

Annual Marketing Innovation Case Competition

Sponsorship Opportunities

The Marketing Innovation Case Competition is an annual event produced each year by Columbia Business School's Center on Global Brand Leadership, in collaboration with the Marketing Association of Columbia (MAC).

Dozens of MBA students from Columbia Business School participate in the task to develop an innovative business and brand strategy by *combining the seemingly incompatible*. This technique, devised by Prof. Bernd Schmitt, stimulates creative thinking by requiring participants to “combine one concept with another seemingly incompatible concept—for example, a well-known brand with a seemingly incompatible social phenomenon or lifestyle trend.” See the Appendix for a write-up of a past competition.

The Challenge

The teams have one week to prepare an idea and submit a multimedia presentation to a panel of business executives who will judge their efforts along the following criteria: creativity, a defensible business case, and the clarity and style of their presentation. The judges will narrow down the submissions and provide feedback to a group of three top teams who will then present their concepts at the MAC Conference in front of a live judging panel in the spring 2023 semester.

Cash prizes are awarded for the top rated teams, and all participants receive a small gift.

Sponsorship

The Case Competition is a rewarding experience for both students and judges, and this is the reason why the Center on Global Brand Leadership at Columbia Business School is constantly looking for new opportunities to challenge the students, connecting theory and practice.

It is possible to sponsor the Case Competition with a **\$10,000 gift**. The sponsor will be recognized as **Presenting Sponsor** of the competition and entitled to:

- provide guidance and feedback on the competition topic areas – the well-known brand and the lifestyle or business trend
- provide opening welcome remarks
- Up to two (2) seats at the judges' table
- Branding acknowledgement on all competition materials both online and offline

About the Center on Global Brand Leadership

The mission of the [Center on Global Brand Leadership](#) is to turn the research and intellectual capital of academia's foremost thinkers on branding into practical tools and insights for real-world application. Since 1999, the Center has fostered a community of researchers, alumni, students, and leading practitioners from global corporations to advance new knowledge, promote widespread learning, and create an impactful dialogue on the challenges of brand building.

About the Marketing Association of Columbia

The [Marketing Association of Columbia](#) is dedicated to providing the recruiting, networking and educational resources necessary for students to successfully pursue careers in marketing. With over 200 members whose interests include brand management, healthcare, consulting and everything in between, the Marketing Association of Columbia exposes our members to all areas of marketing through speaker events, panels, alumni networking and our annual conference. In addition to being located in New York City — the marketing capital of the world — Marketing Association of Columbia members have unique access to leading practitioners from all facets of the field.

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APPENDIX: Combining the Seemingly Incompatible: The MAC Case Competition

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Combining the seemingly incompatible is an inspirational way to ideate.

On March 28, 2014 the [Center on Global Brand Leadership](#), in collaboration with the [Marketing Association of Columbia \(MAC\)](#), hosted the 2nd Annual Marketing Innovation Case Competition.

Twenty-eight MBA students from Columbia

Business School were tasked with developing a

hypothetical game-changing business strategy by conceptualizing a unique way to incorporate one of today's hottest digital trends with a major brand, one that is seemingly incompatible with the trend itself.



More and more articles of clothing and accessories, items we wear on a daily basis, are produced with the ability to gather personal data, and connect us and our data to the digital world. With this “wearables” trend, brands are now challenged to create more robust real time experiences.

Students had three hours to develop a positioning for Unilever, or one of its brands, by integrating the wearables trend and new consumer expectations for information access and interconnectivity.

To judge the competition, the Center on Global Brand Leadership invited [Marissa Freeman](#), VP of Global Advertising at HP Enterprise and founder of [Bee Raw](#), and [Fabian Pfortmüller](#), Co-founder of [Holstee](#) and Founder of [Sandbox](#). Both are experts at understanding trends and using them to create innovative strategies for their businesses. The winning team, Hasbleidy Castaneda '15, Nate Champion '15, Melissa Gavin '15, and Emmy Vallandingham '15, developed *The Water Band*, an extension of Unilever's *Save Water, Save the World* initiative.

The *Water Band* would be a wristband with the goal of reducing shower time. The team explained that it's great for environmentally-conscious individuals. “[Shortening a shower by two minutes can result in 4600 gallons of water saved per year,](#)” shared the students. When wearing *Water Band*, the consumer would be alerted when their shower is running long.

They developed this idea to align with Unilever's sustainability platform to provide value to its consumers, and to promote a sense of community and mutual responsibility amongst its stakeholders

Two teams tied for second place with *The Bobby-Bit*, a bobby pin that captures environmental data for a customizable action plan—using Unilever brands—for taking care of skin and hair based on environmental triggers; and *Dove For Me*, a system that uses wearables to capture environmental and physical data from individuals (e.g. activity, climate, location, vitamin deficiencies, hydration, etc.) to enhance and personalize Dove skin and hair care products at home.



Emmy Vallandingham '15, Nate Champion '15, Hasbleidy Castaneda '15, and Melissa Gavin '15.

The Case Competition experience was rewarding for the judges and the students alike, Marissa Freeman commented “I was astounded by the level of strategic insight, the thoroughness of the foundational data and the professional manner in which the cases were presented. It would have been impressive if they had four days to do it, let alone four hours. In my mind, they were all winners.”

While Sheera Hopkins '14, from MAC, explained that, “participating in the case competition was a great experience where I had the opportunity to put into practice many of the ideas and frameworks I had learned my first year at CBS. Even though it was only a one-day exercise, it helped prepare me for my summer internship.”

The Center on Global Brand Leadership looks forward to hosting the 3rd annual Case Competition in the spring of 2015 at Columbia Business School.

BY GABRIELA TORRES PATIÑO

<https://brandleadership.wordpress.com/2014/04/04/combining-the-seemingly-incompatible-the-mac-case-competition/>