

English business case competition, JMBACC, to be held in Tokyo this November.

Tokyo, Japan, September 30th, 2013 – The first ever business case competition conducted in English in Japan is scheduled to occur on November 17th, 2013. The main event will be hosted by Aoyama Gakuin, in Shibuya, with a networking event to follow elsewhere in the area. Students from Aoyama Gakuin, Hitotsubashi ICS and McGill Japan have been working together since February to make this event a reality.

“We actually came together because of the nascent nature of our programs creates a need to look outward for networking experiences” Mr. Jimmy Chu, an MBA candidate of McGill Japan, explained. “At first this wasn’t about making a case competition – we were simply looking to help our student bodies by making it easier for them to expand their professional networks. The competition is the best vehicle we could think of to deliver that value to our classmates, and other MBA students in the region.”

What exactly does Mr. Chu mean by “the region”? A good question! Although the organizing committee originally only targeted MBA programs in Japan to field teams, it ended up growing to something a bit larger. “It’s actually really exciting when you think about it. We didn’t even market the event outside of Japan, and yet a team from Taiwan just wrote us to confirm they had booked their tickets. It became international all on its own” Ms. Ariel Daniel, a candidate from Hitotsubashi ICS, stated.

Mr. Lyal Clough, MBA Candidate of McGill Japan, expounded “We limited our marketing to Japan because we wanted to keep the logistics of the event simple for the first year. We figured we could expand it to an international audience once we had moved up the learning curve a bit... but how could we say no when a team from another country asked to join? It simply confirmed that there was a demand for what we are trying to create here and that people were enthusiastic enough about it to spread the news across borders. I can’t tell you how motivating that has been to the [organizing] team.”

Some of our readers may be asking what exactly is a business case competition. Ms. Ines Bahri, an MBA candidate of Aoyama Gakuin, explained “Basically, competitors are given a document (a “case”) which outlines a business opportunity faced by an individual in the upper management level of a company (the “protagonist”). Teams are asked to take the viewpoint of the protagonist and analyze the information presented in the case to make a decision about the opportunity.

To make it easier to understand, please imagine the protagonist of the case is wondering which of three markets to enter. Teams in our competition will first need to decide whether to enter a new market or not. If they choose to do so, they must then identify which one is most attractive, based on the information in the case. If they choose not to, they should again use information in the case to justify that choice. Teams will also need outline an action plan, detailing how

much the company should invest at each stage, what should be done, by whom, etc. Once they've made their decision, they will need to create a presentation explaining their analysis and recommendations in front of a panel of judges. Judges may ask questions after the presentation to dive deeper into their analysis. It's all based on one common style of pedagogy used in MBA programs – the “Case Study Method”, popularized by Harvard Business School.”

Evidenced by the fact that this event has attracted people from outside the immediate area (Kyoto), and even outside of the country (Taiwan), there is a massive amount of momentum behind this event. But why? Why would busy Masters students dedicate a week, let alone nearly a year, to an event like this? Mr. Paul Speed, of McGill university offered to explain ‘what’s in it for’ the different parties involved.

“Many top universities host case competitions, because for the university it is a way to get their name out there. Our competition is a bit different than most, in that it is being organized by students from multiple Universities, and doesn't contain a program's name within its title. Still, by participating in the event, or by having students help to organize it, the schools involved will all enjoy increased exposure

Students like to participate because – well – competition is fun first of all, and the prizes involved are usually really generous. Aside from those two factors, however, they also recognize that it is a great opportunity to network. The judges of these events are often influential people in their firms, and the sponsors also send people to watch and to be involved in the event... We've heard many stories of competition participants getting invitations to interview, or even job offers, due to their presentations at a competition, which is a great incentive to participate.

Which brings us to our final stakeholders – sponsors and judges, who both generally come from industry. They like to get involved because by judging or sponsoring the event, they get the chance to see a diverse talent pool in action – analyzing and making recommendations for a real business problem. It's gives them better information about the competitors than any interview ever could. Basically, it's a great way for them to search for talent and to support management education. Like the schools, their companies will also get a boost in exposure by supporting the event as well.”

The whole team went on to explain how they believe that an event such as this will build up the status of Japanese MBA programs in general. They also asserted that events like this ought to benefit business in Japan as a whole. “Our tag line is Competition, Communication and Collaboration.” they emphasized. “Everything that businesses accomplish is through **people**. An event like this connects **people**. The importance of having a good network, of having both superiors and peers upon whom you can depend, cannot be overstated. Basically, we really do believe that a lot of good will come out of this. Based on the support we've gotten from the schools, students and sponsors – it seems we aren't the only ones either.”

Although the preliminary rounds will be closed, the final round and networking event for the competition will be opened to industry and students from participating universities. For more details on the organization or the event, please visit their website, www.jmbacc.org or contact them at info@jmbacc.org.

About Japan MBA Case Competition: The JMBACC is in its inaugural year. Founding members include, Jimmy Chu, Lyal Clough and Paul Speed from McGill Japan MBA, Ines Bahri from Aoyama Gakuin and Ariel Daniel from Hitotsubashi Graduate School of International Corporate Strategy. Since their first meetings, the team has grown to include about 10 people. At the time of release, 11 teams from 8 different schools have confirmed entry, and the team has raised sponsorship from 7 industry sponsors, and 5 industry judges. For more information please contact the author of this release,

Ariel Daniel
Jishengbieshu 9-04
Huilongguan,
Changping Qu
Beijing Shi, 100096
P.R. CHINA
+86-158-1093-3903
im12b003@g.hit-u.ac.jp

###