

## Launch Case Competition Overview

Hello and welcome to Questrom! My name is [Greg Stoller](#) and I'm on the faculty in our [Strategy and Innovation Department](#). Let me preface this introduction by writing that I hope you, your family and/or your work colleagues are all safe and in good health.

To allow you to get to know your future classmates more quickly, we are running a two-stage case competition. This Memo provides an overview of the experience but please feel free to [reach out to me](#) with any questions you might have, at any time.

- 1) **Case/Video:** You will shortly be receiving a written case study which will serve as the basis for the competition. So that you can also get to know the entrepreneur's personality more quickly we have also produced a short form video interview.
- 2) **Prompts:** There are three prompts which we have prepared to better guide your thinking and we will also be providing a slide template that you can use. However, to better promote creativity, we are intentionally \*stopping short\* of suggesting or mandating the specific contents of each slide. That part is up to you and your team! ☺
- 3) **Kickoff Call:** On the Launch schedule, you will notice a 1-hour Q&A session. This is an opportunity for me to briefly describe much of this Memo in a live format and also provide you with an opportunity to ask any big picture questions you might have on the case, or on your preparation approach. This session will be recorded in case you're unable to attend.
- 4) **Mentor:** Each of you has been pre-assigned to a multi-person team and each team has additionally been assigned a professional industry mentor. Each Mentor is providing up to an hour of their time, respectively, to help their 3-4 teams vet their recommendations before presenting. At your convenience please reach out to this individual to schedule a time for you and your team to introduce yourselves and discuss the case. They look forward to helping!
- 5) **Round 1:** In Round 1 of the competition you will be competing against other teams on campus. These rooms will be running concurrently and each room has been assigned a set of different Judges. Some of the judges will be attending in person while others will be on Zoom. Each team will deliver a five minute PowerPoint presentation followed by five minutes of Q&A by the judging panel. Additionally, all of the teams in each room are encouraged to watch each other's presentations to better increase learning. After all of the presentations are complete, the Judges in your room will separately deliberate to select a single finalist. Separately on the Launch Case Competition web site are the LinkedIn / other bios for all of the Judges as well as for the Mentors, and the scoring sheet the Judges will use. We will announce the finalists via email at the end of Round 1.
- 6) **Round 2:** Each of the finalists will present in Round 2 their same five minute presentation followed by Q&A, but this time the Judges will be the Entrepreneur and the company's Management Team! At the end of Round 2, the Management Team will deliberate and select a single winner of the case competition, who will be announced via email. Even if you don't advance, please attend and support the finalists!

- 7) **Guidance:** In an effort to be fair to everyone, here is some guidance on context:
- a. **Research:** Please feel free to use the case study as a *starting point*. You are welcome to bring in any outside research including, but not limited to, related articles, other case studies, competitive intelligence, industry studies, and executive interviews. However we respectfully request, please, that you **do not** contact any of the following: Past, current (or presumed future) full or part time employees, founders, executives, contractors, consultants, customers, clients, partners, stakeholders, or investors of the company profiled in the case, as it's a real firm. Please also **do not** use: Any non-public/proprietary/confidential/copyrighted/patented material from other individuals, databases, or companies in your preparation. There will be multiple BU teams competing and we don't want to breach any client confidentiality from the company in the case, or by others in the industry.
  - b. **Template:** The gist of the prompts will be, please:
    - i. Slide #1: Robert currently has 12 months of cash on his balance sheet with burn rate of \$15 - \$20,000 / month. Before cash runs out, what is the best use of the remaining time and resources before his next capital raise estimated \$1.5M in 6 months?
    - ii. Slide #2: At launch, should Robert focus more on initial revenue or adoption rate? Perhaps he might consider expanding his current customer base exclusive of profitability implications?
    - iii. Slide #3: During his prelaunch period, is his current business model working or should he consider an early pivot, and how might this impact his first-year strategy?
    - iv. Slide #4 (Optional): Please provide any qualitative or quantitative exhibits you feel would better build your case and/or support your logic for slides #1 - #3.
  - c. **Other:**
    - i. Format: Use a minimum 25 point font on the slides to make the text easier to read.
    - ii. Other: Outside of your presentation, please note: 1) No handouts, 2) No Multimedia content (i.e., video/audio), and 3) No Props.
    - iii. Please plan to email me your PPT (before it's presented) so we have a copy of it.
    - iv. Recording: Round 1 will *not* be recorded but we will be recording Round 2.
  - d. **Teamwork:** While we expect each member of your team will have an active role in this overall project, we will defer to you regarding how many people you would like to have present and/or to participate in the Q&A. Additionally, we have provided a 1-page overview of "How to Succeed in Case Competitions."
  - e. **Timing:** We've requested the Judges closely watch the time so neither round goes over its allotted time and negatively impacts other portions of Launch. Apologies in advance if the Judges cut your team off during its presentation or Q&A.
  - f. **Personnel:** We have tried to assemble a diverse set of volunteers, including the Entrepreneur, Judges and Mentors.

Below are some screen shots of the documents and the originals can be downloaded at: <https://languageofbusiness.biz/questrom-launch-case-competition/>.

See next page, please.

HAVE FUN, BEST OF LUCK and please reach out to us with questions at any time. [gstoller@bu.edu](mailto:gstoller@bu.edu)


Sincerely,  
Greg Stoller and the Launch Planning Team

See next page, please.


## Document Template:

MASTER  
TITLE SLIDE
Presentation Title
7/14/20

CLICK TO EDIT SUBTITLE



Boston University Questrom School of Business



Boston University Questrom School of Business

## Scoring Sheet:

Launch Case Competition Evaluation Form	
Team # _____	Scorer: _____
Please rate the following aspects of the team's <u>Strategic Analysis</u> on a scale from 1-7, where 1=poor; 2=below average; 3=fair; 4=average; 5=good; 6=very strong/good; 7=excellent	
	P BA F A G VG E
1. Comprehensiveness of Analysis	1 2 3 4 5 6 7
2. Quality of Analysis	1 2 3 4 5 6 7
3. Creativity of Recommendations	1 2 3 4 5 6 7
4. Clarity of Recommendations	1 2 3 4 5 6 7
5. Viability (potential) of Recommendations	1 2 3 4 5 6 7
6. Integration of Recommendations' functional components	1 2 3 4 5 6 7
7. Fit of strategy with market opportunity	1 2 3 4 5 6 7
8. Evidence of learning and personal growth	1 2 3 4 5 6 7
Please comment on the overall quality of the <u>presentation</u> :	
	P BA F A G VG E
9. Overall, how well were the Recommendations presented?	1 2 3 4 5 6 7
10. How well did the team handle questions?	1 2 3 4 5 6 7
11. Rate the overall creativity of the presentation	1 2 3 4 5 6 7
12. Overall quality of presentation	1 2 3 4 5 6 7
Please provide <u>helpful and constructive</u> overall comments on the nature, quality, comprehensiveness, and general thoughtfulness and adequacy of the Pitch and of the presentation (use other side if necessary). What was good? What could be improved? How?	

## Case Competition Best Practices Overview:

### Case Competition Tips

#### Analysis and PPT / Written Document Tips

1. "Tell them what you'll be saying, say it, remind them what you said."
2. Go down 2-3 levels of depth in analysis
3. Include Appendix slides, show Table of Contents at end of presentation and put extra slides in there
4. Ask yourself "what if?" for every slide
5. Have a conclusion on every slide, either verbally or on the slide, preferably as the header
6. Point out key conclusions from the graph(s) charts and leave nothing to chance
7. Note balance of content on slides—not just bullet points, but not so much text they have to be 'read.' Slides should be the back-up for the presenter, with the focus on the presenters only
8. Analysis is the most important (and competence in Q&A). Do NOT restate case facts. Summarize key numbers—NO charts / graphs / gridlines, please.
9. Have each other review the slides they DIDN'T write; ask each other "why" 3-times on its content before you approve each slide.
10. PROOFREAD out loud before pressing 'send'

#### Presentation Tips

1. Greet the judges, shake their hands, introduce yourselves. Thank them at the end. Make eye contact.
2. Carry small index card
3. Think through "opener, analyst(s), closer"
4. Mind the clock. This should be a team member's job
5. Be a little bit theatrical in terms of emphasizing key points
6. Smile. Be energetic.
7. Speak *with* the judges, *not* at them
8. Have one team member manage Q&A. Use index finger during Q&A to jump in.
9. Repeat / rephrase question to buy yourself and the team time before answering them
10. Politely cut each other off if someone is 1) seized with stage fright, 2) rambles, 3) doesn't know the answer

#### Team Tips

1. You'll win as a team; bottom line
2. People have different skill sets- embrace each other and don't be insecure
3. There are usually 5-6 different roles: 1) Data / industry analyst, 2) Presentation creator / editor, 3) Finance / Quant jock, 4) Marketing guru, 5) Presenter, 6) Q&A expert
4. Play off one another; make transitions seamless. Thank each other before you progress to next section. ACT as a team
5. PRACTICE, PRACTICE, PRACTICE and ask faculty for help