VENTURE CONNECTION CLIENT GUIDE:
COMPANY DESCRIPTIONS AND MEDIA KITS

Prepared by:  Jesse Robson
Communications and Events Coordinator
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**Company Description**

Having a clear, concise, and well-written description of your company is very helpful in creating and maintaining a professional image. It is important for all companies to have because it clearly describes what the company does, for whom, and what differentiates it from competitors. Not only does this better define the company, it can also help convey the tone, style, and personality of the company as well.

A company description is very similar to a 30-second elevator pitch (if you take the time to create a great one, it can be used for both) as it directly creates and influences the impression you leave on potential customers, partners, and investors. Keep in mind that it should be written in an interesting and engaging manner but the wording must be concise, professional, and direct.

**What to include**

The exact length, structure, and tone will vary with different companies, but your description must include the following:

- **Company name, what type of company it is and what you do**
  e.g. "**Cookify** is a gourmet baking company that provides delicious organic treats."

- **For whom** (who the customer is)
  "...to small and medium sized coffee-shops unable to freshly bake their own."

- **The value created for the customer** (why they care/pay)
  "...so that they increase the quality of their food offering"

- **How it differentiates from competitors** (what's so special?)
  "Unlike other bakery suppliers, Cookify uses an innovative system which provides freshly baked daily treats while allows customizing and differentiating items for specific cafes."

**Length**

Descriptions vary in length based on company and intended usage, but it is a good idea to start with a concise 25- to 40-word description for general use. Once this is completed, it can be helpful to create multiple lengths suitable for different uses or mediums (such as a 25, 50, 100, or 150 word version).

While the length of these may allow for more information, make sure the longer versions still provide a clear, concise description of your company (Longer does not equate to better, as Mark Twain once said "I didn't have time to write a short letter, so I wrote a long one instead").
What to avoid

Remember that this is a publicly broadcasted description of your company, so you want to be as professional as possible. Descriptions are all different in order to fit the company, but it is generally a good idea to avoid the following:

• **Indirect, unconfident and unprofessional wording**
  Using wording such as “we would like to try to..” or “we are hoping that..” detracts from your professional image. Even if you are still developing your ideas or product, you can describe this in a professional manner: “researching and developing solutions to..”

• **First-person pronouns**
  While first person descriptions certainly work well for matching the tone or culture of many companies, it is usually a good idea to be able to describe your company as an independent entity by avoiding personal pronouns such as “we”, “us”, “our” etc.

• **Broad statements or assumptions**
  Your company description should not assume anything about the audience such as knowledge, preferences, or habits. Broad statements that require audience agreement or understanding can backfire without adequate evidence or agreement (which is not possible to provide in such a short description).

  For example “This addresses the well-known problem of...” – if the audience doesn’t identify with the specific problem then they lose interest in your message. It’s best to avoid this problem by identifying specific customer needs or demand.
**Media Kits**

Once you have formulated a strong company description, it’s helpful to publish this as part of your company information. Often the best way to do this is the creation of a media kit, which is a pre-packaged set of contact information and promotional materials related to a company for use in editorial or publishing purposes. By providing this information in an easily accessible package, it saves time while allowing companies greater control over their public image.

Media Kits should include the following:

- **Company description**
  Multiple lengths (Typically 25, 50, and 100 word versions of the description)

- **Contact Information**
  How to contact the public relations or external communications representative for the company as well as social media channels.

- **Corporate Information**
  Brand names, incorporation details, and mailing address.

- **Branding Assets**
  Logos (high quality versions, ideally in vector format), product images or screenshots, and company branding guidelines.

Additional (optional) items to include:

- **Management Team**
  Introductions/Bio’s for core team members.

- **Company Facts**
  Interesting ‘fast facts’ about company history, products, partnerships, designations, and awards.

- **Recent Press Releases**
Example: Hiretheworld

As previously discussed in this guide, the structure, wording and tone of company descriptions will differ greatly, but each must include a concise description of **what the company is and what they do, for whom do they do this** (who the customer is), **the value they create for the customer** (why people should care), and **what differentiates them from competitors** (what makes them special).

The following example is from Hiretheworld, winner of the 2010 BCIC New Ventures BC Competition and alumni of the SFU Venture Connection program.

**Company Name:** HiretheWorld or HiretheWorld.com (not Hire the World or Hiretheworld)

**Web:** www.hiretheworld.com

**Twitter:** @hiretheworld, @HTW_Design

**Logos:**

![HiretheWorld Logos]

**Descriptions:**

**25 words:** Hiretheworld is an online resource that connects employers with professional designers from around the world, allowing businesses to access top design talent quickly and easily.

**50 words:** Hiretheworld is an award winning online resource, active in over 130 countries, that connects employers with a network of thousands of professional designers from around the world. HiretheWorld allows businesses to work with many designers simultaneously via a Design Contest or to hire a single designer for project work.

**100 words:** Currently active in over 130 countries, HiretheWorld is an award winning, online resource that connects employers with a network of thousands of professional designers on a global scale. HiretheWorld has developed an unprecedented range of tools that allow employers to engage with designers from abroad quickly, easily and entirely risk-free. Design Contests allow employers to review work from dozens of designers simultaneously before making a purchasing decision. By capturing regular screenshots of the designer’s work, our Virtual Studio application allows employers to get a real-time view into how a design is progressing allowing businesses abreast of work being conducted.

In addition to the company descriptions shown, the Hiretheworld media kit also provides founder bios, links to their social media channels, and contact information for media relations.
Additional Examples

The following companies provide good examples of a well-formulated company description published in an easily accessible media kit:

**HootSuite**

*HootSuite is a social relationship platform for businesses and organizations to collaboratively execute social media strategies across networks such as Twitter, Facebook, LinkedIn and Google+ Pages from one secure, web-based dashboard. Advanced functionality includes tools for audience engagement, team collaboration, account security and comprehensive analytics for end-to-end measurement and reporting.*

**HootSuite Media Kit:** [media.hootsuite.com/media-kit/](http://media.hootsuite.com/media-kit/)

**Payfirma**

*Payfirma is an award winning payments company that helps businesses accept credit and debit cards online, in stores, and on mobile devices. Payfirma's payment solutions keep all transaction data in one place, making it simple for businesses to use their sales data to make smarter business decisions about their customers, products and employees.*

**Payfirma Media Kit:** [www.payfirma.com/media-kit/](http://www.payfirma.com/media-kit/)

**Strutta**

*Strutta is a social promotions platform that enables brands to create, launch and manage social media campaigns to drive leads, awareness and sales. In addition, our social management dashboard provides brands with rich data on how their customers are interacting with and sharing their story across social channels to encourage ongoing engagement.*

**Strutta Media Kit:** [www.strutta.com/media-kit/](http://www.strutta.com/media-kit/)