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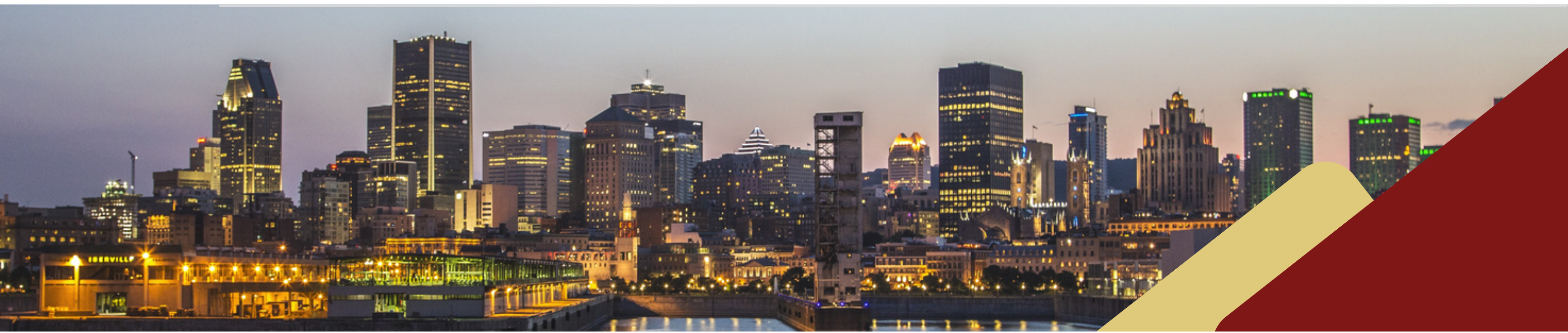
CONCOURS INTERNATIONAL D'ÉTUDE DE CAS MBA
JOHN MOLSON
MBA INTERNATIONAL CASE COMPETITION

# 2024

# GUIDE FOR SCHOOLS

3rd January - 7th January
Montreal, Quebec - Canada



# SERGE HELOU

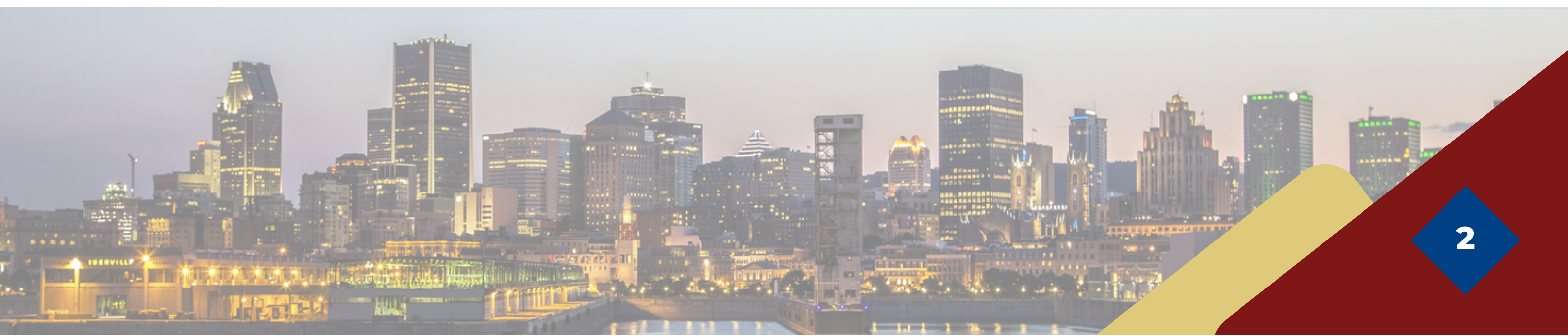
ICD.D FCAE P.ENG.
Chairwoman, Board of Directors,
JMSB MBA International Case Competition

*On behalf of the Board of Directors from the John Molson School of Business International Case Competition, Welcome back! This year marks the 41st anniversary and we are filled with excitement and anticipation in witnessing tomorrow's business leaders perform at their highest levels as we happily welcome them back in person.*

*I would like to thank each and every Participant and Coach for sticking by us while we took the year to work on all those "rainy day" behind the scene improvements we have been wanting to accomplish for some time.*

*For those Universities and Business Schools returning to the JMSB ICC, we are thrilled to have you back. For those new Universities and Business Schools joining for the first time, welcome, we are excited to have you with us! Your experience will be what you make it, and your opportunities to connect and form valuable relationships will only be limited by the limits you place on yourself.*

*The opportunities are priceless. Thank you all once again and enjoy this year's event!*



# ACKNOWLEDGMENT

*The original Guide for schools was prepared in 2007 by Memorial University of Newfoundland who has participated in the John Molson MBA International Case Competition since 1985. It was recognized that providing a guide for schools that were new to the competition would be helpful. The organizers of the 2007 John Molson MBA International Case Competition, together with Sir Wilfred Laurier University and Université Laval helped review and edit the original manual.*

*In the light of changes implemented at the 2014 competition, this Guide was changed in to reflect the new competition format. Memorial University, along with the organizers of the 2024 John Molson MBA International Case Competition, have further updated the manual for the 2024 competition and we hope you find the document useful.*

**Dr. Peggy Coady**
Memorial University of Newfoundland
September 2015

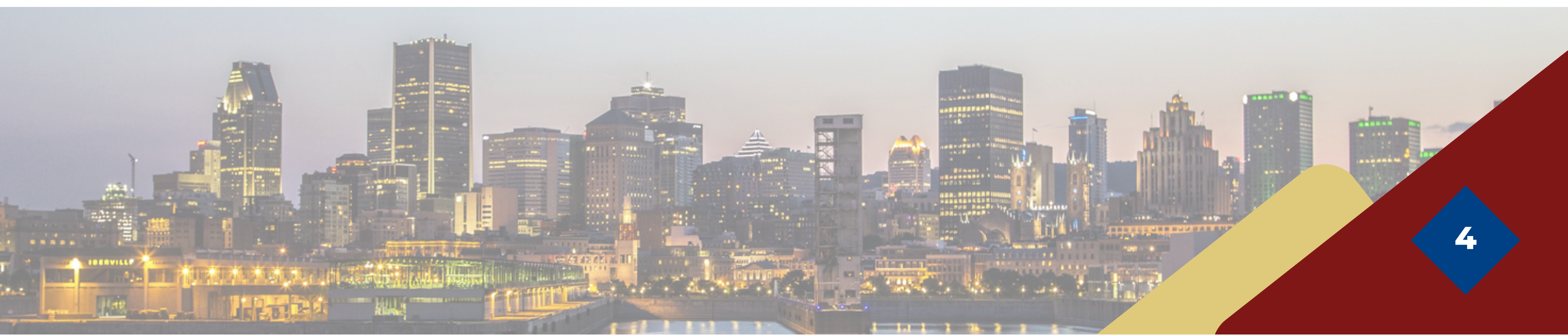
# ORGANIZER COMMITTEE

From left to right: : Sahil Nain, Pratik Padalia, Mehdi Karimimehr, Maatangi Sachchithanandam, Benedict Marsh, Carmen Ekpo, Sarthak Jetly, Myriam Selmani, Aman Dhanani

*The John Molson International Case Competition is the oldest and largest event of its kind. Since its inception in 1981, this prestigious event continues to provide a unique and international networking experience for students, academia, and business executives.*

*For the past 42 years, the organizers, volunteers, judges and sponsors, have contributed to creating more than just a competition – it is an opportunity to innovate, connect and compete.*

*We thank our participants and coaches for all the effort you have put these months into the preparation for this competition.*



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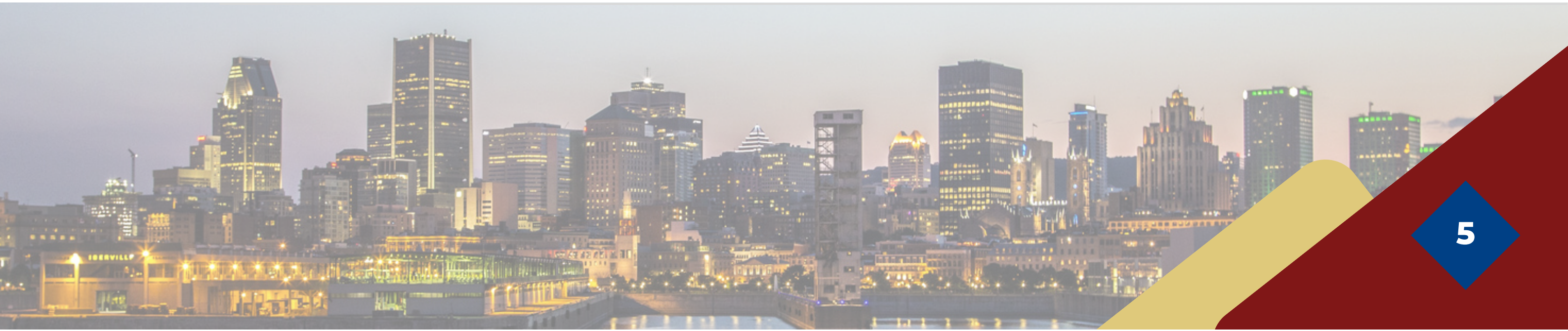


# 1. INTRODUCTION TO THE GUIDE

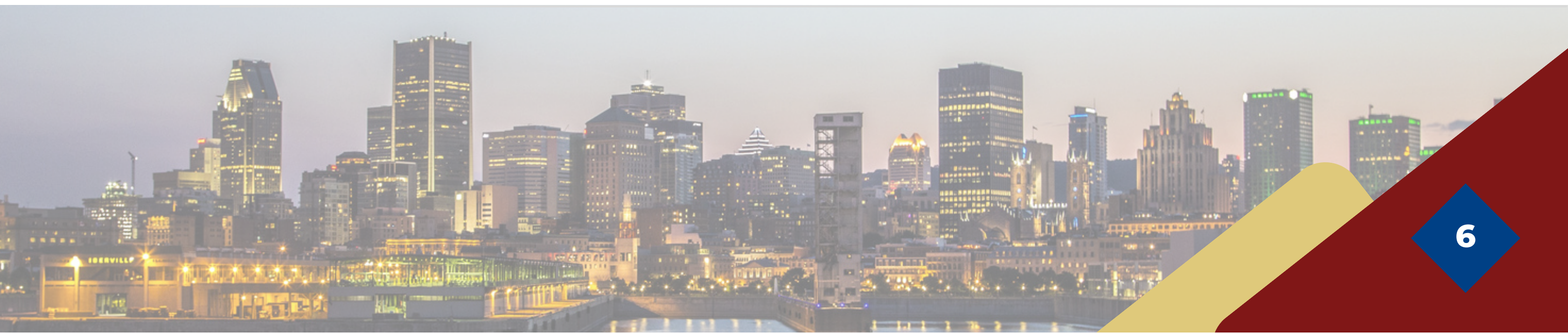
The John Molson MBA International Case Competition is the largest and one of the most prestigious case competitions in the world. Thirty-six teams from countries throughout the globe participate in this week-long event and their experience varies from first-time participants to veteran schools that have competed for decades.

The purpose of this guide is to help all teams prepare for the John Molson MBA International Case Competition.

The basic strategies teams could take when preparing and presenting a case are outlined. This guide also includes advice on how to select a team and what to expect at the competition. Furthermore, the information provided will help to ensure that teams experience all aspects of the competition including the non-case events. Participants have great opportunities to meet and network with senior business executives attending the competition either as judges or sponsors. Networking with other MBA students from all over the world is also another benefit of participating in this reputable event. A relaxing environment conducive to maximizing the intended benefits of these networking events is provided by the organizing committee.

By being prepared for the competition, teams are ensured that they will experience a week like no other and one that they will cherish and talk about throughout their careers.

Good luck to all teams!



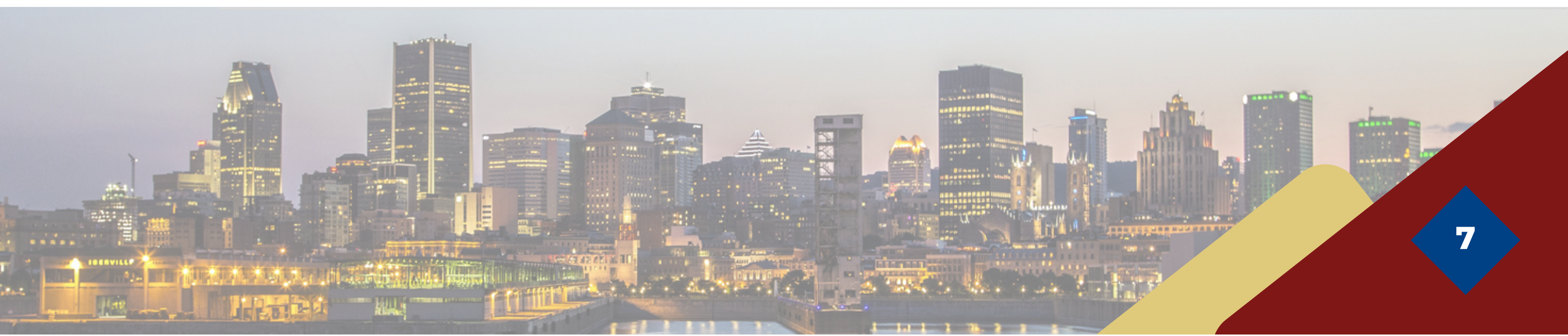
# 2. COMPETITION

The John Molson MBA International Case Competition is a not-for-profit event organized by a team of MBA students from the John Molson School of Business at Concordia University. The competition is open to top business schools worldwide and is recognized as the largest competition of its kind. Its main purpose is to bridge the gap between the corporate and academic worlds, which ultimately enriches both students and executives alike.

The competition format is a round-robin tournament consisting of five business cases. One of these cases is a Live Case presented by members of an organization that is currently facing a real-life business challenge.

With normally only three hours to prepare, teams of four students analyze and evaluate unpublished business cases using the skills, knowledge, and experience they have acquired from their respective MBA curriculums. During the preparation time, each team may bring their own laptop (1 per participant.) and will have access to *flash drives to upload their presentations*. Access to external communication platforms is not permitted. The teams are expected to present their case in a PowerPoint to a judging panel. The presentation should demonstrate the student's ability to analyze problems/issues and develop strategic recommendations and a feasible implementation plan for the organization featured in the case.

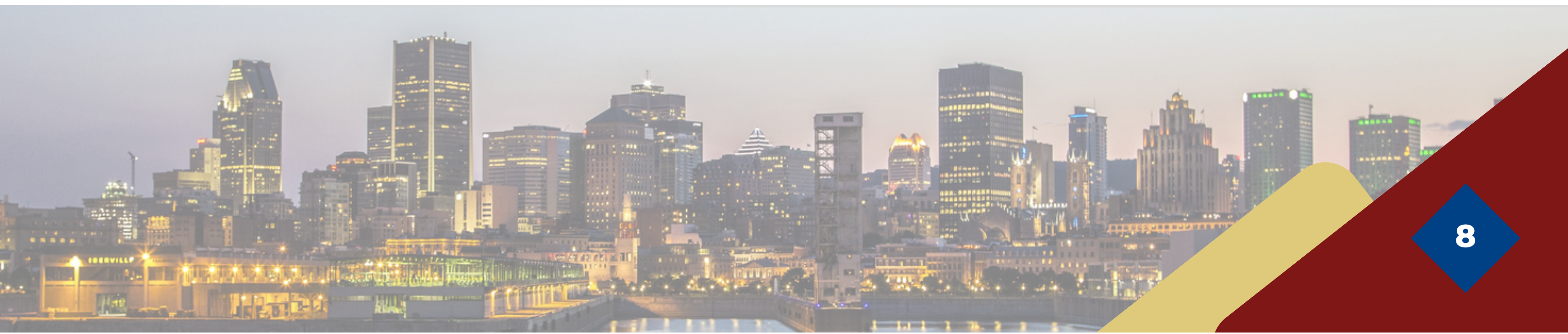
More than three hundred senior business executives serve as judges, using their unique backgrounds, experiences, and perspectives to critically assess the participants' presentations. Teams are judged on the quality of the analysis, presentation, question and answer period, and recommended course of action.
Following the round-robin tournament, nine teams advance to the semi-finals for the opportunity to compete in the three-team final.



# 3. SELECTING THE TEAM

There are several methods that the coach may use when selecting their case team. One method is to have interested students present cases to the coach individually or in groups as part of a try-out session. Secondly, there is the course method where the university offers a Business Case Course or Directed Study where students learn how to read, evaluate, and present cases for course credit.

The coach would normally review resumes, transcripts, and any other information provided by students to aid them in the team selection process. A sample application template is available in
Appendix A – Competition Application Form

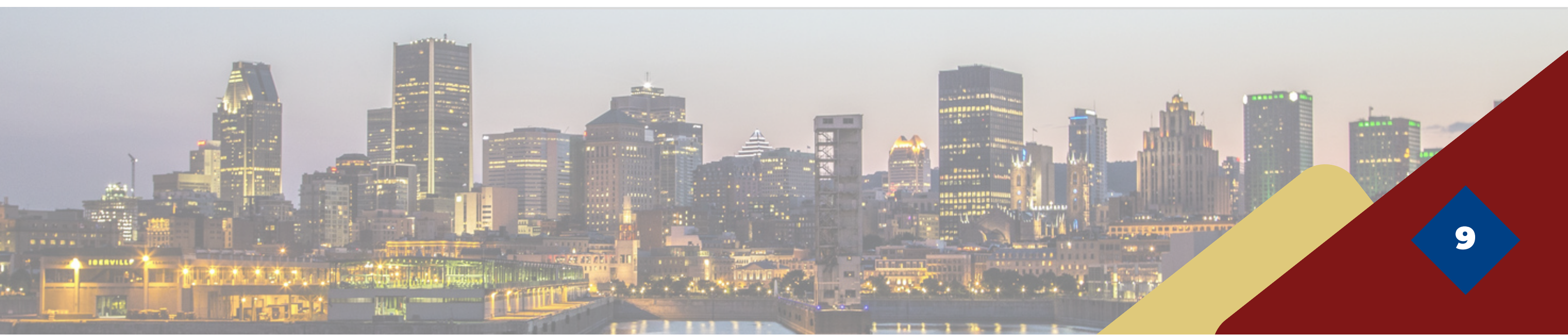


# 3.1 INDIVIDUAL PRESENTATION METHOD

The individual presentation method of selection can be used to either select 5 individuals ( 4 participants plus 1 replacement) that will make up the case team or as a pre-selection tool for the group presentation selection method. With this technique, students should be given a case to prepare in advance. Each student will then be given a maximum of 25 minutes to present the case to the coach using PowerPoint.

Students should be provided with the judging criteria that will be used during the competition to score the teams. The judging scoring criteria list is available in **Appendix  B– Scoring Criteria.**

During the presentations, each student should be judged using the scoring sheet provided in **Appendix C: Evaluation Form**. After each student has presented, the coach should rank the students. Discretion may be used to decide the five students who will makeup the case team; however, normal practice would be to select the top five scores.

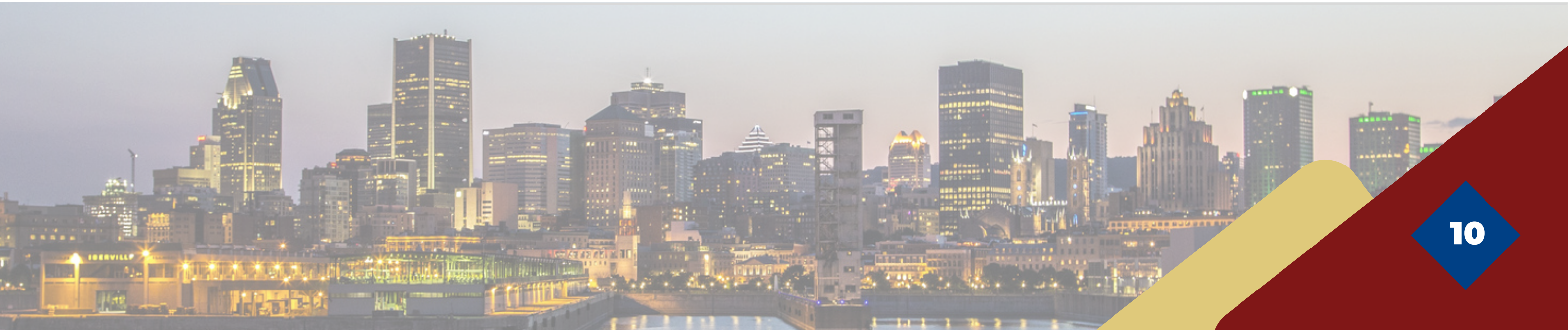


## 3.2 GROUP PRESENTATION METHOD

The group presentation method for selecting a team is used to view how students will work as a team and in the role that they have been designated. The role of the coach is to not only critique the team as a whole but also to assess individual performance. Selecting a group of the top 5 individuals isn't always the best approach. A winning team is the group that can work in tandem with each other and present a strong case.

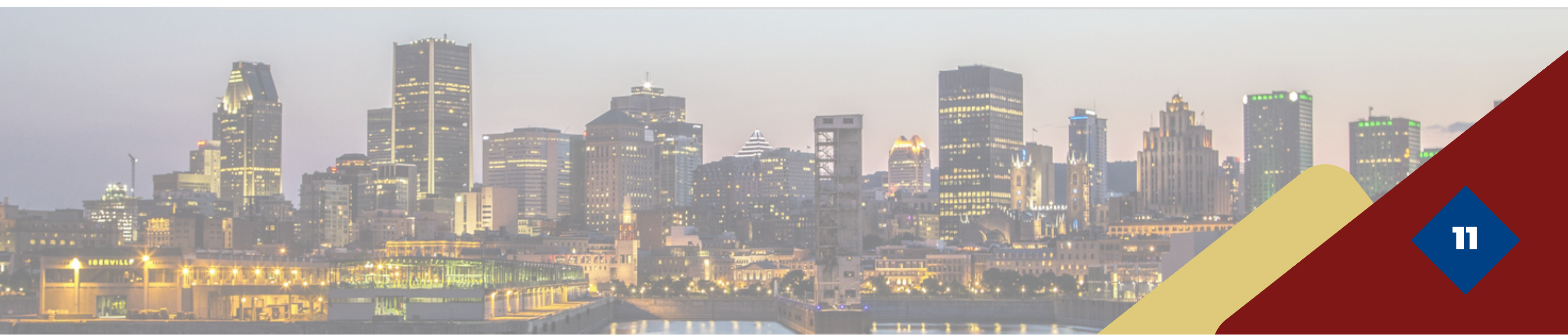
The coach should form initial teams based on the background information provided by the students. Well-rounded teams should be formed comprising of individuals from diverse backgrounds. For example, one member could have a marketing background, one with an accounting/finance background, one with a science or engineering background, and one with a background in arts.

Once the team is formed, the coach should designate roles to each team member based on the background information provided by students. For example, someone with strong analytical skills may be best suited for the analysis portion of the case presentation. A problem-solving skill set may be best for implementation, etc. Once the roles have been set, the next step is to decide on the method with which the teams will review the case.



When teams present the first case, the coach should use the same scoring method as the individual case presentations. The coach should also rank the students on their roles in order to determine the suitability of the student for that role. This will allow the coach to rearrange teams to ensure that the roles assigned utilize each team member's skill set to the maximum.

One approach the coach may wish to explore is to observe teams as they prepare. The coach could sit with the team(s) for short periods of time while the teams prepare their case. This will allow the coach to observe how the team members are interacting and organizing themselves and to point out any weak links or overly argumentative individuals. From the presentations, the coach should be able to determine the best fit for the team and select the individuals accordingly.

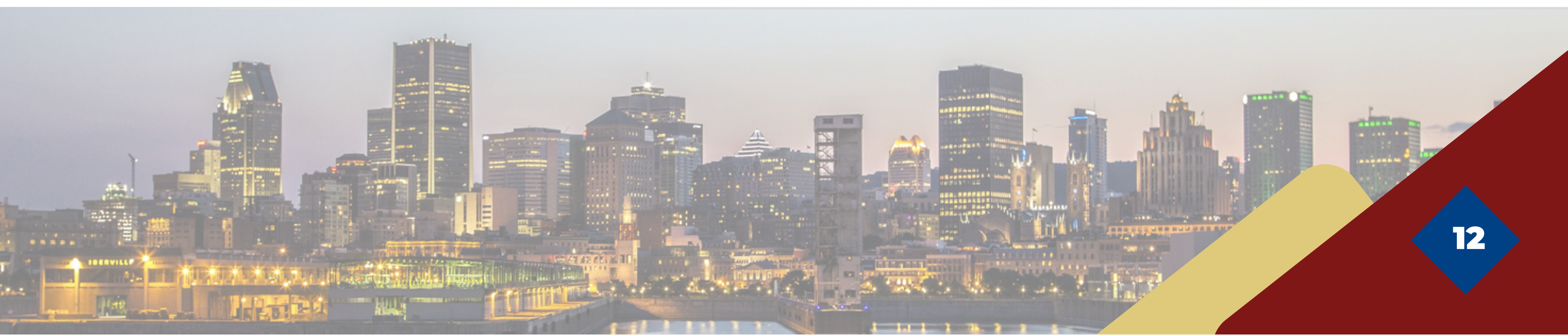


# 3.3 CASE COURSE METHOD

Some universities offer a course that teaches students how to evaluate and compose solutions to business cases. The focus of these courses may vary. While some of these courses focus on specific cases such as international marketing or accounting, others focus on general business cases. Regardless of the focus of the course, coaches may wish to tailor the course to focus on training students for the competition. This is a difficult option as it will involve obtaining approval for the course, but if put in place, it can prove to be one of the best methods for selecting a team and fostering a culture of case analysis within your school.

This method is very similar to the group presentation method in terms of how a team is selected, the major difference is that students who wish to try out for the case team will need to enroll in the course.

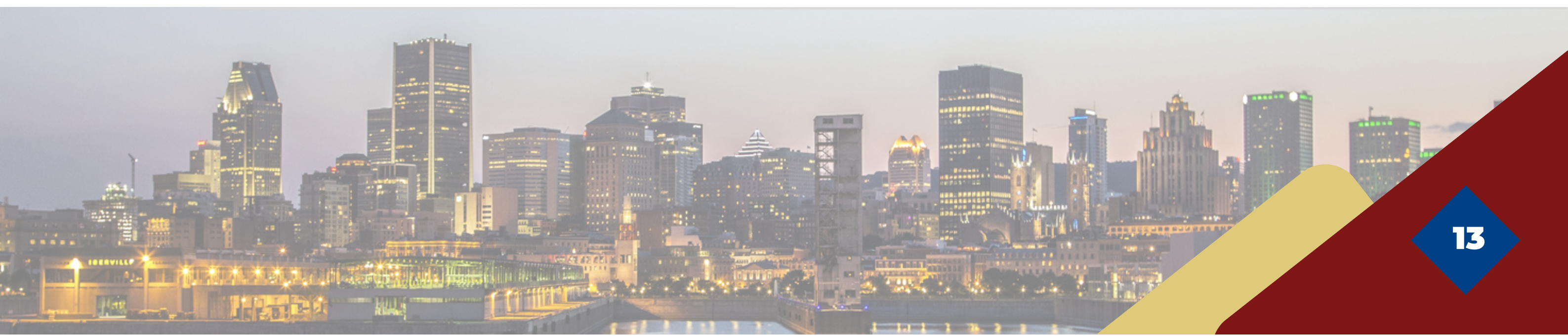
The first quarter of the course should concentrate on educating students on how to prepare for a case (for more information on preparation see Section 4 – Preparation for the Competition). After students receive guidance from the coach, teams should be formed and presentations should begin. The coach may wish to change group members in order to build the best teams possible. However, too many changes may be counterproductive as students will not be able to get to the level of comfort and familiarity needed to perform well as a team.



When the course is approximately three-quarters complete, the coach will need to select the team that will attend the competition and begin final preparations. For those students who have not been selected to attend the competition, the coach may wish to either use them as judges or to continue to have them give presentations in order to determine grades for the course.

It is recommended that the team selected to attend the competition completes at a minimum of one case per week for the remainder of the course. This will allow the team to become familiar with the time constraint of the competition and with the styles of each team member. If the timetable of the school does not allow for 4 consecutive hours for a class, the team may be required to attend school after hours or on weekends in order to have the amount of time needed to prepare and present a case.

The case course method will benefit the coaches, as it will allow them to dedicate time during their workday to improve the team and coaching methods. The course method will also aid in gaining the support of the school to help finance and support sending a team to the competition. With increased support of the school and faculty, the coach will have the ability to attain the resources necessary to fully prepare the team.

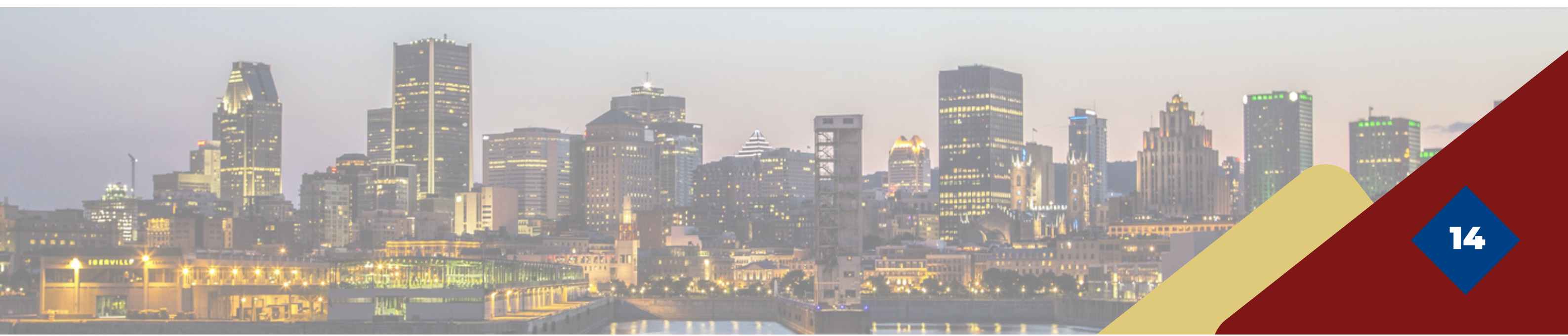


# 4. PREPARATION FOR THE COMPETITION

Once a team is selected preparation must begin immediately in order to complete enough practice cases prior to the competition. Teams should complete a minimum of 4, to a maximum of 12 preparations cases. Team members should also become familiar with different areas of the world and how they conduct business, as the cases may be set in one or many countries around the world. Finally, the team should familiarize itself with different industries and the cultural nuances they may have.

It is important that, when the preparations begin, the coach and the team members be aware of the official rules of the John Molson MBA International Case Competition, which can be found at http://mbacasecomp.com/competition/rules. Also it is very important to review and possibly practice with cases used in previous years of the competition.

If you required example cases or presentations from previous competitions just write to the Schools Organizer or your point of contact with the  Competition



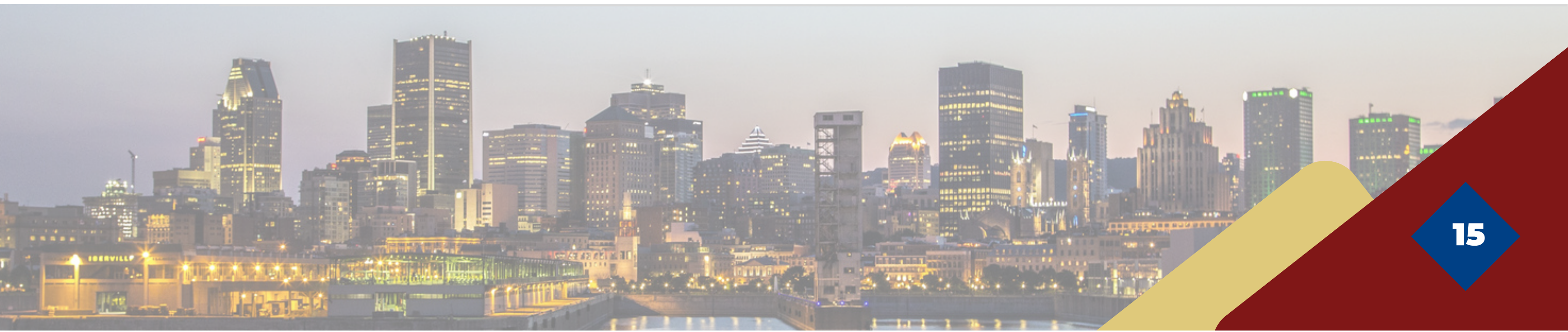
# 4.1 COUNTRY RESEARCH

Due to the international nature of the competition, it is advised that the team become familiar with several geographic areas. Each team member should be tasked with one or two areas in which they are to complete a summary.

The summary should include information such as population, geography, political and economic environment, imports, exports, most common industries, infrastructure, etc.

Knowing cultural, political, economic, or other local information can add great value when formulating a solution for a case.

We recommend regularly watching the news and specialized youtube channels on analysis of countries' economies or political relations.



# 4.2 INDUSTRY RESEARCH

Along with country research, teams should become familiar with several industries to ensure they know how they work and what are the key success factors for each industry. Examples of industries that have been in the past cases include:

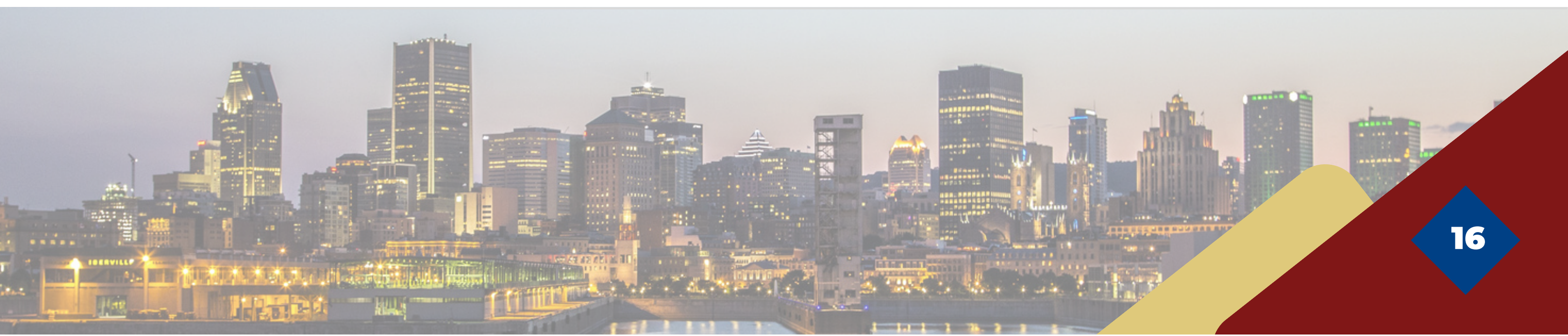
- Airline
- Pharmaceutical
- General Retail
- Small business
- Minerals/Mining
- Banking
- Information Technology
- Entertainment

Having an understanding of specific industries will be of great value to the teams. Knowing items such as rules and regulation, materials, labor requirements, etc., will all help in the formulation of a solution.

It is also important to understand the products/services of an industry and how they are produced and supplied. For example, knowing that a new drug will take approximately X number of years to get to the market will allow teams to bring realism to their solutions. Unrealistic timelines used might cause the team to lose points, as it will impact realism and practicality of solutions.

Another important reason for conducting industry research pertains to cross industry dependence. In 2007, a live case was presented by Alcan, a Canadian producer of aluminum. The major issue within the case involved obtaining the energy needed to produce the aluminum. Knowledge of the power generation industry would have given teams an advantage during the creation of an implementation plan for this case.

It is impossible to prepare for every possible type of industry in all regions. These are just suggestions to give teams some guidance when preparing for the competition.

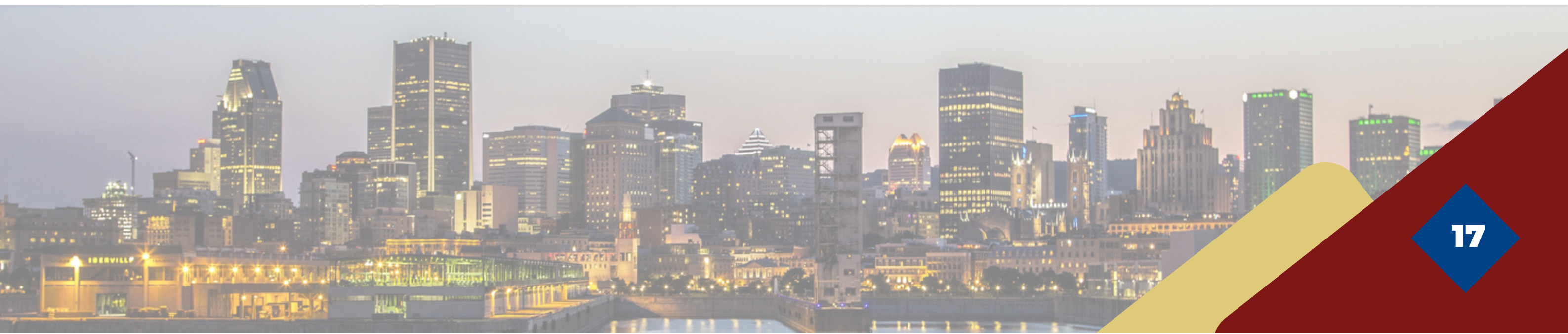


## 4.3 PREPARATORY CASE(S)

These cases best represent what the team will face when in Montreal. The coach should also seek other cases of comparable difficulty to increase the number of practices the team will have. It will take approximately 7-10 cases before the team is able to work efficiently together within the three-hour time limit.

If you required example cases or presentations from previous competitions just write to the Schools Organizer, Pratik Padalia: pratik.padalia@mbacasecomp.com

The following sections present suggestions for how the team should prepare for all of the components of the case from the preparation to the question period.



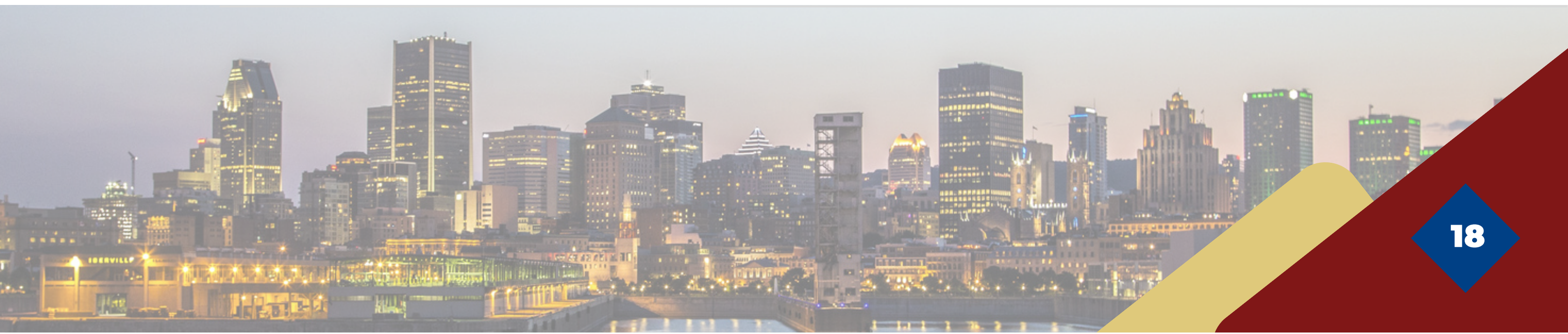
## 4.3.1 HOW TO READ A CASE

A case will usually take 30 to 45 minutes to read from start to finish. When the team first receives the case they should read the first and last paragraph of the case to help determine the problem being presented. Knowing the problem while reading will allow team members to filter out the information they need in order to determine the best solution.

While reading, each team member should make note of key issues within the case, along with noting key pieces of information that will help them with their portion of the case. For example, if a member is given the role of presenting the analysis, he/she should keep notes on strengths and weaknesses of the company, industry information, economical conditions, etc.

It is very important to note exactly where the information is within the case as the team will not have enough time to read it a second time. One alternative is to take note of pages that contain vital information. Another alternative is to simply highlight key points and make short notes next to each highlight that will allow the student to identify the type of information that is highlighted. Whatever the method, each team member should ensure that they stick to one method to avoid confusion during the three-hour preparation time.

As the team becomes more familiar with reading cases they will soon learn which information needs their attention and which can be skipped over.



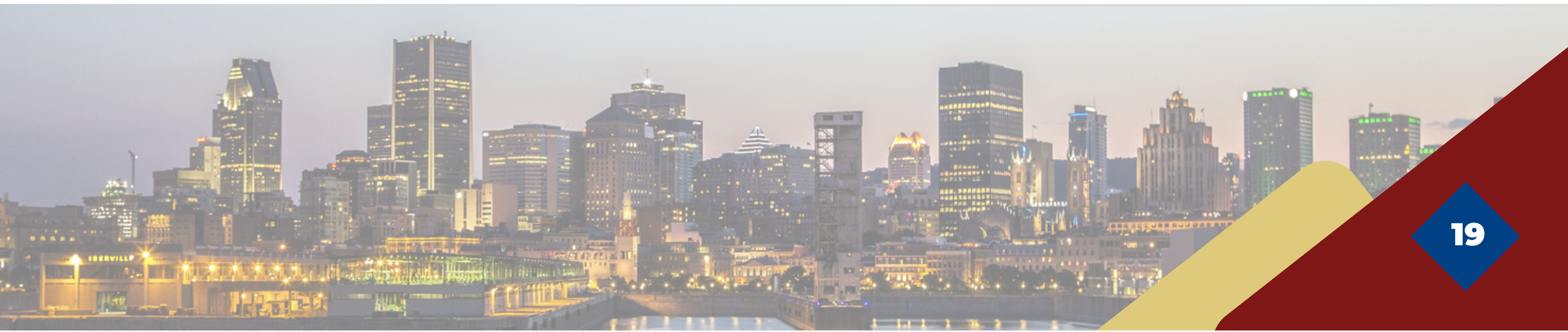
## 4.3.2 HOW TO DISCUSS A CASE

The discussion must begin immediately after the team has completed reading the case. If a team member finishes earlier than the rest of the team they can begin preparing the slides (heading, design, cover sheet, etc.). This will ensure that the team is utilizing the three hours to the maximum.

One person should be designated as the note taker and it will be their job to put all ideas that are mentioned on display (whiteboard, paper, etc.). It is important to take down all ideas as this will help to narrow down the correct problem, solution, and implementation. The brainstorming period should not exceed 10 minutes. After that, the team will need to begin filtering ideas and making a decision as to what the problem is and what are the possible solutions.

During the discussion, one person should be designated as the timekeeper to ensure that the team does not spend too much time on one topic. The timekeeper should continually inform the team of the remaining of the preparation time.

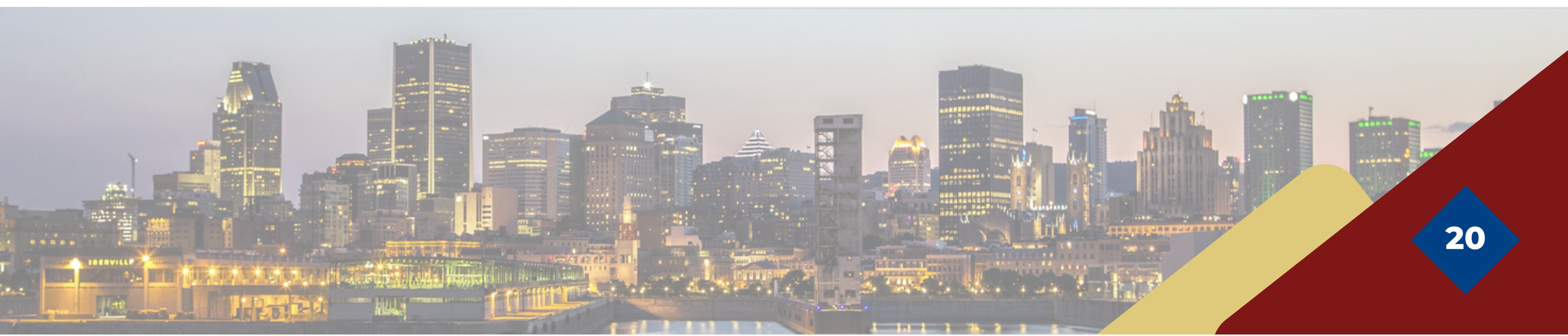
A good starting point for the team discussion is to identify the main problem presented in the case. The team should spend no more than 15 minutes determining the problem statement. Once the problem is defined, the next logical step is to list all of the key issues presented in the case. This step will help the person who is presenting the analysis, as it is their portion of the presentation that sets up the recommendation and implementation. Furthermore, recognizing the key issues allows the team to formulate a solution that will address most, if not all, key issues within the case.



Next, the team must come up with a minimum of 2 additional solutions to the problem. Presenting additional solutions demonstrates that the team has fully understood and discussed the problem at hand. In addition, it clarifies that the selected solution is the optimal one. Every alternative should have advantages and disadvantages, with the final recommendation having the most advantages. It should be noted that status quo is usually not a solution. A team that presents status quo ('Do nothing'), as an alternative will be seen as one that has not fully thought out how to handle the case.

After the alternatives and the recommendation are completed, an implementation plan needs to be created. The discussion should simply allow the team to present, in point form, ideas that will allow the member responsible for implementation to formulate a complete plan. Items that should be discussed include timeframe (how long will it take), cost (order of magnitude estimates), how it will solve the problem, and resources (who will be involved).

Once the implementation plan has been discussed, the team should take a few minutes to review. Once a consensus has been reached, the discussion should end and members should begin to prepare their slides.



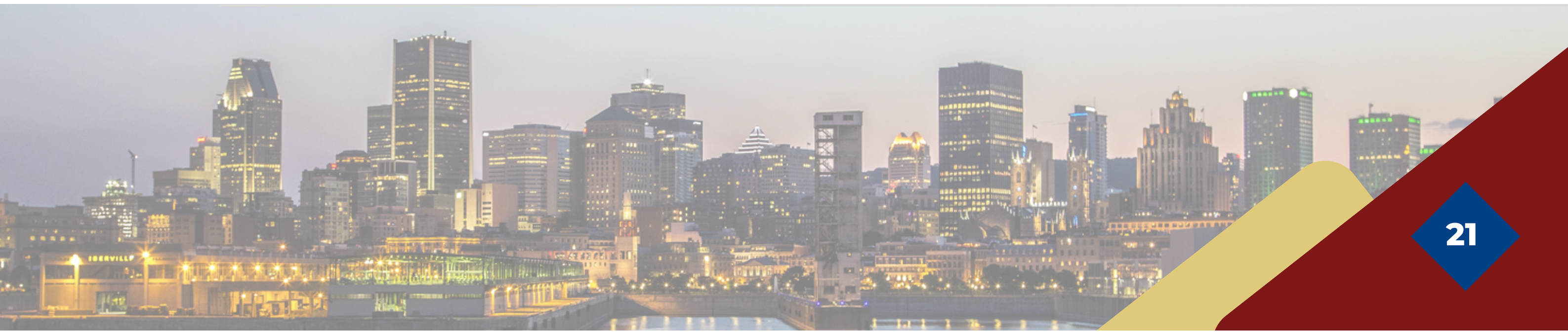
## 4.3.3 HOW TO DIVIDE THE WORK

Each team member should have a role in the team. Based on the way the cases are judged the natural roles that emerge are five as follows:

**1.- Introduction, key issues/ problem statement**
The key issues and problem statement within the case should be clearly stated.

**2.- Analysis**
The environmental, economical, financial, and political factors of the case should be reviewed in terms of what is relevant to the key issues. The analysis should have an external and an internal focus in term of the organization. One example would be the use of a SWOT analysis to review the organization.

**3.- Alternatives and Recommendations**
A minimum of three alternatives should be analyzed one of which will be the recommended solution. The recommended solution should address the key issues and solve the problem stated.



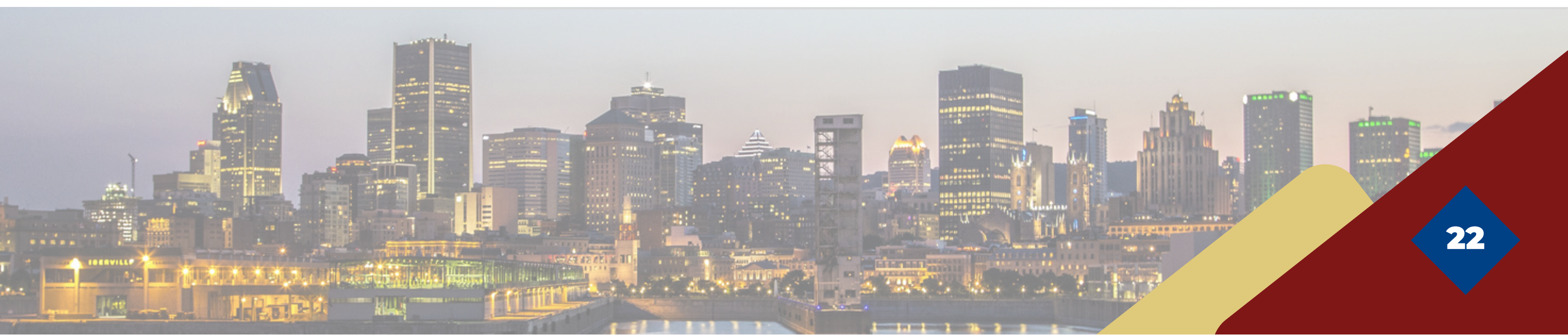
## 4.- Implementation

The implementation is an action plan that the company in the case will use to implement the recommendation. The implementation must fit the organization and should be attainable. The implementation should address all areas of the organization including operations, marketing, human resources, and finance. The plan should have a timeline along with a breakdown of the costs associated with the implementation.

## 5.- Financial analysis, and conclusion

All cases should address how the recommendation will affect the organization financially. If the case does not provide any financials, students can still address how the plan will affect them, however specific numbers will not be available. Items that may be considered in this section are: Stock/share price, profits, revenue, expenses, IRR, NPV, etc.

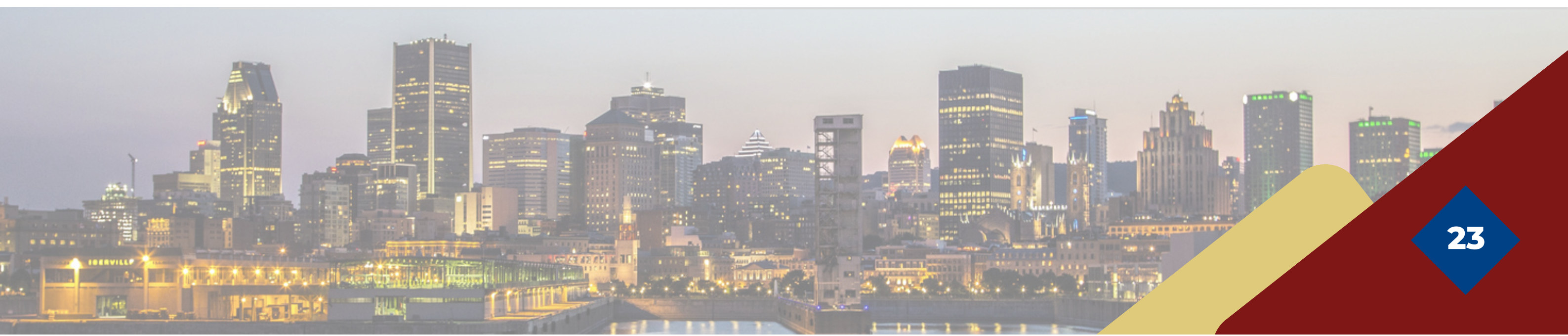
The coach should provide guidance as to how the teams can put their own unique spin on each section to enhance the overall presentation.
For example, teams may wish to choose a color scheme for their slides that will remain constant throughout the competition. They may also wish to decide on a team name that will be used consistently throughout each case.



# 4.3.4 FINAL 5 MINUTES

When the timekeeper announces the five-minute remaining mark, the team will need to begin collating and saving their presentation before transferring it to the provided USB flash drive. Once the three-hour time limit passes, the team hosts will not give teams extra time for making any final additions or changes to their presentation or for saving the presentation. The team will have to close their laptops immediately. When practicing, coaches should follow these rules in order for the team to become comfortable with the time constraints and the strict rules of the competition.

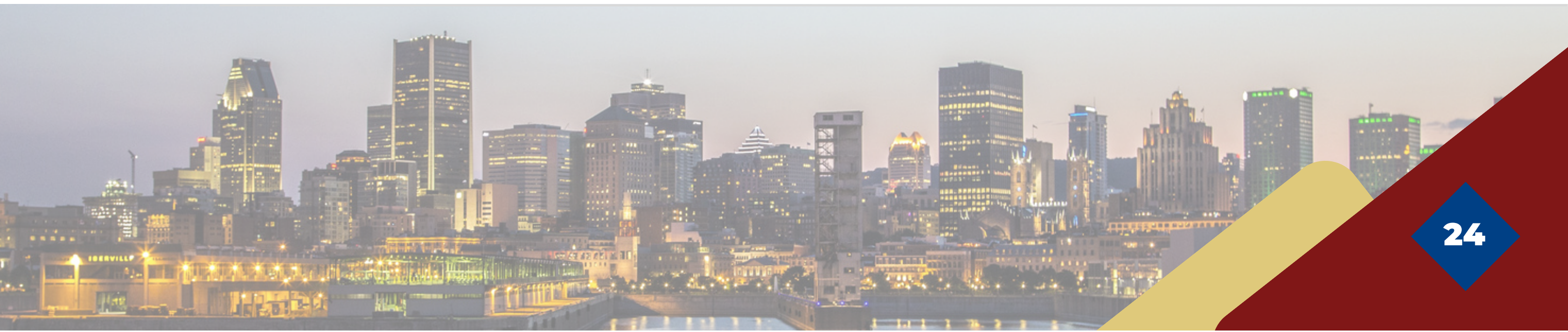
The teams do not need to worry about their personal belongings, as they will have time to clean up once the USB flash drive (with the presentation) has been passed to the team host. The team should take a minute to relax and mentally prepare themselves for their presentation. If a bathroom break is required, teams should let their team host know and they will be escorted to the nearest washroom. Teams should attempt to be on time because the judges will not want to delay the presentation.



## 4.3.5 PRESENTING THE CASE

When entering the presentation room, team members normally introduce themselves to the judges and wait for instructions from the judge coordinator. The judge coordinator will open the presentation of the team and set it up for projecting. Teams may sit or stand during the presentation. All members of the team should present a part of the case. There should be balance and flow between members.

Before presenting it is suggested that the team designates a team member(s) to change slides. For example, once the first team member has finished speaking, that person can become the one responsible for changing slides for the remainder of the presenters. Or individual team members can control their slides. Practice with these transitions is just as important as the presentation itself. Sloppy transitions are distracting, will waste time, and may be seen as a lack of preparation by the judges.

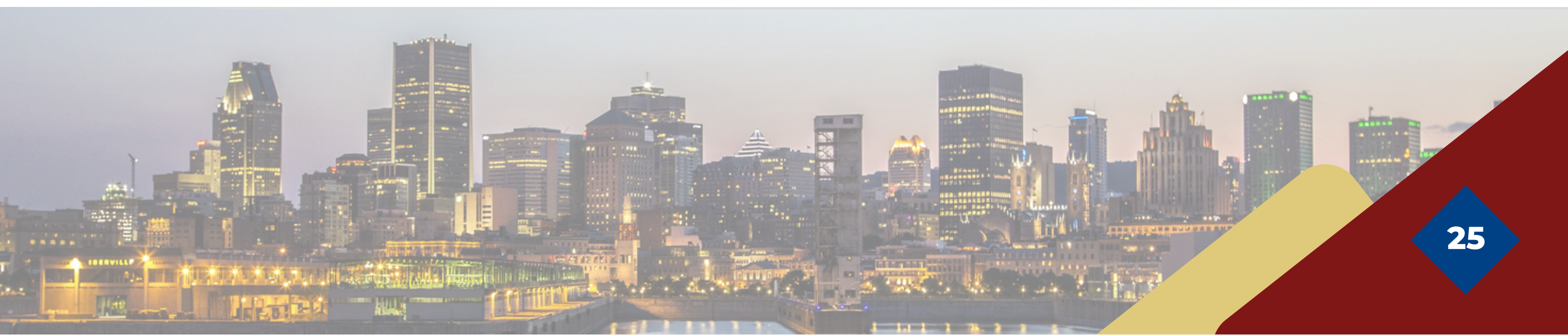


## 4.3.6 QUESTION PERIOD

Prior to the competition, the coach should attempt to bring in judges for the practice presentations. The coach may act as a judge at first, but to avoid the team from becoming comfortable, external judges should be used.

When the team has completed the presentation, they should all stand and wait for the judges to begin their question period. When a judge asks a question, be careful not to hastily jump into an answer. Everyone should pause and take 3-5 seconds to ensure they understand the question. If the question is unclear, ask for clarification before trying to present an answer.

After a team member has answered a question, a follow-up answer should only be given if it will add value to what was already been said. Teams must also ensure that they do not contradict each other while answering questions. When one team member gives an answer that another may not agree with, they should first determine if their answer will give the impression that there is conflict within the team.

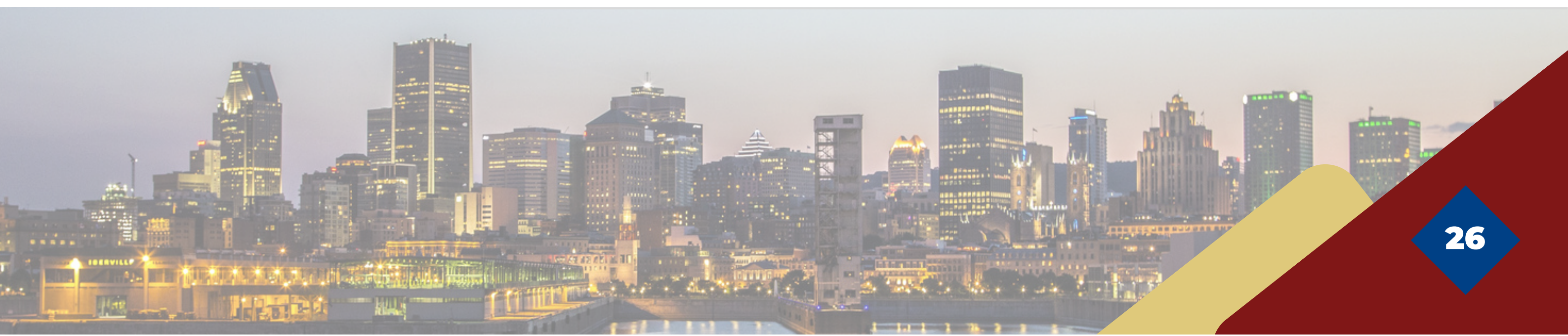


Contradicting a team member will show that the case was not discussed fully or that the team did not agree on their recommendation. If the answer is sufficient the team should leave it and not attempt to correct the mistake. Only when the answer is 100% incorrect should a member give a different answer. Even during this contradiction, the person speaking should formulate their response in a manner that, although contradictory, is in agreement with the previous answer. Confidence in the solution proposed along with the answers being given is very important when judges are scoring teams.

At no time should a team argue with a judge. Many times judges will tell teams they do not agree at all with the solution presented. Some may even tell the team that they are wrong. When this occurs, becoming confrontational will only hurt the team. At this time, confidence in the solution must be presented. Teams should still support their answer, but they should do so by revisiting the facts they presented and assuring the judge that their plan is the optimal one. The result will almost always be one of these two scenarios:

1. The team convinces the judge
2. The team gains the judges respect since they were able to back up their solution, even if they still disagree.

Finally, teams should pay attention to the body language of the judges. When a judge begins to nod their head in agreement or present other body language that sends similar signals, the person answering the question should wrap up and allow for the next question to be asked. The objective is to efficiently answer questions in the 15-minute period.



# 5. MATERIALS TO BRING

## 5.1 PREPARATORY MATERIAL

The research material prepared, as suggested in sections 4.1 and 4.2, may accompany the team to Montreal in order to allow brief reviews prior to starting a case preparation. Having this information on hand will allow teams to enter a case with the details fresh in their minds.

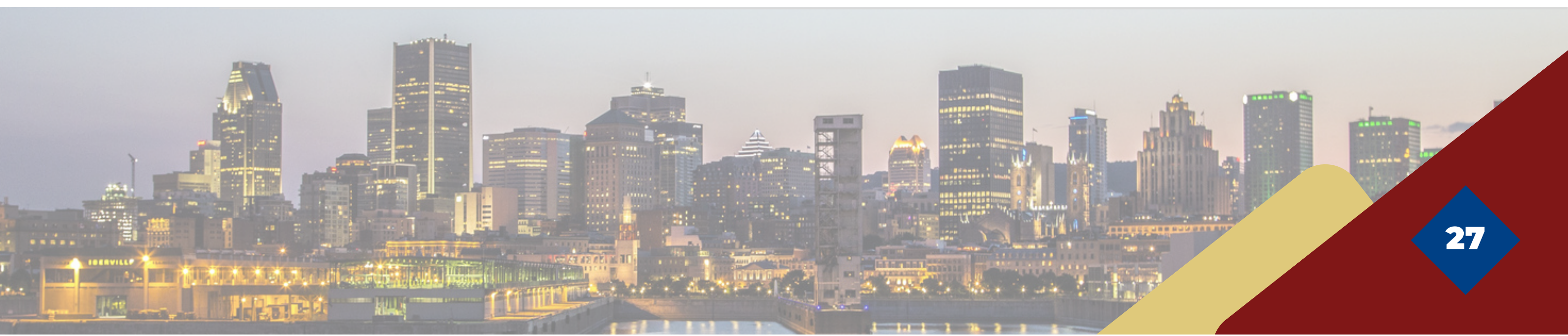
It is also helpful for the teams to have a slide template prepared to review prior to entering a case.

Finally, the team should review their strategy. The three to four month preparation period should result in teams creating a strategy for how to attack a case. This should be documented to allow the team to review their strategy to ensure they utilize the three-hour preparation time to its full extent.

## 5.2 SUPPLIES

Office supplies that are not provided by the competition but are allowed to be used if you bring your own are listed below:

- Large sheets of paper such as Post-it Self-Stick Easel Pad
- Markers for writing on the Easel Pads
- Non programmable calculators
- Tape
- Snacks
- Beverages (Water, soda, etc.)



## 5.3 ATTIRE

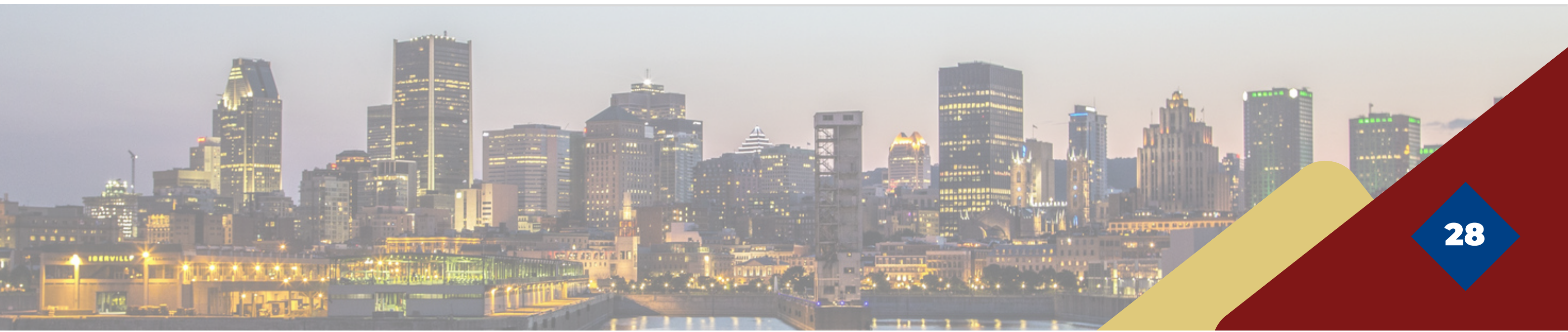
It is important to dress professionally while participating in the competition. The dress code for the competition is business professional. It is important that team members not only wear professional clothing but also that they are comfortable in their attire.

The three-hour preparation period along with the 40 minutes teams have to stand in front of the judges is a stressful experience and adding discomfort to the equation can lead to the team underperforming. If team members are not accustomed to wearing business professional apparel, it is highly suggested that they complete all of their practice cases in full formal attire.

We recommend bringing multiple outfits to reduce the need to have items laundered. Although the competition is located near many clothing shops, last-minute purchases will only add to the stress of the event. Hotel laundry is of course available, but it is another area where problems may occur.

We also recommend bringing a travel stain remover and clothing repair kit. Finally, teams should have comfortable clothing to wear when not participating in a case. As it has been mentioned, teams will participate in many social events ranging in formality. This will allow teams to relax and socialize more comfortably, which will help lower the stress level in between cases. The organizers normally hold a **Theme Party** during the competition and most schools do come with costumes in line with the theme. This usually becomes one of the highlights of the competition and a great opportunity to show originality and foster team spirit.

An important point to note is that in January Montreal can be quite cold and there is often snow on the ground. As you will likely be leaving the hotel for various events winter attire is recommended!



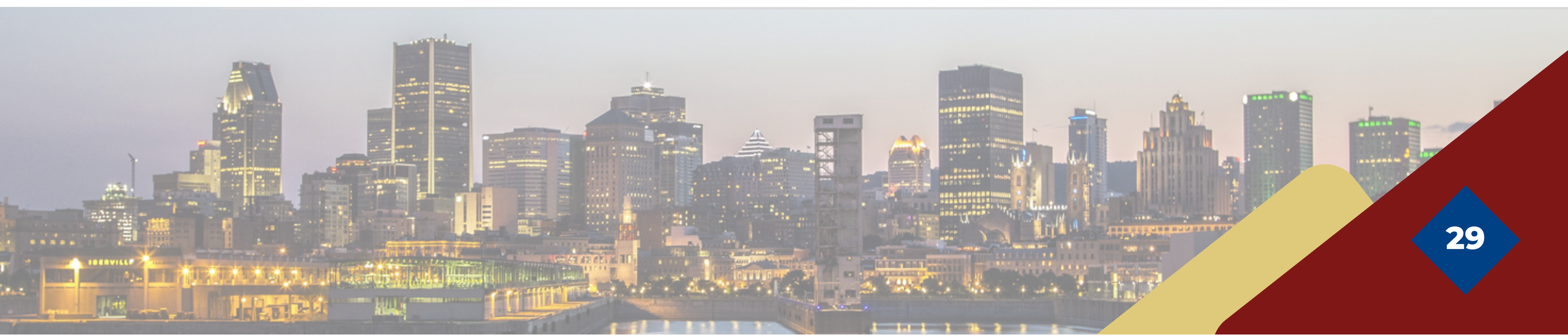
# 6. ARRIVING IN MONTREAL

## 6.1 SPEAKING FRENCH

Canada has two official national languages; French and English. Montreal is located in the province of Quebec, which is a French-speaking province. Most people in Montreal do speak English, however, signs are in French. Below you will find a useful list of common French signs.

- **Entrance:** *Entrée*
- **Exit:** *Sortie*
- **Open:** *Ouvert*
- **Closed:** *Fermé*
- **Pull:** *Tirez*
- **Push**: *Poussez*
- **Cashier/Check out**: *Caisse*
- **No Parking:** *Défense de Stationner/Stationnement interdit*
- **No Entry:** *Défenser d'entrer*

If you wish to communicate with Montrealers in their local language, you can find a list of helpful words and phrases and their pronunciations on the following website http://www.linguanaut.com/english_french.htm, or via various Apple or Android Apps.



# 6.2 IMPORTANT LOCATIONS IN THE HOTEL

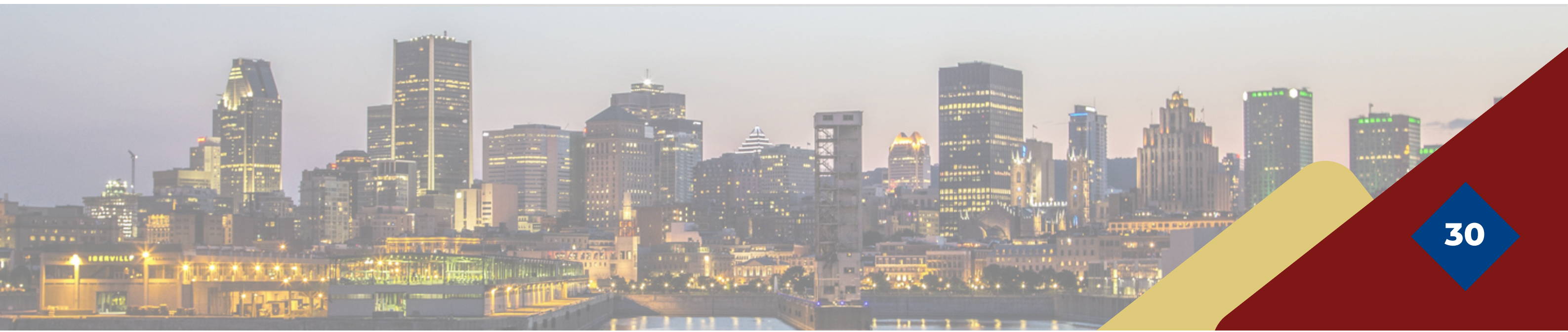
After checking into the hotel rooms, make sure to become familiar with the important locations in the hotel such as presentation rooms, the main banquet hall, the hospitality suite, and all the restrooms.

It is highly recommended that teams visit at least one presentation room in order to understand their surroundings prior to the first case. Please reach out to the organizers or the hotel who will help facilitate this. Walking into a presentation room for the first time just before presenting can be unnerving. Having visited these rooms in advance will remove this uncertainty and increase the teams' performance.

Taking a bathroom break during preparation will mean lost time and searching for restrooms is a task that teams cannot afford. As teams will not use the same preparation room for all cases, knowing where all restrooms are will allow for teams to use the one nearest to them during their preparation.

The banquet hall is where the lunches and some breakfasts will be served. It is also where the selection of team groupings occurs. After presentation rooms and hotel rooms, the banquet hall is where teams will spend most of their time. This room does not have assigned seating and the teams can visit the banquet hall before hand and might decide where they prefer to sit.

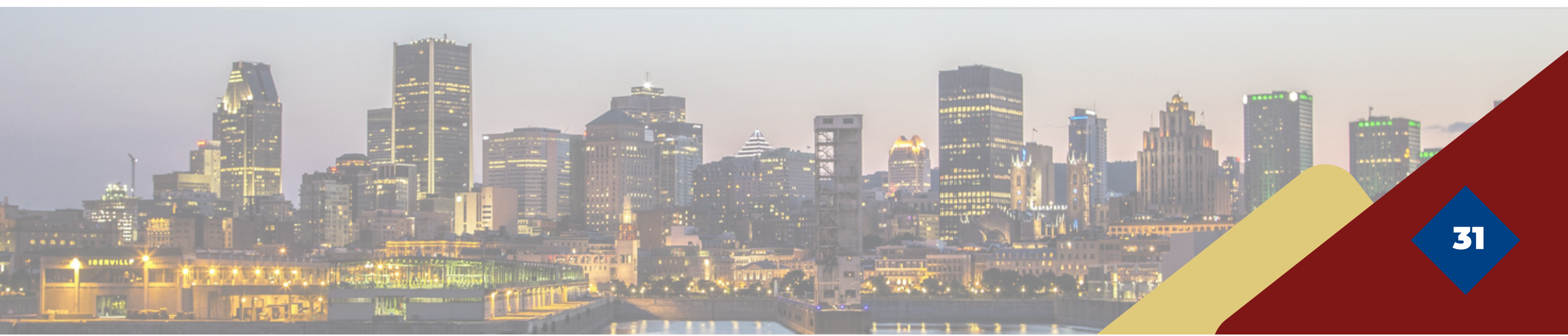
Finally, the hospitality suite is an important location, as it is a place where teams can relax and socialize with other teams. For more information on the hospitality suite and the importance of social participation see Section 10.



# 6.3 SNACKS AND BEVERAGES

The host hotel is located at the heart of cosmopolitan Montreal and is connected to the extensive underground city of thousands of boutiques, restaurants and cafés. The location of the hotel simplifies any personal needs participants might have. Teams should make sure to familiarize themselves with the shops in the immediate vicinity.

The competition will offer water, coffee, tea and some of the meals during the preparation time, however, to ensure they are completely prepared, teams should have some food and beverage with them in case they are not provided or a team member has an aversion or allergy to items provided.

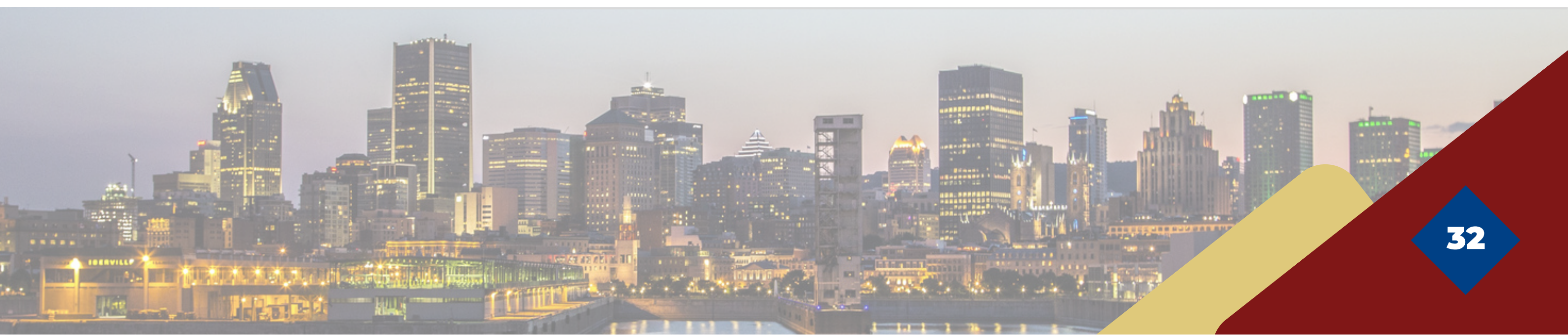


# 7. THE FIRST CASE

The first case of the competition normally occurs on the second day after lunch. If a team has not competed in a competition prior to this moment, the first case is always unsettling. This section contains information and tips that will help teams prepare for the first day of five stressful and fast-paced days.

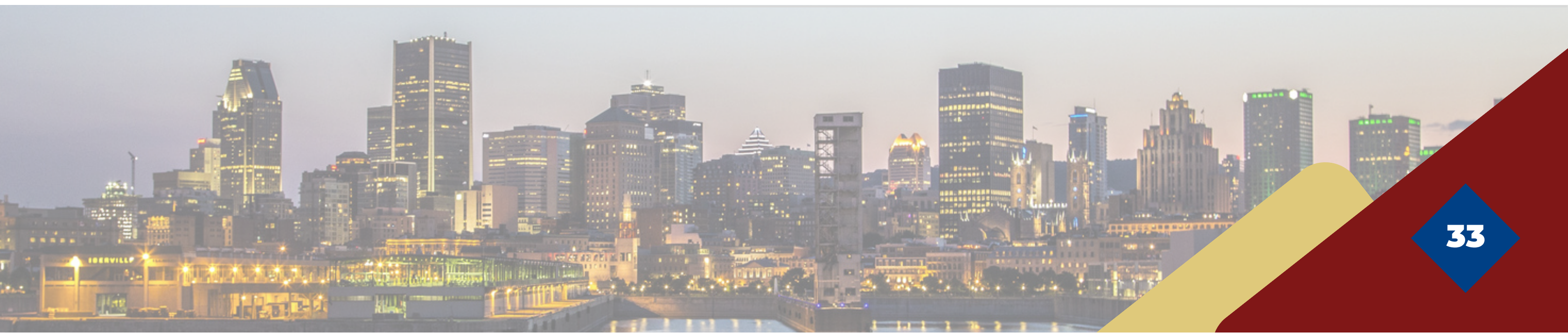
The John Molson MBA International Case Competition is the largest competition of its kind. Teams that have completed prior to this competition may still find the first day difficult. In order to get off to a good start, teams should ensure that they have a game plan prior to leaving for the competition. Although teams will learn a great deal while at the competition, they should not stray too far from their plan as this is what they have practiced and what is familiar to them.

Many times the excitement and adrenaline of competing can lead to teams becoming disorganized and unfocused. To prevent this from occurring, the team must gather their thoughts prior to entering the preparation room and communicate with each other. Five minutes prior to entering a preparation room, teams should go through some sort of ritual (be it a pre-case cheer, moment of silence, top 5 keys to success, etc.). Having a routine that they have practiced before each practice case will cause a familiar feeling and help the team to relax. This is similar to athletes who use a routine prior to a game in order to set the mood and tone before competing.



Communication is the key component that will allow teams to stay on track and complete the case to the best of their abilities. Vocalizing that a plan is going off track or that a member or members are not working as they have practiced can jolt the team back on track. Vocalizing things such as time remaining, roadblocks, new information, etc., will allow all members to fully prepare for the presentation and work as a single unit.

The most important thing to remember about the first case is to leave the outcome in the presentation room. Whether teams win or lose, work well or poorly together, team members need to remember that this is only the first of the five cases. Premature celebration or feelings of doubt may cause teams to lose sight of their strategy and not succeed at the competition. Teams should always learn from each case despite the outcome but each case should be attacked with an open mind and as if it is the deciding case for the competition.



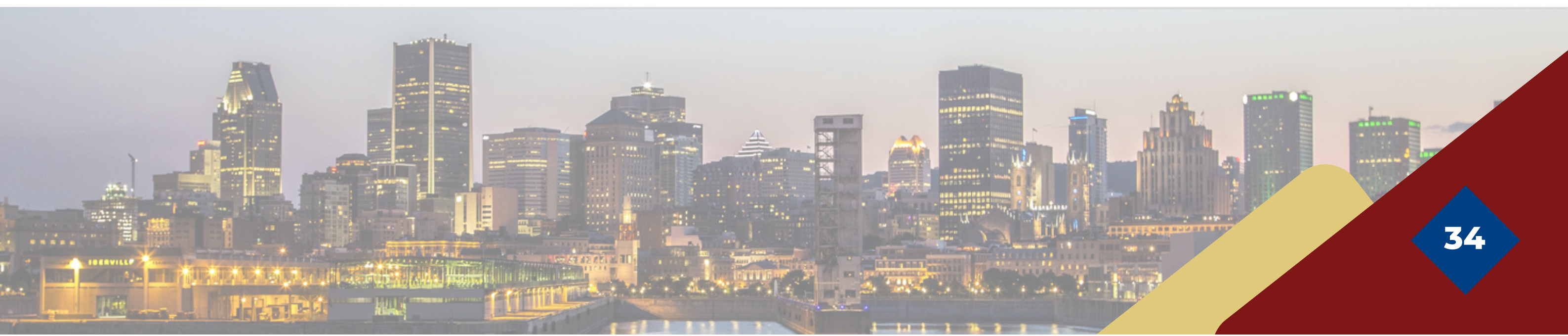
# 8. DOUBLE CASE AND LIVE CASE

The double case day and the live case can be just as stressful as the first case, but for different reasons.

The **double case day** is the day where teams will complete two cases in one day.

The **live case** is the day where members of the organization upon which the case is based present live to all the teams.

Each of these days will test teams in different ways and this section aims to help outline how teams can prepare for the different types of challenges they bring.



# 8.1 DOUBLE CASE DAY

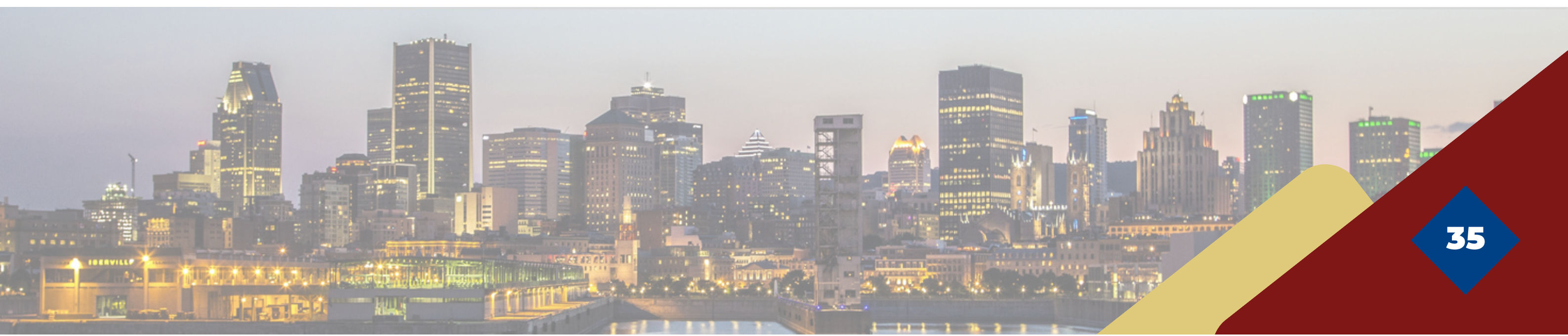
The double case day is always a challenge to teams as there is little time between cases to relax, eat, or discuss the previous case. This day is by far the most difficult day (along with the semi-finals where a second case is required on the same day) and preparation is the tool teams need to complete two successful cases.

The first thing a team must do is to practice completing two cases in one day before arriving at the competition. This will allow the team to be familiar with the limited time between the cases, along with dealing with low levels of energy during the second case. The cases on the day are as follows:

- Normal case: 3 hours of preparation and 25 minutes of presentation
- Short case: 90 minutes of preparation and 15 minutes of presentation,

This is the most important day, and it is strongly advised that food should be brought to the preparation room. Motivation is another required component for this day. During the practice sessions, team members become familiar with one another's moods and motivating or demotivating factors. Learning how to support each other and cheer each other up is a great tool for the entire competition, but especially for the double case day.

Finally, the team must remember that the judges have also had a long day. The team must make a conscious effort to show energy, enthusiasm, and confidence during the second case. Being mentally and physically drained and showing signs of fatigue or inattentiveness could cost them the match.



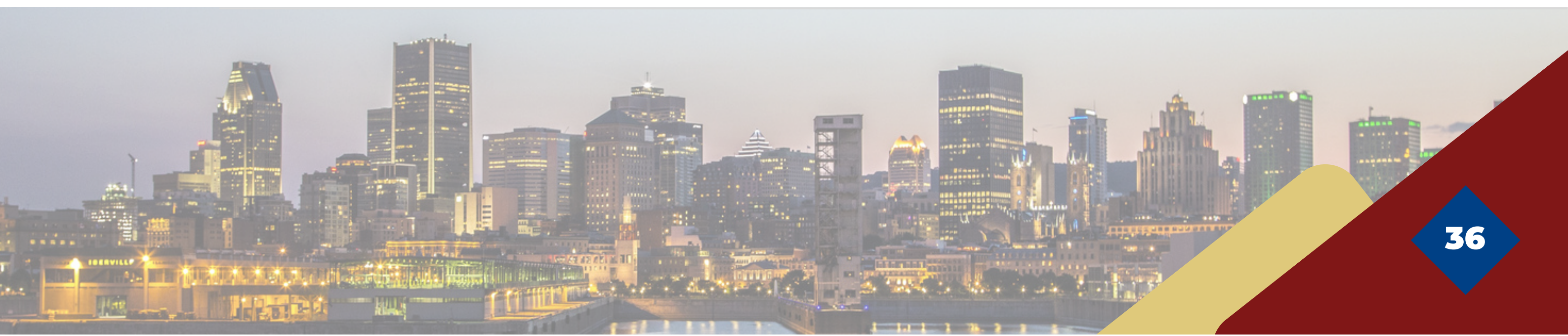
# 8.2 LIVE CASE DAY

The live case day is less taxing on the team in terms of usage of energy; however, it is still a stressful event. During the live case, teams need to listen to the issue at hand as presented by the organization and take notes as this information will not be made available to them during the preparation time. Teams have one hour to listen to the case and pose questions, and only two hours and a half to prepare the case.

All team members should take notes during the presentation and question period. It is important that the team also attempt to come up with a large number of questions to pose, as other teams may ask the same question before they are called upon. The team should also discuss the questions together in case the answer was already provided during the presentation.

Asking a question with regards to information already presented will allow other teams to now possess this information that they may have missed. Finally, since the first hour is used to allow the company to present the case and for the teams to ask questions, team members should begin preparing their case as much as possible. The reduced preparation time will result in teams being unable to go through their normal preparation routine(s), and having as much completed as possible during the first hour will reduce the tension during the preparation period.

The rest of the live case follows normal case rules. Teams will have the normal presentation time and question period time. As long as teams prepare for the live case, the only difference should be how the information is presented to them.



# 9. WINNING AND LOSING

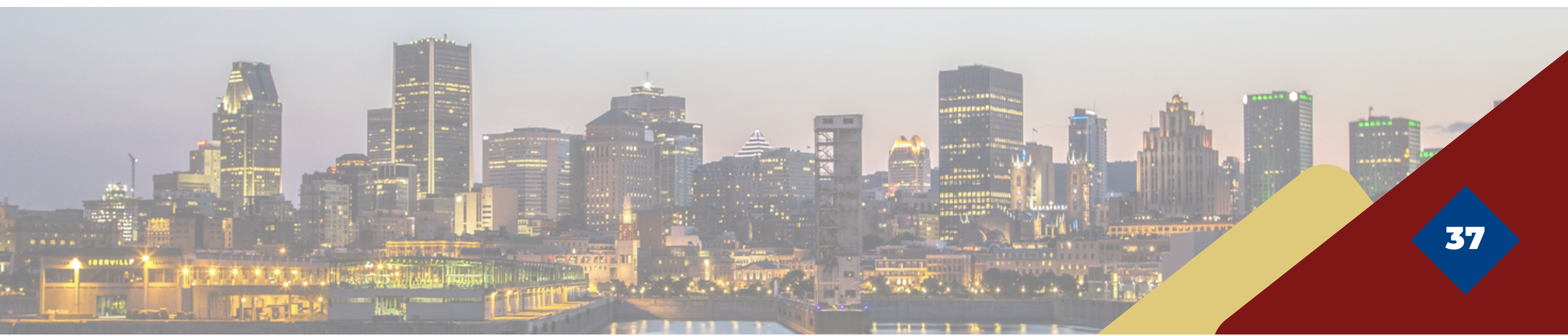
In all competitions some teams will win, some will lose, and some will experience both. This section of the guide is not aimed at teaching teams how to do either in terms of strategy, preparation, etc., rather it is to allow teams to win and lose gracefully and to learn from each experience.

Whether it is your first win or your fifth in a row, teams should understand that there is a proper way to celebrate the win. Until a team reaches the semi-finals, no win is worth celebrating. Even with an 11-0 win over another team, there is always something the team can learn and improve upon before the next match.

Over celebrating will also give the impression that the winning team is not showing the proper respect for the team they just competed against. Spirit is a very large component of this competition and displaying class and respect towards all teams is a contributing factor.

Losing is also not to be approached negatively. Review the loss and pick out areas where the team could have approached the case differently to produce a better result. Learn from the loss and then move on. Many times both teams present a strong case and the judge's decisions were the result of one particular point such as how a question was handled or a more realistic cost analysis, etc.
Therefore, a loss does not mean the losing team did not present a good analysis and solution to a case, it simply means the other team may have simply performed a little bit better. After the results are posted, teams can review the judges' comments and determine how to ensure they perform better in the next case.

Finally, no matter what a team's result might be, no team leaves the competition without learning. All teams will leave feeling that they are stronger and more able to tackle issues and problems that will face them in their careers.



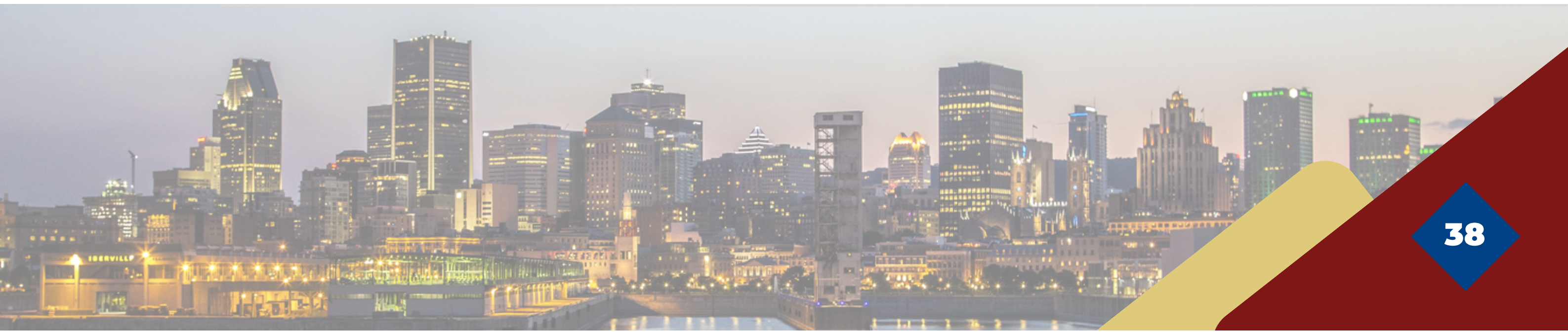
# 10. SOCIAL EVENTS AND NETWORKING

During the course of the competition, teams and coaches will have several opportunities to socialize with the other teams, coaches, judges, and event coordinators. The competition plans several social events including dinners, sightseeing, sports events, and a theme party at the end of the competition.

A major component to the competition is spirit. The week-long competition is a stressful and tiring time, yet extra effort is made to ensure that all teams not only enjoy the experience of competing against schools from around the world, but that they also get to meet new people and have fun once the work is over.

MBA students do not need an introduction to the benefits of networking, however it is important to remind the teams that this competition is a great chance to not only meet members of other teams, but also to meet executive-level judges and other attendees. Judges of the competition are some of Canada's most prominent businesspeople who have a wealth of knowledge. Team members should take the time to meet and talk to these senior business executives serving as judges and take advantage of their knowledge to exchange ideas and get inspired about their own futures in business.

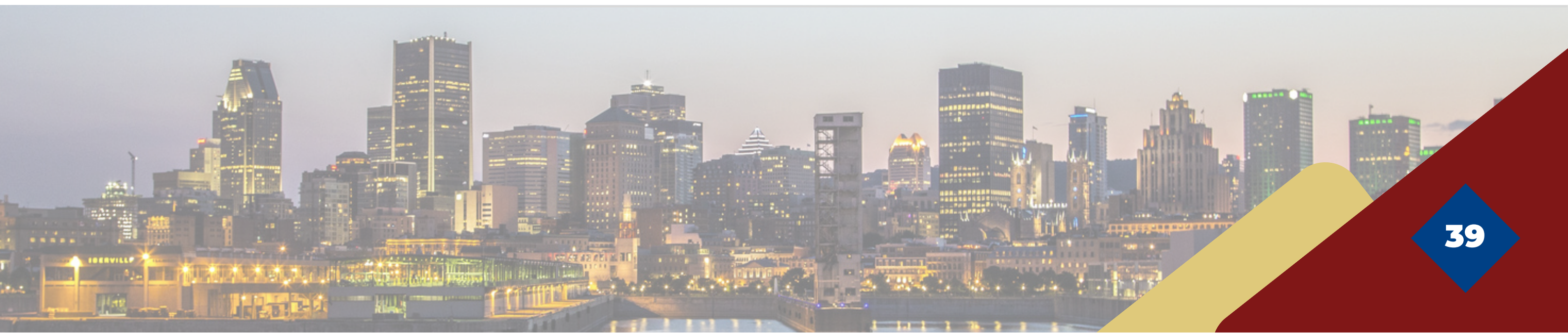
We recommend that teams take part of the organized social events. Not all teams will be comfortable with taking part in social events, as it is not for everyone



Some teams may believe it will interfere with their ability to perform. However, most teams will find that social events and simply socializing with others will help to ease the stress and tension of the competition. The topic of spirit is an important and celebrated part of this competition and an award for spirit is presented at the final banquet.

The award for spirit is named the “*Richard Outcault Team Spirit Award*”. This award was started by Northeastern University after a member of their 1998 winning team suddenly passed away. Richard attended the competition within days after his father’s death and considered the experience one of the greatest of his life. Winning this award is a very prestigious honor, and teams in the past have been very flattered to receive the award as all team members understand the tremendous value for which it stands.
For more information on the award please visit [http://mbacasecomp.com/about-us/richard-outcaultteam-spirit-award](http://mbacasecomp.com/about-us/richard-outcaultteam-spirit-award).

Another special award at the competition is the "*Dr. J. Pierre Brunet Coach Award*", which recognizes the outstanding leadership, ongoing support and contribution of coaches to the competition. Dr. Brunet taught at Concordia University for 30 years and is a founding Board Member of the John Molson International MBA Case Competition.

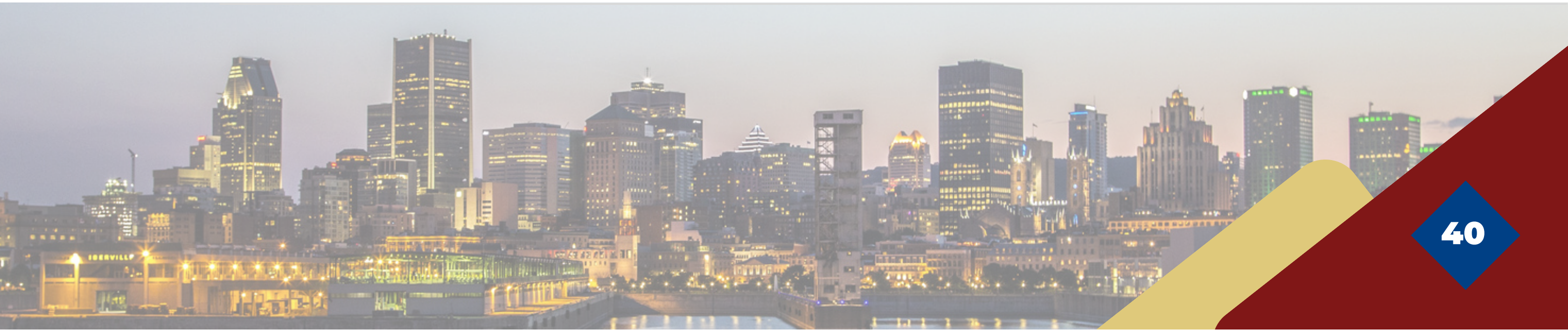


# 11. NEXT YEAR, NEXT STEPS

Once the competition is over the work does not end for the coaches or for some of the team members. Upon returning to their schools it is suggested that all teams debrief and attempt to determine how the following year's team can perform even better. Even if the team is the competition champion, there is always room for improvement.

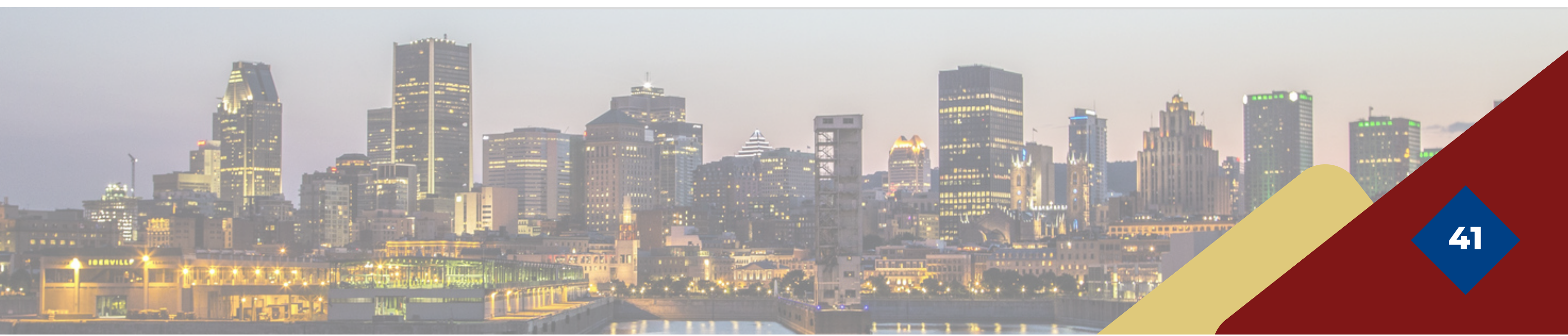
During the competition, the coach should keep a journal of how the team performed. They should also attend other teams' presentation as much as possible in an attempt to see how others perform. This journal will be very useful in the following year, as it will help prepare the next team to ensure they are able to perform to their full capabilities.

The coach should always retrieve the slides used by their team during the competition. This will allow new teams to view exactly the caliber they must attain prior to leaving for the competition. It will also help give new teams a better idea as to how they should approach their role and tasks for each case.



The coach should also talk to other coaches. Just as it is important for participants to socialize, coaches should also forge relationships with other coaches. Many schools have been participating at the competition for a long time and their coaches are very open and willing to giving advice to other schools. Even though it is the goal of each coach to win the competition, another goal is to continually improve the competition as a whole.

Past team members are a great source of help when new teams are preparing for the competition. They are able to describe the competition to new teams in terms of the pressures, stress, and competition level, among other topics. Past participants can also help prepare new teams by participating in the preparation period and attempt to spot pitfalls they encountered. This will give the new team time to remove these pitfalls and ensure greater success at the competition. They can also act as judges during the practice cases. Having stood in front of judges in the previous years, past participants understand the level of questioning that will be present at the competition.

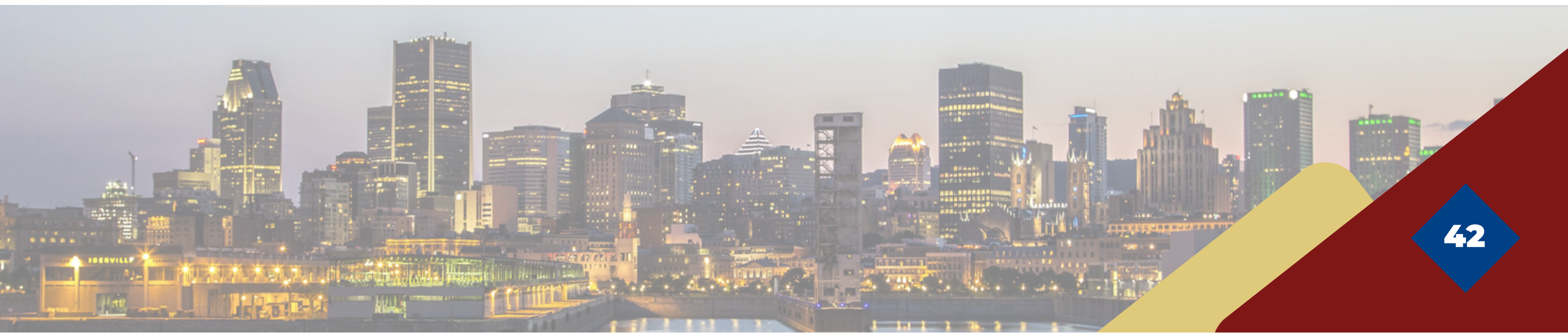


# 12. APPENDICES

## APPENDIX A:
COMPETITION APPLICATION FORM

## APPENDIX B:
SCORING GUIDELINES

## APPENDIX C::
EVALUATION FORM



## **Appendix A:** Competition Application Form

Student Name: -------------------------

Student # or ID: ------------------------

Academic Information

Undergraduate Degree: -----------------------

Other Degree/Diplomas: ----------------------

MBA Area of Concentration: ------------------

Employment History

Company:

Position:

Duties:

Company:

Position:

Duties:

Company:

Position:

Duties:

Reason for wanting to join the case team:

# Appendix B: Evaluation Form

**Presentation:**

Was the team's presentation well organized, timed, and delivered in a professional manner? Was the team consistent and convincing in the role it chose to assume?

Score _____/10 x1 = _______

Comments:

**Analysis and Development of Alternatives:**

Did the team clearly identify the pertinent issue(s) facing the company/individual? Did the team develop a range of credible and creative alternatives to address the identified issue(s) by using relevant case data and making realistic assumptions?

Score _____/10 x2 = _______

Comments:

**Recommendation(s):**

Did the team effectively evaluate each of the alternatives it proposed and, with clear and substantiated criteria, justify its recommended course of action in a realistic and pragmatic manner consistent with the case data and the subsequent analysis?

Score _____/10 x2.5 = _______

Comments:

**What might the team have done better?**

**Where did the team succeed or fall short when compared with the opposing team?**

**Implementation**

Was the team's implementation plan achievable given the case data, and was it consistent with their analysis? Did it include a reasonable timeline, a contingency plan, and was it financially sound?

Score _____/10    x3    =    _______

Comments:

**Question Period:**

Did the team use the question period to effectively defend, support, and/or build its recommendation(s)? Were the responses clear, concise, on-point, and given with assurance?

Score _____/10    x1.5    =    _______

Comments:

**TOTAL _____/100**

**What did the team do particularly well?**

**What might the team have done better?**

**Where did the team succeed or fall short when compared with the opposing team?**

# Appendix C: Scoring guidelines (may be subject to change)

During the round-robin phase, the panel will evaluate each of the two teams and provide a numerical rating of 1 to 10 in five evaluation categories.

1. **Presentation:** Overall quality of the PowerPoint presentation submitted by the team
2. **Analysis and Alternatives:** Team's ability to draw valid conclusions from case data and research and explore alternatives
3. **Recommendations**: Scope and viability of recommendations pertaining to the analysis and anticipation of impact on the organization and its stakeholders
4. **Implementation**: The comprehensiveness of the action plan, timeline, and contingency plans.
5. **Question Period:** The team's ability to sufficiently answer questions posed by the Judge panel

Each category is weighted differently, and the relevant multiplier, when applied, will give the weighted score for that category:

| lier |
|---|
| Presentation x 1 |
| Analysis and Development of Alternatives x 2 |
| Recommendations x 2.5 |
| Implementation x 3 |
| Question Period x 1.5 |

The weighted scores will then be summed to provide a cumulative score, up to a maximum of 100. The team with the highest cumulative score will be declared the winner of that match. In the event of a tie, the winner will be determined by using, in order, the following tiebreakers:

- The highest Implementation Plan score;
- If tied, the highest cumulative Implementation Plan and Recommendations scores;
- If still tied, the highest cumulative Implementation Plan, Recommendations and Analysis and Development of Alternatives scores;
- If still tied, the highest cumulative Implementation Plan, Recommendations, Analysis and Development of Alternatives and Question Period scores;
- In the unlikely event that the teams have identical scores in all categories, the lead judge will decide the winner.

**Match Points**

For purposes of determining the Competition's divisional and overall rankings, a total of 11 match points will then be allocated to the two teams (based on the differential in their cumulative evaluation scores), on the following basis:

| Total Score | 11 Match Point Split |
|---|---|
| Differential of 3 or less | 6 match points to winning team 5 match points to losing team |
| Differential of 3.5-10 | 7 match points to winning team 4 match points to losing team |
| Differential of 10.5-20 | 8 match points to winning team 3 match points to losing team |
| Differential of 20.5-35 | 9 match points to winning team 2 match points to losing team |
| Differential of 35.5 or more | 10 match points to winning team 1 match point to losing team |

In addition to their allocated 11-point split, the winning team will receive an additional 30 match points, except in the event of a 6-5 split wherein the winning team will receive an additional 20 match points and the losing team will receive an additional 10 match points.

There is no match point allocation in the semifinals and finals. The Judges will declare a winner in each of the semifinal contests. The three winning teams will then participate in the finals. The Judge's decision regarding the first, second and third place winners will be announced at the closing banquet.