

American Marketing Association Collegiate Case Competition: Engaging Tomorrow's Marketing Leaders



Engage with thousands of young marketers...

Get fresh perspective on a marketing challenge and inspire a new generation of professionals.

Each spring, more than 1,400 college-age members of the American Marketing Association and their faculty advisors gather in New Orleans for the AMA International Collegiate Conference.

A highlight of the conference is the AMA Collegiate Case Competition, in which teams of students compete to solve a real-world marketing challenge presented by a leading company or nonprofit organization.

That sponsor could be you!





As the cornerstone event at the AMA International Collegiate Conference, the Case Competition generates significant interest and engagement. By partnering with AMA as the Case Competition sponsor, your organization reaps numerous benefits:

Marketing Solutions

- Fresh thinking and innovative approaches to a specific marketing challenge, including Gen Y insights into the mindset of your target market
- Up to 100 packaged, applicable solutions for your case from North America's top marketing students, coached and curated by leading marketing faculty
- High-level market research data, as well as sole ownership of all the Case Competition entries

Access and Exposure

- The opportunity to meet and interact with 1,400+ conference attendees — North America's brightest and most driven marketing students
- Exposure to an even broader audience of 10,000+ college marketing students who receive communications multiple times in the six months leading up to the conference

A Chance to Give Back

- An opportunity to inspire the next generation of marketing professionals and to elevate the level of quality in the field
- The chance to recruit talented young marketers who can add value to your team as interns or employees

“ ”

This is an unbelievable resource of potential marketing solutions and the best marketing consulting value in North America. Where else can you get dedicated and creative work — over 80 submissions from 400+ top students — for \$75,000?

» Rob Malcolm,
The Hershey Company



About the Case Competition

The American Marketing Association includes 10,000 student members in over 340 chapters in the United States, Canada, Puerto Rico and select international locations. As AMA members, students have access to marketing knowledge, a network of professionals, leadership development opportunities, and projects that enable them to put classroom theory into practice.

The Case Competition, run by the AMA Collegiate Chapters Council, is one of those opportunities.

Started in 1986, the annual competition is open to undergraduate teams at schools that have an affiliated AMA Collegiate Chapter. The yearlong event has two primary aims:

- 1.** To provide AMA collegiate members the opportunity to work together on a real-world marketing challenge
- 2.** To provide the Case Competition sponsor direct contact with the very best marketing students and solutions to a marketing challenge the sponsor faces

AMA students have unique knowledge of effective ways to market products and services to their peers and other groups. For the sponsor, this is an opportunity to gain the perspective of top students while contributing to the development of the next generation of marketing leaders. Students are proud to include their participation in the event on their resume and set themselves apart from other candidates.

The Case Competition sponsor is also the title sponsor of the International Collegiate Conference, as well as a College2Career Partner, which offers extensive recruiting opportunities.



How It Works

While the sponsor is closely involved throughout the year, AMA handles all administrative and support aspects of the Case Competition, making it easy and efficient.

- 1.** The sponsor establishes the marketing challenge — a real marketing problem that the sponsor is facing. This gives participants a chance to experience the kind of challenges they will face in their marketing careers. (Marketing communications cases are acceptable and challenging to this new generation of marketers.)
- 2.** With the sponsor's guidance, a formal case is written by the Case Competition Committee, made up of experienced marketing faculty who serve as advisors to AMA collegiate chapters.
- 3.** Assisted by their faculty advisors, the student teams execute research, use that research to develop a strategy and marketing plan to address the situation, and present their solution in a structured case document, which takes the form of a marketing plan.

- 4.** Generally, over 75 cases are submitted for review every year. The Case Competition Committee, along with a panel of faculty advisors and industry judges, scores the entries and selects up to 10 of the best marketing plans to proceed to the finals.

- 5.** Up to 10 finalist teams present their cases to the judges during the International Collegiate Conference. First, second and third prizes, as well as honorable mentions, are presented at the awards dinner that closes out the conference.

All case submissions become the property of the sponsoring firm, which has the right to use them in any way it sees fit. AMA procures all appropriate releases for such use, including waiving all ownership and title by participants.

Case Competition Timeline

The Case Competition is designed around the academic year, beginning with prep work over the summer and culminating in the award presentation at the AMA International Collegiate Conference in the spring.

» June/July

The sponsor establishes the marketing challenge. AMA's Collegiate Case Competition liaison works closely with the sponsor to develop and write the case. (Some schools utilize the case as a basis for class curricula, so the case must be ready to go in August.)

» August/September

The case brief is posted online, and AMA Collegiate Chapters are invited to participate. Students form teams to work on the marketing challenge.

» December

Case entries are submitted by student teams. A panel of faculty and industry judges reviews and rates the cases.

» January

Up to 10 teams are chosen as finalists. Between January and March, those teams prepare their oral presentations.

» March

The finalist teams present their oral presentations to a panel of judges from the sponsoring firm at the International Collegiate Conference, where the winners are chosen.

“What a great way to get a fresh look at a business problem or opportunity!”

» Rob Malcolm, The Hershey Company

Who Sponsors the Case Competition?

Join these leading organizations that have successfully sponsored past AMA Collegiate Case Competitions:

- Donate Life America
- Dunkin' Donuts
- Goodyear & Sullivan Tire
- The Hershey Company
- Kellogg's
- Kwik Trip, Inc.
- MasterCard
- McGraw-Hill
- New Orleans Convention and Visitors Bureau
- Nintendo
- Northwestern Mutual Life
- Pearson
- Procter & Gamble
- UNICEF
- **vitaminwater®**



Case challenges have included:

- A plan for **vitaminwater®** to attract younger consumers without alienating its older loyalists
- A product re-launch for The Hershey Company
- Increased donor registration for Donate Life America
- A new delivery channel launch for Pearson
- Expansion of the user base for Nintendo
- Fundraising for a fresh water initiative for UNICEF



What One Sponsor Had to Say

Case Competition sponsors have found tremendous value in the process — and the results:



The quality, insight and depth of the case submissions were simply outstanding. More importantly, they provided some terrific strategic options and a number of very practical and immediately usable ideas should Hershey decide to relaunch the brand. What a great way to use ‘crowd sourcing’ among the best and brightest marketing students to get a fresh look at a business problem or opportunity. Where else can you get dedicated and creative work — over 80 submissions from 400+ top students — for \$75,000?

» Rob Malcolm,
Board Member, The Hershey Company
and Case Judge



The students and their presentations were impressive. The thinking was strategic, the tactics suggested were inventive, and the passion and hard work for marketing clearly showed through. This is a worthwhile event for the students and the companies.

» Jamie Bruckner,
Brand Manager, **vitaminwater**[®]



Seeing such passion behind the Take 5 brand was incredible. Each team not only presented thorough knowledge and understanding of the brand and project, but also pushed boundaries, showcased creativity and took challenges in each of their presentations.

» Jeff Schmitz,
Senior Director, Variety Franchise,
The Hershey Company

A Look at Past Cases



2014–2015 Case Sponsor: vitaminwater®

vitaminwater® is the pioneer and leader of the enhanced water beverage industry. In a hotly contested category, the brand must continue to innovate to stay atop the heap. In 2010, with an eye on the consumer trends in the marketplace, **vitaminwater®** launched a zero-calorie, nutrient-enhanced water beverage called **vitaminwater zero™**.

Competitors include Pepsi's Sobe LifeWater, Propel and private-label store brands, and newer entrants such as Sparkling Ice from Talking Rain. Produced by glacéau (part of The Coca-Cola Company), **vitaminwater®** also competes with all hydrating beverages, including well-known brands such as Gatorade and Aquafina.

vitaminwater® is known for marketing with an irreverent voice and creative, forward-thinking activation. With a bevy of competitors in tow, **vitaminwater®** was looking to expand its appeal and engender brand loyalty at a younger age.

While **vitaminwater®** appreciates its popularity among the 30- to 39-year-old segment, the brand was specifically interested in engaging the 18- to 24-year-old consumer.

The AMA Collegiate Case Competition challenge was to determine how **vitaminwater®** could kindle its brand relevance and preference among these younger consumers.

AMA chapters were asked to design a compelling marketing campaign for the **vitaminwater®** brand to attract the 18- to 24-year-old group without alienating its 30- to 39-year-old loyalists. Teams had to address consumer segmentation, product positioning, possible product packaging and pricing changes, along with distribution issues, and marketing promotion to this target audience.



2013–2014 Case Sponsor: The Hershey Company

The Hershey's Take 5 candy bar, launched in 2005, was enthusiastically received by consumers. But sales were not on par with the other top-selling brands of the leader of the U.S. chocolate market. The AMA Collegiate Case Competition challenge was to develop a comprehensive marketing plan to re-launch the Take 5 product, including:

- Establishing the brand's value proposition, its strategic target market (a group other than Hershey's typical 18- to 34-year-old market?) and overall brand strategy, as well as a possible name change.

- Analyze the Take 5 distribution channel strategy and offer specific recommendations, including packaging changes, product displays, cross promotions/bundling, in-store promotions and promotional pricing.
- Develop an integrated marketing communications program, including how TV, digital, social, print and other channels would work together to deliver increased sales.

Marketing plans covered a 12-month period, worked within a budget of \$10 million and focused solely on the U.S. market.



2012–2013 Case Sponsor: Donate Life America

Donate Life America is a nonprofit alliance of national organizations and state teams across the U.S. committed to increasing organ, eye and tissue donation. The organization wanted to create a passion for donation that would procure new registrants and new advocates, particularly in the 18–24 age range.

Donate Life America needed a turnkey integrated marketing campaign that could be used by colleges and agencies at the state and local level. AMA Collegiate Case Competition teams were asked to identify a primary and a secondary target market, with one being college students unless their research indicated otherwise.

Teams were asked to:

- Research potential markets in the U.S., including consumer profiles of relevant segments
- Develop an IMC plan that supports the marketing strategy and positioning statement
- Provide recommendations for reaching potential markets, including media and messaging
- Create a timeline for implementation
- Work within a \$100,000 annual budget

PEARSON

2011–2012 Case Sponsor: Pearson

Pearson Learning Solutions is part of Pearson, an innovative learning company that collaborates with institutions and educators to provide customized and personalized educational solutions and services that help to improve student outcomes. The company's Case Competition challenge was to create an integrated marketing communications plan that would reach two potential U.S. markets for Pearson's new service concept Prepare.

Teams were encouraged to be as creative as they wanted, as long as their recommendations were based on research

and analysis of two markets: 1) home-schooled students seeking to accelerate and prepare for their college career through access to college-level courses, and 2) pre-college students seeking summer courses or looking to fulfill general education credits before enrolling in an undergraduate program.

Working within a \$500,000 annual budget, teams were asked to craft a comprehensive and detailed plan that would result in registrations of 5,000 students for 3-credit courses priced between \$199 and \$399.



2010–2011 Case Sponsor: Nintendo Co., Inc.

Japan-based Nintendo Co., Inc. develops and markets game consoles, portable gaming devices and software worldwide. Aiming to expand its potential gaming market, Nintendo developed a Case Competition challenge to create a sales and marketing plan that would reach current non-gamers in the United States.

Teams were encouraged to be as creative as they wanted, as long as their recommendations were solely in the area of sales and marketing of existing products (Nintendo was not interested in hardware or software development ideas).

Case judges evaluated the submissions with special attention to:

- Research of the potential gaming market in the United States
- Development of an IMC plan to support the team's marketing strategy
- Focus on expanding the gaming population by capturing the attention and imagination of non-gamer markets
- Ability to work within a budget of \$20 million over a six-month period



2009–2010 Case Sponsor: UNICEF

The Tap Project is a remarkable program that helps UNICEF accomplish its goal of improving access to safe water. What started as a pilot effort in New York — with restaurants asking patrons to donate \$1 for the tap water that they otherwise enjoyed for free — has become a global movement to provide clean water to millions of vulnerable children and their families.

The AMA Case Collegiate Competition teams were asked to work with the U.S. Fund for UNICEF as a vital marketing partner in the effort to eradicate preventable child deaths worldwide. The challenge was to identify the next strategic direction for the Tap Project, specifically focusing on fundraising within the U.S.

Case Competition judges evaluated how teams gave attention to the following:

- Tapping of other resources; although the restaurant model was still a component of the Tap Project, they wanted to explore other ways to promote and raise funds
- Ideas for raising awareness and money for the Tap Project
- Development of an IMC plan to support the marketing strategy
- Analysis of U.S. program growth
- Working within a budget of \$300,000

Jason Oleniczak
Director Strategic Alliances
joleniczak@ama.org
312.542.9041



American Marketing Association
311 S. Wacker Drive, Suite 5800
Chicago, IL 60606
AMA.org