Welcome to Ascend 2026

Introduction to Case Competition

VERSION 3.0 — AUGUST 2026

Agenda

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- Ascend Presentation Tips

Foreword

Business competitions can be daunting, especially to those new to the experience. At Ascend, we want to ensure that everyone feels confident and excited when they enter through the venue’s doors, regardless of their previous experience. Therefore, we have compiled the following presentation to provide you with the necessary resources to perform to the best of your abilities!

Introduction

What is a Case Competition?

- Case competitions provide a problem simulation that mimics the reality of corporate affairs through an analytical lens.
- During the competition, you will all receive a case study based on problems that you could encounter in the real world. It will be about a specific company or market and the problem it wishes to resolve.
- Your team must identify these issues and develop a resolving recommendation strategy. Then, you must skillfully present your idea(s) to a panel of judges.

What should I expect?

A Case Competition exposes students to many issues found in the realm of commerce. Your team must work together to analyze problems and create resourceful and innovative solutions. These solutions will need to be put together in presentation slides. Your team must then present your analysis to a panel of professionals.

For additional tutorial, please visit our sister organization Prosper's YouTube channel and attend the pre-conference preparation webinar.

The Case Study

What is a case study?

A case study is an account of a real or hypothetical scenario about a specific company or market, its background, its strengths, and the problem it wishes to resolve.

You can find examples of previously presented cases here and here.

Analyzing a Case

Before stepping into the competition, everyone on your team should have an assigned role. These roles differ depending on the quantity of members, including: Analysis of Company/Market, Key Issues, Recommendations, Mitigation, etc.

Remain aware of your assignment and take note of any information in the case that pertains to your role.

Reading a Case

A good practice for case analysis is a 15 minute silent read.

While there will likely be more than 15 minutes worth of information, this time constraint will motivate you to be particular with relevant points, paying extra attention to the first and last page.

Furthermore, make sure to take notes either by yourself or collaboratively with your team members while reading the case!

Case Discussion

Following this 15 minute read, share your opinions and thought process as a team, and come up with a cohesive plan on how to tackle the issues detailed in the case.

After that, everyone is free to focus on their specific portions of the slides, with a pre-set slide template to avoid starting from square one.

Important Aspects to Consider

- Events that lead up to the issue
- What the case is prompting
- Potential competitors
- Consumer information
- Available alternatives
- Financials
- Industry

Presentation Format

The Essential Elements

In order to show the judges the steps you have taken to reach your final strategy, as well as how you plan to execute the plan, the following are vital:

1. Introduction and Issue Analysis
2. Internal and External Analysis
3. Recommendations
4. Implementation and Financials
5. Risks and Mitigations
6. Summary/Conclusion

Introduction and Issue Analysis

Introduce the problem in a way that is succinct and clear. The problem statement should invoke excitement, curiosity, and inspiration.

Show an understanding of the underlying problems that the business must face. Focus on the issues and set the stage for recommendations.

COMPONENTS

- Title Page
- Agenda/Overview of Presentation
- Problem and Topic Introduction
  - Identify Key Issues
  - Problem Statement: a concise description or question of the issue is addressed
    - (i.e. How can we establish a market for this new product based on current consumer trends?)
- Objective / Goals

Internal and External Analysis

INTERNAL ANALYSIS

1. SWOT Analysis
   Strengths
   Weaknesses
   Opportunities
   Threats

2. Issue Identification

EXTERNAL ANALYSIS

1. PEST(LE) Analysis
2. Porter's Five Forces
3. Competitive Analysis
4. Consumer Analysis

Recommendations

This is a high level strategy of how the company will solve its issues, according to your analysis. A professional recommendation requires:



How the company will solve its problems



What the client needs to do



Why the client needs to do this



Who will be involved in executing this plan

Recommendation Tips

3

Aim for ≈ 3 recommendations



Unique and valuable position

(Is anyone else doing the same thing? Do customers want this?)



Create a strategic “fit” across the business

(Are different parts of the business plan supporting each other?)

Recommendation Tips – Continued

If necessary, reiterate your findings, be it internal or external, and explain how your recommendations address this.

Solutions should align with business capabilities (SWOT) as well as take into account industry and situational factors (PESTLE, consumer, and competitor analysis).

Implementation and Financials

A plan comprised of tactics and details that will make the recommendation into a reality.

A professional implementation requires:



Breakdown into detailed steps



Set a timeline



Consider the financials

Implementation Details

IMPLEMENTATION PLAN

- Break the strategy into actionable steps
- 4Ps Marketing Mix (Place, Product, Promotion, Price)
- Be realistic and reasonable

IMPLEMENTATION TIMELINE

- Assign proposed strategies to a time frame
- Timeline should follow the scale of fiscal periods, typically by quarter

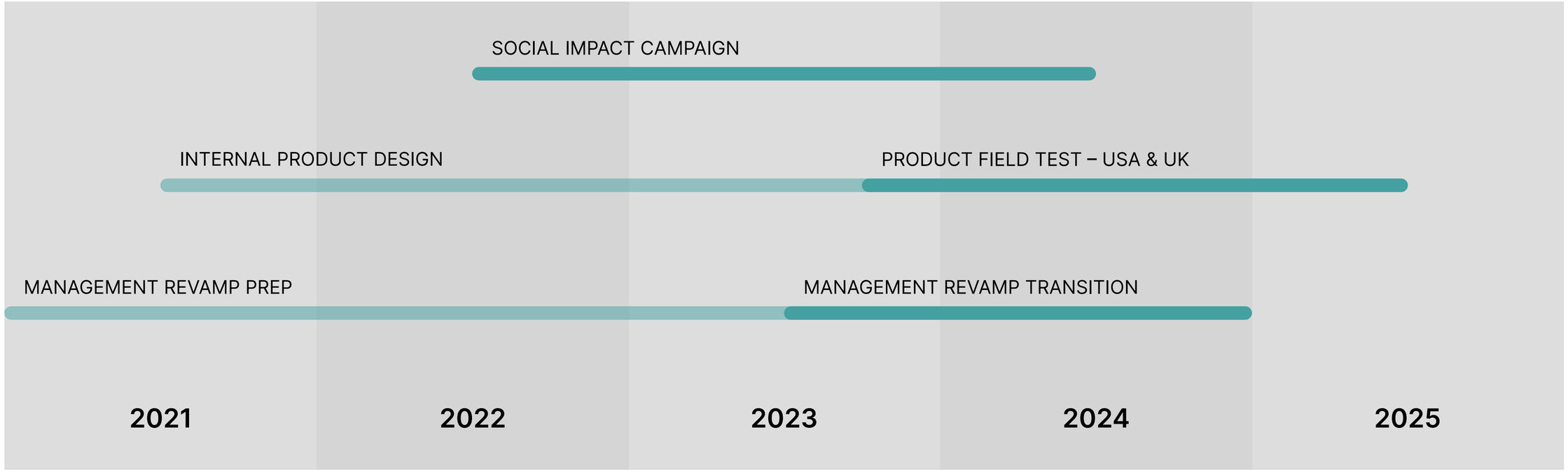
Implementation – Example

Recommendation	Steps	Resources	Costs	Timing	Key Risks
Recommendation #1 “Fiji Water CSR Campaign”	1. Eco-friendly packaging	Biodegradable plastic or paper specialists and factories	$75,000 USD	Approximately 6 months	Packaging might receive backlash from consumers
	2. Community outreach programs	Local outreach coordinators	$80,000 USD	Approximately 18 months	Overextending resources or not providing enough
Recommendation #2 “Fiji Recycle Program”	1. Implement a mobile app 2. Contact local recycling centers	Partnerships with municipal governments and recycling companies	$75,000 USD	Approximately 20 to 24 months	Low program user engagement rate

Implementation Timeline

An implementation timeline can help illustrate your overall strategy more clearly through a linear medium.

Implementation Timeline – Example



Financials Details

Included in your implementation is a brief financial analysis that:

- Outline costs associated
- Provide financial justification (business benefits, economic profits, opportunity costs)
- Breakdown costs into two categories – one-time cost and recurring costs

Financials Tips

BONUS

Because spending money always has a negative connotation, try to convey the benefits they provide!

Item	Cost (in $ Million USD)
Taxes and other legal fees	8
Property, Plant, and Equipment	15
Training Costs	5
Misc.	9
Total	37

Item	Benefit (in $ Million USD)
New Products	8
Cost Savings in the Long Run	15
Added Benefits	40
Government Subsidies	5
Total	68

Financials – Cost Breakdown

Cost Breakdown	Step 1	Step 2	Step 3	Step 4	Total
One-Time Cost (or) Upfront Cost	CA$15,000	CA$35,000	CA$5,000	CA$65,000	CA$120,000
Recurring Cost (on an annual basis)	CA$40,000	CA$20,000	CA$35,000	CA$10,000	CA$105,000 per year
First Year Cost	CA$55,000	CA$55,000	CA$40,000	CA$75,000	CA$225,000

Risks and Mitigations

Your risks and mitigations slides should outline plausible risks of your proposed strategy as well as a comprehensive plan of how to mitigate them.

- Plan to address pitfalls of the recommendations your team has presented
- Outline the severity of risks and potential points of mitigation
  - *Present in a table format outlining the probability, severity, and method of mitigation for each risk*

Risks and Mitigation – Example

Risk	Probability	Severity	Mitigation
Risk 1	LOW	MODERATE	Avoidance Strategy 1
Risk 2	HIGH	EXTREME	Avoidance Strategy 2
Risk 3	MED	LOW	Avoidance Strategy 3

Distributing the Work

Since your team will be working under significant time pressure, it is important to delegate the tasks effectively.

The Generalist

The majority of members should fall under this category.
Tasks include background analyses, strategic analyses, recommendations, risks and mitigations, presentation scripts.

The Financial Analyst

Usually someone who knows basic financial projections.
Tasks include estimating the cost of implementation, identifying fixed & recurring costs, and discovering cost optimization opportunities.

The Designer

Someone who is skilled at graphic design and crafting slide decks.
Tasks include making the template before the event, formatting inputted content, and making sure deck is visually flawless.

Ascend Presentation Tips

General Tips

- Confidence is key
- Talk at a steady pace
- Project your voice with clarity
- Employ body language and eye contact, even in a Zoom call
- Aim for a strong hook and conclusion
- Include professional visuals
- Wear business attire
- Greet the judges before your presentation and thank them afterwards
- Don’t forget to smile

Aesthetics

While your content serves as the biggest component of assessment, ensuring your pitch deck is clean and understandable will help judges along the way of awarding you maximum points!

If you feel unsure where to start, begin with a template. You can find a compilation of such slides here or here.

Organization

Some presentation has used the components shown down below to indicate the present topic. These are called breadcrumbs and are encouraged within case competition decks, to highlight content.

Typically, they are titled in the master slides according to the essential element of the presentation.

Example:

Ascend

Introduction to Case Competition

Ascend 2026

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