

Having being a part of the NUS MBA Community in the past one year, I have gained invaluable experience by participating in business plan competitions, delivering admissions talks, shaping the Corporate Ethics Focus Group, and following up on events through NUS MBA BUZZ.

I am honored to have been chosen by my fellow students to serve as the President of the NUS MBA Club. As a student community, we have immense potential and energy amongst us that carries tremendous value. My priority would be to create the interaction platform that would enable the students to share and realize this value. As a young business school, we have a scope for reinforcing various ends of the MBA experience and I would work towards taking those few steps in the right direction. My mission is to bring this experience to a higher level from where we can scale further heights and horizons.

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The McGill Management International Case Competition 2007

Chen Jianwen, a BBA(Hons) Year 3 student, was part of the team that recently won 1st place in the prestigious McGill Management International Case Competition (MMICC) 2007. This international case competition, held in Montreal, Quebec, has long been regarded as a premiere competition in which teams from the best business schools around the world converge annually to fight for the highly regarded top prize. Here, he shares his intimate encounters during the competition week.

Lost sleep, burnt weekends and endless hours of preparation were what we signed up for when we were chosen to represent the NUS Business School in the international business case competitions. With the NUS Business School not having won any competition in the past 2 years prior, there was much pressure on us to perform.



Jianwen and teammates balances work and play during the MMICC.

In the weeks leading up to the competition, we found ourselves staying awake for 24 hour stretches, preparing numerous powerpoint slides and discussing complex strategies. Pretty soon, the classrooms became our second home and it was there that our team trained hard together, and whilst doing so, formed a strong bond – one which could only be forged by enduring trying times together.

We figured that our direct competition was going to be very tough, as the teams taking part were all from top international business schools with histories of having won past case competitions. And so, vowing to face the competition, we exhausted every avenue in preparing for our competition: calling on seniors to share experiences, watching videotapes of past presentations, consulting with our expert professors and of course, not forgetting sheer hard work!

Our competition week started off with a whole list of activities, planned and executed by the wonderfully efficient MMICC committee. Activities ranged from the mundane talks by sponsors, to fun-filled social events such as karaoke, and even adrenaline filled, action-packed snow tubing! All of us had great fun, due to the openness and fun-loving spirits of all the participants and organizers, and the best part was that everyone played so hard that it almost seemed like

there was no competition! Many a new friendship was forged over bottles of beer, karaoke singing and cocktail dinners, and of course, snow fights on the ski slopes.

However, the dawn of the competition day brought everyone back to the purpose of their round-the-world trip to Montreal, which was to take part in a case competition! Teams were given access to the case at staggered intervals and every team had exactly 22 hours to devour the case, formulate their strategy and prepare their winning presentations. Then, teams were given 2 hours to rehearse their delivery, following which they would make the first of 2 presentations to an independent and distinguished panel of judges. 2 presentations to 2 different panels would determine the eventual winners.

Whilst other teams were getting all serious and apprehensive prior to the release of the case, anyone looking at our team would have thought that we had no competition, as we were laughing and joking in high spirits! To me, that was confirmation that our team had the best synergy as we were able to have fun together, despite the pressures of the impending competition.

During the case, we applied systematically whatever analytical styles we had learned and analyzed the case from a number of perspectives. Working under strict time constraints was not new to us as we had had a number of simulations and many cans of redbull kept us going strong throughout the 24 hours with minimal sleep. The thing I am most proud about is that our team has never ever fought before, and in spite of the pressures of the competition, that didn't change. In fact, the competition brought us even closer together and the memories of working with the best team would always remain warm in our hearts.

Our presentations went exceedingly well, and we had a huge following waiting to enter the rooms to watch us present. Many a smiling face came up to congratulate us on the job well done, but we didn't let any of the compliments get to our head, because we believed in not counting our chickens before they hatch.

And so, after a grand gala dinner, it was time for the results to be released. Everyone waited with bated breath as the presenter went on stage; the silence in the room was so great you could hear a pin drop! When we heard the words "Team 5, National University of Singapore" as the winner, we were so shocked that it took a few seconds before it hit home – we had won! Needless to say, the after-dinner farewell party was a blast! There were no hard feelings between those with prizes and those without; everyone had a whale of a time partying together for the last time.

The next morning, many of the teams left Montreal richer – filled with memories and the experience of a great competition, filled with friendships of new friends round the world, filled with the joy of having the most amazing week of their lives. As some stories go, some people even left their hearts in Montreal, but that is a story for another day.

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NUSBSA-Faculty Roundtable - Intellectual Leadership on 19 April