

***Targeted Benchmarking on  
Company Involvement in University Case Competitions***



CAHRS Partners have the opportunity to benchmark with other partner companies on HR topics of interest. The benchmarking is typically conducted with 5-7 other CAHRS Partners selected by the company that initiated the request. The CAHRS office identifies the appropriate connections at selected companies and the benchmarking company then schedules 1:1 phone calls to explore their questions.

Examples of recent requests include: Sponsorship Initiatives, Organization Designs and Structures, Diversity Metrics, Talent Management Practices, Competency Models and a variety of HR Policy Questions (i.e. Relocation, Cost of Living, Airline Mile Usage, etc.).

CAHRS partners find this more qualitative approach to benchmarking very valuable for revealing novel insights and practices, as well as for building their network. At the conclusion of the process, the benchmarking company shares an anonymized summary of their findings with the participating companies and CAHRS, who then makes them available so all partners can benefit from the learning.



How many teams are involved with the different steps of the case competition (initial signup, 1<sup>st</sup> round, 2<sup>nd</sup> round, etc.) and how do you limit the number of participants?

### Company A

- a. 1 day, couple hour event, teams answered questions and presented
- b. Just students at a partner university. Any students of any major.
- c. Limiting teams was not a problem. 5 or 6 teams. 4 or 5 people per team.

### Company B

- a. Around 15
- b. They have to meet certain criteria, and write up to 250 words about why they want to participate in the competition.

What does the budget generally contain (use of internal resources, external resources)? How do you decide the amount to invest in the case competition?

- a. Budget allocated per university. Consistent year to year. Bought lunch for participants. Provide prizes for winning team. University HR campus team has the budget they get to decide what to do with it.

- a. Fairly new case comp. Past years it has just been prize money. Trying to increase budget slowly each year as we grow the size of the case competition.

What is your main purpose for holding the case competition?

- a. Good exposure for those outside of the HR function to learn about HR
- b. Gain great talent from majors outside of HR
- c. Main focus was engagement
- d. Considered for using as a hiring mechanism.

- a. Considered for using as a hiring/recruiting mechanism.
- b. Solve actual business cases for the company.

How is HR involved with the case competition?

- a. University team does recruiting. A recruiter does manage the company's recruiting.

- a. HR Team members from the business unit and overall company have built the case, plan the case timeline, and judge the case.

## What is the reasoning for doing or not doing the case competition virtually?

### Company A

- a. Case is all in-person. Want to make it very approachable and very engaging. No pre-work required going in to make it very approachable.

### Company B

- a. Cost plays a role. Time for travel has to be considered. Currently considering do a mix of virtual round and in-person round but awaiting budget constraints before deciding.

## How long have you held a case competition and what have been some of the challenges of it?

- a. Only done it 1 year.
- b. How can we continue to grow the competition and tap into other pools of talent?
- c. It does require prep work leading up to it, allowing adequate time for registrations to occur, correct headcount for rooms and food (logistics).

- a. Done 2 years. Currently planning the 3<sup>rd</sup> year of competition
- b. Knowing what the budget will be
- c. The people who plan the competitions have changed every year; sometimes multiple times.
- d. Trying to use it as a recruiting mechanism without knowing the business needs at the time of the competition.

## What has made it valuable to the participants?

- a. Exposure to questions that HR professionals might face/ be thinking about
- b. A fun experience to work with colleagues at school.
- c. Benefit of gift cards if you win and free lunch.
- d. Network with HR professionals from the company
- e. The case was about an imaginary company.
- f. We have engagement across all levels (campus recruiting, vice presidents)

- a. Chance to interact with professionals from the company
- b. Experience solving a real business problem
- c. Exposure to values of the company

## What do you do about coordinating travel funding?

### Company A

- a. No travel required because judges go to school and are from Seattle. Judges are part of HR campus team

### Company B

- a. Previously had no need to coordinate travel funding, when needed considering using company travel planners.

## What have you done to increase participation?

- a. Identify other talent resources that are not already tapped into. (other majors outside HR)
- b. Work with student leaders and have official communication with the leaders to new student areas.

- a. Increased recruiting at schools that commonly compete in case competitions.
- b. Added online resources/landing page to drive online traffic when searching for case competitions.