The annual BCLC Target Case Competition is an event well-loved by its participants, so when I saw the sign-up sheet online this past Fall, I knew I had to participate. The premise of the Target Case Competition is to give BCLC students the opportunity to gain knowledge and skills through experiential learning. Participants are split up into teams and together they are given a case study, presented by Target employees, about a current business problem at Target. The teams attend a “Q&A” session, where the Target representatives present the case in further detail, and students have the opportunity to ask questions. The teams then have two weeks to create a solution to the case and the competition culminates in an afternoon of presentations to Target judges.

The 2019 Target Case Competition kicked off on Thursday, October 3rd, when all of the participants were split up into teams and notified of their group and the case study via email. I clicked on the case and, as a Marketing major, I was excited to see that our case involved promotion and increasing in-store foot traffic. Immediately, one of my group members made a GroupMe chat so we could all plan what days we would meet, and do some initial brainstorming. We all met later in the week and generated a few solid solutions that we could use as the basis of our presentation. Each of us thought the ideas over, and at our next meeting we picked the solution we thought would work best. After selecting our plan, we delegated tasks within the group to ensure our
project would be completed thoroughly and in a timely fashion. For example, I worked on the “SWOT” analysis slides for our presentation, while another group member worked on the slides explaining our loyalty program. At our next meeting, we went over each slide to make sure we kept the same flow throughout the entirety of the presentation. This process allowed us to work more efficiently, while still maintaining a streamlined presentation, which the judges were in favor of.

A short two weeks later, Presentation Day came! We all met in the School of Business Boardroom on October 23rd, and nervous energy filled the room. All of the groups left for the School of Business Lounge to wait for our presentation time, and each group came back from the Boardroom after their presentation, feeling excited and pleased with their performance. Presenting our solution really taught my group members and I to stay on our toes. Going into our presentation, we thought we had everything mapped out and it would be a walk in the park. Boy, were we wrong! We ran into a problem with the “clicker,” which advances the presentation slides when pressed. Throughout our entire presentation, our clicker kept automatically switching slides quickly, before we finished presenting the information on the prior slide! Although it was scary and nerve-wracking in the moment, it taught my group members and I to stay cool, calm, and collected, and to always expect the unexpected.

You can feel completely prepared going into a presentation, but that doesn’t mean the presentation will go exactly as you plan. Our hard work paid off -- our group was awarded 3rd place at the conclusion of the competition. Overall, this experience taught us a lot that can’t be taught in the classroom, such as teamwork, strategy, presentation skills, and being creative when faced with a challenge. These skills are sure to come in handy in our future careers, and I would highly recommend this experience to all future BCLC members.

— Olivia Hoffman