

## JUDGES INFORMATION GUIDE

### BACKGROUND

The competition is the oldest and one of the most prestigious of its kind in the world. The competition brings to Montreal in early January each year, teams of four students and their coaches from 36 Canadian and international business schools representing over 20 countries. The event takes place at a grandiose Hotel in downtown Montreal.

The competition is unique in that it lasts 6 days at the same venue and includes not only the cases on which the students compete but a wide variety of networking and social events that enable them to establish connections not only with other students but with sponsors, judges and other senior members of the Montreal business community. A schedule of a typical week of the competition will be provided to you by the organizing team.

The competition is organized by five second year John Molson MBA students who report to an advisory board made up of Montreal business executives and senior representatives from the school. These organizers are responsible for attracting top tier schools, selecting the cases, recruiting judges and volunteers, making the necessary logistical arrangements, raising the sponsorship monies required to fund the event and ultimately, for planning and executing an event that will be memorable for the over 1,000 people involved and which will reflect positively on the school.

### HOW THE COMPETITION IS STRUCTURED

The 36 schools are divided into six divisions of six schools who compete head-to-head in five separate rounds with the other five schools in their division. Nine of the schools advance from the round robin to compete in a semi-final case. Three schools then advance to the finals for a chance to win the Concordia Cup and the \$ 10,000 prize that goes with it.



### THE CASES

The majority of the seven cases used in the competition (Five for the round robin and one for each of the semi-final and final) are traditional business school cases. These are selected from submissions made by international case writers to a case writing competition run by the organizers every year to generate original cases for use in the competition.

There are two exceptions to these traditional cases. The first is a live case which involves the presentation by a company of a current unresolved strategic issue facing the firm. The second is a short think on your feet case where the students are given a limited amount of time to deal with a situation that requires an immediate resolution. The identity of the live case company or the nature of the short case are not divulged to the students until the day of the case.

Typically, each team is given up to three hours to prepare a twenty-five minutes PowerPoint presentation to a five-person panel of judges. Their presentation will incorporate their analysis of the issues in a case, their consideration of alternatives, their recommended course of action and an implementation plan.

### JUDGES



Judges for the competition are selected from the Montreal business community on the basis of their experience, seniority and area of expertise. As 90 judges are required for each case in the round robin phase (5 person panels for 18 simultaneous head-to-head competitions), the competition maintains a pool of some 350 judges, around 15 % of whom are new to the competition each year.

Judges will be contacted well before the competition begins to determine their availability for the week of the competition and will be advised of the case or cases in the round robin phase which they will be assigned to judge. Each case represents about a half day commitment and it is most important that judges respect their engagement.

## A judge's day involves a number of different phases:

- Registration and assignment by a volunteer to one of eighteen five-person judge panels;
- Reading of the case and discussion with four fellow panelists;
- A discussion about the case with all judges led by a senior academic;
- Assignment of the panel to a presentation room to judge twenty-five minutes presentations by each of two schools, in each case followed by a fifteen-minute question period;
- Evaluation of the presentations with fellow panelists and selection of a winning team;
- Preparation of feedback to each of the teams.



Each judge panel includes a lead judge whose main responsibilities include organizing the question period, leading the discussion to select the winning team, preparing the final version of the evaluation and feedback form and casting a deciding vote to choose the winner in the highly unlikely event of a tie.

## JUDGING CRITERIA

The panel will evaluate each of the two teams in five categories and will assign a rating of 1 to 10 for each category which is weighted to reflect the historical degree of difficulty the students have had with a given category. The rating for each category should be based on what the panel would have expected from four senior MBA students who have had extensive case study and practical business experience working as a team. While subjective, a team that met the panel's expectation should be rated in the 4 to 6 range. The team with the highest cumulative total for all five categories is the winner. An example of the evaluation form which includes the criteria, is presented during the judges briefing session.

Remember that your feedback is very important to the participants and reflects the quality of the judge panel. So, provide detailed commentary and constructive criticism that will help the teams learn and improve.

## SUGGESTIONS AND REMINDERS TO JUDGES

### Before the competition:

- Acknowledge all communication from the organizers;
- Become familiar with the rules governing the competition.

### Upon arrival and in the Judges' room:

- Engage with the volunteers and follow their directions;
- Engage with your fellow panelists;
- Read the case attentively;
- Participate in the case discussion;
- Do not look up information on the company in the case as it would be unfair to the students who only have the information in the case.

### During the team presentations:

- Keep an open mind; the presentation may not be what you expect or have prepared for;
- Be sensitive to linguistic and cultural differences; there are up to 20 countries represented. English may not be their first language. There may also be cultural differences in how issues are dealt with;
- Avoid any reactions or interruptions;
- Take notes to prepare for the question period, the deliberations and the feedback to each team.

### During the question period:

- Assume the role the students have given you;
- Ask short questions based only on the presentations and the information in the case;
- Avoid editorializing or expressing opinions on the quality of the presentation.

### During the deliberations and evaluation:

- Be open to the opinion of others;
- Try to reach a consensus;
- Most importantly be as constructive and as complete as possible in your feedback. This is essential for the coaches and their teams as they progress through the week.

### Upon completion:

- Do not discuss the case with any of the participants;
- Complete the short survey you will receive at the end of the day. We value your feedback as well as any suggestions you have to improve the competition.

## Do's & Don'ts to Remember

It is important that judges be familiar with the following rules governing the competition;

	Role	Dos	Don'ts
<b>Introduction</b>	Introduce yourself	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Short intro (name, position &amp; company)</li></ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Long intro (&gt; 30 sec)</li></ul>
<b>Presentation</b>	Listen	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Listen attentively</li><li>• Be open minded</li><li>• Write down comments &amp; QS for Q&amp;A</li></ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Listen passively</li><li>• Communicate verbally &amp; non-verbally</li></ul>
<b>Q&amp;A Session</b>	Ask questions	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Be culturally sensitive</li><li>• Ensure clarity in question formulation</li><li>• Demonstrate patience when seeking an answer</li></ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Lead the conversation</li><li>• Undermine participants</li><li>• Move on too quickly</li><li>• Initiate a debate</li></ul>
<b>Deliberation Period</b>	Deliberate	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Support decisions with concrete examples</li><li>• Consider the alternatives</li></ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Fixate on one solution based on preconceived notion</li><li>• Penalize teams who appoint one member to answer questions</li></ul>
<b>Evaluation</b>	Provide feedback	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Provide constructive criticism &amp; detailed comments</li><li>• Point out development opportunities and how presentation could have been improved</li></ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Provide short, vague sentences &amp; general comments</li><li>• Discuss case with participants</li></ul>

Join our special networking cocktail, mingle with sponsors, participants, volunteers, and other judges. For the details refer to the schedule provided by the organizing team.



Remember to keep your details and profile updated and make use of the exciting features provided.

**THANK YOU. YOUR PARTICIPATION IS VERY MUCH APPRECIATED. ENJOY THE EXPERIENCE**

### Contact Us

#### Website

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