document is submitted no later than Monday September 11, 2017 at 9:00 AM.