

Pitch Friday

SEASON 1 | EPISODE 1 EVENT REPORT

May 8, 2026 | Window on America, Makurdi, Benue State, Nigeria

ORGANISED BY



The First Tech-Focused NGO in Benue State, Nigeria

Sponsored by Maxify Global | AI Campus | Sonal AI | Powered by Maxify Tickets | Venue: Window on America

SECTION 01

Executive Summary

Pitch Friday Season 1, Episode 1 was a landmark moment for the tech ecosystem in Benue State. What we planned became real, and what became real exceeded every expectation.

On May 8, 2026, BenueTech Foundation hosted the inaugural episode of Pitch Friday at Window on America in Makurdi, Benue State. Five carefully selected tech startups took the stage before an audience of 110 guests, exceeding our target of 100, and competed for real prizes, expert feedback, and a path into acceleration.

The event was powered by Maxify Tickets for seamless QR-based guest check-in. While internet connectivity challenges arose during the session, the team responded decisively, with Tersoo Abatyough and Tamen Kuma stepping in as in-person judges to ensure every startup received the quality evaluation they deserved. Winners were announced by Bemdoo Hulugh.

SprintET emerged as the winner of Season 1, Episode 1. All five startups walked away enrolled in Hub 17's acceleration programme and supported by resources from Maxify Global. Post-event feedback was overwhelmingly positive, with a 4.3 out of 5 overall rating and 100% of respondents saying they would recommend Pitch Friday to others.

110

Guests Attended

5

Startups Pitched

4

Judges on the Day

4.3

Guest Rating /5

100%Would Recommend

SECTION 02

Event Overview

Event Name	Pitch Friday — BenueTech Startup Pitch Series
Season / Episode	Season 1, Episode 1

Date	Friday, May 8, 2026
Time	1:00 PM — 3:00 PM WAT
Venue	Window on America, Makurdi, Benue State, Nigeria
Total Guests	110 guests (Target was 100 — exceeded by 10%)
Guest Check-in	Powered by Maxify Tickets — QR-based, fast and seamless
Startups Pitched	5 selected startups
International Judges	Tim Uzua (Warrington, UK) and Connor Cofoid (Chicago, USA) — joined virtually
In-Person Judges	Tersoo Abatyough (CEO, Mediaoja) and Tamen Kuma (Co-Founder, Hub 17)
Winner Announced	Bemdoo Hulugh
Programme Lead	Adeke Msonter Samuel
Official Sponsor	Maxify Global
Sponsors	AI Campus Benue, Sonal AI
Powered By	Maxify Tickets
Venue Partner	Window on America, Makurdi
Acceleration Partner	Hub 17 Startup Studio
Organised By	BenueTech Foundation

SECTION 03

Competition Results

Five startups. One stage. One winner. Five futures changed.

#	STARTUP	FOUNDER(S)	SECTOR	PRIZE
1st	SprintET WINNER	Ernest Msugh Chia	Developer Infrastructure	N100,000
2nd	NXTDOOR Technologies 1st Runner-up	Ahile Benedict	E-commerce / Delivery	N50,000
3rd	LodgeMe 2nd Runner-up	Jackson Patrick Alechenu	Proptech / Housing	N50,000
4th	iDOC eXperience 3rd Runner-up	Ene Eunice Ogaba	Healthtech	N50,000
5th	Membba 4th Runner-up	Aondona Precious & Anthony Nder	Creator Economy	N50,000

Total prizes: **N300,000 cash** + N500,000 in Maxify Global resources + **Hub 17 Acceleration for all 5 startups**

SECTION 04

Startup Summaries

01. SprintET — Winner

Founder: Ernest Msugh Chia | Sector: Developer Infrastructure | Stage: Early Users

SprintET addresses operational stagnation caused by rigid, legacy software by engineering high-performance, custom digital infrastructure. Their flagship product FSdiscover is a lightweight, modular tool for seamless wireless interaction and high-speed file sharing between

devices. The judges were impressed by technical depth, solution clarity, and the founder's ability to communicate a complex engineering product with precision.

02. NXTDOOR Technologies — 1st Runner-up

Founder: Ahile Benedict | Sector: E-commerce / Delivery | Location: Makurdi

NXTDOOR Technologies connects users to nearby vendors for fast, reliable local food delivery in Benue State, while helping small businesses digitize. A hyperlocal solution built for how people in Makurdi actually live and trade. Judges praised the practical execution and direct community impact.

03. LodgeMe — 2nd Runner-up

Founder: Jackson Patrick Alechenu | Sector: PropTech / Student Housing

LodgeMe solves the chaos, scams, and stress of finding off-campus housing for Nigerian students. Their platform aggregates and verifies housing listings, making the search trusted, transparent, and student-focused. A visceral, highly relatable pitch with a massive underserved market.

04. iDOC eXperience — 3rd Runner-up

Founder: Ene Eunice Ogaba | Sector: Healthtech | Stage: Early Users

iDOC eXperience is building a barcode-enabled, AI-powered personal health identity — a portable, lifetime medical record addressing Africa's paper-based healthcare crisis. With 70% of facilities still analogue and a \$1.4 billion market, iDOC delivered a compelling, data-driven, and scalable pitch. A standout performance from a female-led startup.

05. Membba — 4th Runner-up

Founders: Aondona Precious and Anthony Nder | Sector: Creator Economy

Membba automates the monetization of WhatsApp and Telegram communities, removing the manual burden of screenshot verification, member management, and subscription tracking from creators. A pain-killer product built on existing platforms to eliminate adoption friction from day one.

SECTION 05

Our Judges

Pitch Friday SIEI featured a four-judge panel. Two international judges joined virtually, and when internet challenges arose, Tersoo Abatyough and Tamen Kuma stepped in as in-person judges, ensuring every startup received the full evaluation they deserved.

Tim Uzua — Warrington, UK (Virtual)

Head of Technology, Fox Group International | Co-Founder, Sonal AI | Co-Founder, Aiivon Hub

A Makurdi-born technologist who taught himself QBASIC and C++ at 15. After two decades building at Gentrack Ltd, Maxify Global, and Fox Group International (supplying 40,000+ clinics globally), Tim co-founded Aiivon Hub — one of Makurdi's first tech hubs — and Sonal AI, a wearable AI product featured in Forbes, TechCrunch, and Wired. Tim is the definition of the road these founders are trying to find. He has already walked it.

Connor Cofoid — Chicago, USA (Virtual)

Founder, Connor Cofoid Consulting | Pitch Coach, 1 Million Cups Chicago

An entrepreneur who has supported over 100 founders through consulting, the Small Business Accelerator, and hands-on workshops. Organiser and pitch coach at 1 Million Cups Chicago — one of America's most respected weekly entrepreneurial communities. Connor brought sharp strategic thinking and immediately actionable feedback to every startup on stage.

Tersoo Abatyough — Makurdi, Nigeria (In-Person)

CEO and Co-Founder, Mediaoja

Tersoo stepped in as an in-person judge when connectivity issues affected the virtual connection. As CEO and Co-Founder of Mediaoja and a committed member of the BenueTech ecosystem, Tersoo brought grounded, honest, and deeply encouraging feedback rooted in the realities of building in Benue State. His presence ensured the quality of evaluation never wavered.

Tamen Kuma — Makurdi, Nigeria (In-Person)

Co-Founder, Hub 17 Innovation Space

Tamen Kuma, Co-Founder of Hub 17 Innovation Space, served as the second in-person judge. With his direct experience running a startup hub and supporting early-stage founders, Tamen brought a sharp eye for startup potential, team readiness, and market fit. His evaluation was thorough, fair, and rooted in the very ecosystem these startups are trying to enter.

SECTION 06

Startup Testimonials

The founders who pitched on May 8 left with more than prizes. Here is what they said.

"It was a great experience. The questions from the judges were really helpful — the kind that push you to reevaluate your model. And Maxify Tickets? I would recommend it any day. With Maxify it is just a scan away. No hassle."

Ernest Msugh Chia — Founder, SprintET — Winner, Pitch Friday S1E1

"The ideas of each startup were incredible. It was genuinely interesting to be in a room where people are building real solutions to real problems."

Ahile Benedict — Founder, NXTDOOR Technologies — 1st Runner-up

"I had so much to learn and improve on as a startup. It was an amazing experience and I would do it again without hesitation."

Obochi Elizabeth Ogwa — iDOC eXperience Team — 3rd Runner-up

"Pitch Friday was a very valuable experience. I learnt a lot — the kind of learning that stays with you."

Anita Raagale Ugwuru — Founder, EarnVersity — Pitch Friday Participant

SECTION 07

Guest Feedback

10 guests submitted post-event feedback. Every single one said they would recommend Pitch Friday and want notifications about future sessions.

4.3/5

Overall Experience

4.4/5

Maxify Tickets Rating

100%

Would Recommend

100%

Want Notifications

10

Responses Received

Individual Feedback Responses

RESPONDENT	OVERAL	MAXIFY	EXPERIENCE / KEY QUOTE
Ambo Terdoo Philemon	5	5	It was a blast. I can say Benue is fast growing in tech.
Utor Bemgba	5	5	Amazing.
Obochi Elizabeth Ogwa	5	5	It was an amazing experience.
Anita Raagale Ugwuru	5	5	It was a very valuable one, I learnt a lot.
Adegboyega Elisha	4	4	Excellent. The feedback, the ideas — everything was valuable.
Tersoo Abatyough	4	4	Awesome. A great opportunity for our youth to own and defend what they have created.
Ernest Msugh Chia	4	5	A great experience. The judges' questions push you to reevaluate your model.
Ahile Benedict	5	3	Interesting.

Adeke Msonter Samuel	3	4	Amazing experience. We can do more, especially with better internet.
Anonymous Guest	3	4	Great experience. I got to learn a lot and connect with people in Makurdi.

What Guests Found Most Valuable

- Hearing real startup ideas and pitches from Benue-based founders
- The quality of judge feedback — described as 'questions that push you to reevaluate your model'
- The structured programme format and how well the event was organised
- The opportunity for young people to showcase ideas and receive expert support
- Networking opportunities — described by one guest as 'like a launchpad'

Suggestions for Future Sessions

- Dedicated internet connection or backup provider
- Live streaming for future sessions to reach wider audiences
- Stricter audience silence during pitches and Q&A
- Tighter time management and smoother MC transitions
- A bigger venue as the community grows
- A dedicated BenueTech workspace to reduce logistical friction

SECTION 08

Sponsors and Partners

- **Official Sponsor** — cash prizes and N100,000 in training, mentorship, and tech resources for all 5 startups: Maxify Global
- **Sponsor** — North-Central Nigeria's first purpose-built AI innovation ecosystem: AI Campus Benue
- **Partner** — wearable AI startup co-founded by judge Tim Uzua, featured in Forbes, TechCrunch, and Wired: Sonal AI
- **Powered By** — handled all guest ticketing and QR check-in seamlessly on the day: Maxify Tickets
- **Venue Partner** — provided the event space and facility support in Makurdi: Window on America
- **Acceleration Partner** — enrolled all 5 pitching startups into their acceleration programme: Hub 17 | Startup Studio

SECTION 09

The Team

Every great event is built by people working with purpose behind the scenes. This is the Pitch Friday S1E1 team.

TEAM MEMBER	ROLE AND CONTRIBUTION
Tersoo Hulugh President BenueTech Foundation	Overall vision, leadership, and strategic direction. Delivered the opening speech. Responsible for securing sponsors, judges, and partners. The driving force behind Pitch Friday as a programme.
Adeke Msonter Samuel Programme Lead / POC BenueTech Foundation	End-to-end coordination and execution. Startup onboarding, judge liaison, registration, quality control, and post-event reporting. The operational engine of Pitch Friday S1E1.

Bemdoo Hulugh Announcer / Compere <i>BenueTech Foundation</i>	Announced the winners live with energy and presence, making the award moment a highlight of the evening for every founder and guest in the room.
Tersoo Abatyough In-Person Judge <i>CEO, Mediaoja</i>	Stepped in as judge when internet connectivity issues arose. Delivered structured, fair, and encouraging feedback to all 5 startups.
Tamen Kuma In-Person Judge <i>Co-Founder, Hub 17</i>	Served as second in-person judge, ensuring the process remained complete and credible. Brought startup ecosystem experience to every evaluation.
Oheobe Agwu Core Team <i>BenueTech Foundation</i>	Supported planning, logistics, and community communication across BenueTech platforms.
Kator Adabo Core Team <i>BenueTech Foundation</i>	Supported planning and event delivery, helping ensure the session ran smoothly from setup through to close.
Tersoo Joseph Abatyough Core Team <i>BenueTech Foundation</i>	Supported team coordination, documentation, and on-the-day logistics.

SECTION 10

Event Highlights

- 110 guests attended, surpassing our target of 100 by 10%
- Maxify Tickets delivered fast, seamless, contactless QR check-in — rated 4.4/5 by guests
- Two international judges joined virtually, with in-person backup from Tersoo Abatyough (CEO, Mediaoja) and Tamen Kuma (Co-Founder, Hub 17)
- Winners announced live by Bemdoo Hulugh to a full room of 110 people
- All 5 startups delivered structured pitches using the standardised 10–slide framework
- Hub 17 formally enrolled all 5 startups into their acceleration programme
- N300,000 in cash prizes awarded on the day
- 100% of feedback respondents said they would recommend Pitch Friday to others
- Networking and refreshments extended the energy beyond the formal programme

SECTION 11

What Worked and What We Are Improving

What Worked Well

- Maxify Tickets delivered a fast, stress-free check-in experience — rated 4.4/5 by guests
- The in-person judge contingency worked beautifully — the event never lost momentum
- The 10–slide pitch framework created consistency and made evaluation fair across all 5 startups
- All sponsor and partner commitments fulfilled in full
- Bemdoo Hulugh's winner announcement added a celebratory, memorable moment
- Window on America was professional, accessible, and well-suited to the format
- The networking session generated strong connections and energy

Areas for Improvement

- Internet connectivity — a dedicated mobile data backup must be arranged for Episode 2
- MC delivery and energy between segments needs to be sharper and more consistent
- Stricter audience management during pitches and Q&A

- Tighter time management across the full programme
 - Live streaming capability to extend reach beyond the room
 - A dedicated BenueTech venue would solve 50% of recurring logistical challenges
 - Printed programmes for guests to follow along
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SECTION 12

Next Steps

1. **Hub 17 Enrollment:** Confirm formal Hub 17 enrollment for all 5 startups within 7 days
 2. **Prize Disbursement:** Confirm all cash prizes received by winners and runners-up
 3. **Post-Event Coverage:** Publish winner announcement and highlights across all BenueTech platforms
 4. **Session Recording:** Share full session recording with all 5 pitching startups
 5. **Thank You:** Send formal thank-you to all sponsors, partners, judges, and the Bemdoo for the announcement
 6. **Team Debrief:** Conduct internal team debrief to document learnings for Episode 2
 7. **Internet Solution:** Source dedicated internet solution for Episode 2
 8. **Episode 2:** Begin Episode 2 planning — scheduled for August 7, 2026
 9. **Summit Pipeline:** Begin pipeline planning to feature Episode 1 winners at Benue Tech Summit, September 2026
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CLOSING NOTE

A Word from the President

Pitch Friday Season 1, Episode 1 was not just an event. It was proof.

I am simply lost for words to express how proud I am of this history we've made. This is Proof that you can build world-class startup infrastructure in Makurdi. Proof that when challenges arise, like the internet issues we faced, a community with the right people finds a way. Tersoo Abatyouh and Tamen Kuma did not hesitate. Bemdoo Hulugh brought the energy the room deserved. The BenueTech team delivered. 110 people showed up. Five founders took the stage. Prizes were paid. Acceleration was confirmed. And every single person who filled out our feedback form said they would come back.

That is not a small thing. That is everything.

Episode 2 is coming. August 7, 2026. And we will be ready.

Tersoo Hulugh

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Building Benue's Tech Ecosystem | www.benuetech.org