2016 Patagonia Eco Innovation Case Competition

Compete to win $10,000.... and a visit to Patagonia headquarters!

Patagonia faces a real and current challenge and wants to hear from you.

Timeline:

- **Registration opens:** November 20, 2015.
- **Eligibility:** Teams must be comprised of 4-6 graduate school students (Masters and Ph.D.) from U.S. based universities that are home to an accredited business school. (See “Forming a Team” for additional information.)
- **Submission of FAQs: December 4, 2015.** Initial questions about team formation and the competition must be submitted by this deadline at [j.mp/patagonia16_FAQ](http://j.mp/patagonia16_FAQ)
- **Initial FAQs Released: December 9, 2015.** A PDF answering questions submitted will be posted online and emailed to all teams.
- **Team registration deadline:** December 18, 2015. Competition administrators reserve the right to extend targeted invitations after this deadline.
- **Case study release: January 25, 2016.** The Patagonia Eco Innovation Case Competition is released to the teams. (See “Case Study Information” for additional information.) Each team will receive the case via email and have approximately three weeks to prepare and submit their proposals.
- **Final submission of case questions: January 31, 2016.** All teams must submit their questions about the case by midnight PST at [j.mp/patagonia16_FAQ](http://j.mp/patagonia16_FAQ)
- **Case FAQs Released: February 2, 2016.** A PDF responding to submitted questions will be emailed to all teams.
- **Proposal deadline: February 15, 2016.** (See “Proposal Details” and “Submission Guidelines” for information regarding the submissions.)
- **Semi-finalist selection:** Proposals will be reviewed by Patagonia. (See “Proposal Selection Criteria” for additional information.) Eight semi-finalist teams will be chosen to participate in the final event. Three backup teams will also be selected.
- **Semi-finalist announcement: March 1, 2016.** Eight semi-finalist teams publicly announced.
- **Final event: April 21, 2016 (evening) to April 22, 2016.** University of California-Berkeley Haas School of Business in Berkeley, California. Teams present their solutions to a team of judges comprised of a suite of Patagonia senior leaders and key employees and engage in question and answers. Patagonia judges determine Winner and Runner-up. See “Final event Proposal selection criteria” for additional information.
  - Each team is responsible for expenses associated with travel and lodging.
- **Surf with Patagonia!: Memorial Day Long Weekend, 2016.** Winning team hosted at Patagonia headquarters in Ventura, California. Flight, local transportation, food and lodging to attend the event will be paid for and arranged. Visit includes a surf outing with Patagonia.
Case publication: 2016-2017. The case will be published in California Management Review and part of the Berkeley-Haas case series for use in university classrooms throughout the U.S. and beyond. Input from semi-finalist teams will be included as case content.

Forming a Team:

- Teams must be comprised of 4-6 graduate school students (Masters and Ph.D.) from U.S. based universities that are home to an accredited business school. Each team member must be currently enrolled as a student and taking credited coursework. Each team member must be from the same university. At least one team member must be an MBA student. Executive MBA students are not eligible. Teams may include any combination of part-time and/or full-time students. Multiple teams from the same university are permitted to register. Current or former employees employed at Patagonia’s headquarters in Ventura, California are not eligible.
- Diversity in disciplinary perspectives is strongly encouraged. While a team could be, for example, comprised entirely of MBA students, this is discouraged. Patagonia values differing perspectives represented by disciplines from across the university. In cases where multiple MBA students comprise a team (or multiple students from any particular university program comprise a team) it will be important in the proposal to explicitly call out diversity in backgrounds. Gender-balanced conformation of the teams is also highly recommended.
- See “Case Study Information” for additional information that may help to inform team selections.
- Teams are encouraged to leverage student networks, such as the Net Impact student organization, to form teams. For example, Net Impact chapters may consider hosting mixers to connect students from across their respective universities to help enable multi-disciplinary teams.
- While not required, teams are encouraged to identify an advisor who is a member of the university faculty who can provide on campus support to the teams. The advisor is not considered a member of the team. A likely “good” advisor is an individual with one or more of the following attributes: experience with student and other case competitions; experience with business case studies; connections across the university to enable the effective identification of useful university resources; sustainability knowledge as applied to the field of business; and commitment to the team. The faculty advisor for the Net Impact chapter may be one potential advisor teams may consider approaching.
Patagonia is known for its high-performance clothing for the outdoors – and quality waterproof gear is a critical component of the company’s technical lines. Along with other outdoor suppliers, Patagonia for years has relied on fluorocarbon-based Durable Water Repellant (DWR) chemistries to bead up then disperse surface moisture from rainwear. Unfortunately, the by-products of these chemicals, known as PFCs, are toxic and persist in the environment, a combination that makes it unacceptable despite its excellent performance.

For the past decade, Patagonia has carefully researched and tested every available fluorocarbon-free alternative. Many finishes—including waxes and silicones—will lower the surface tension of a fabric enough to cause water to bead up and disperse rather than saturate. But they are easily contaminated by dirt and oil and rapidly lose their effectiveness, reducing the effective lifetime of a garment.

The short life span is of special concern. A rain shell that stops preventing saturation functionally degrades into a wind shell long before the garment itself wears out. The garment must be replaced more frequently, which constitutes its own environmental problem. Every replacement garment comes with its own environmental cost in energy and water used and waste and greenhouse gases generated. So sacrificing garment life is not an option.

Patagonia has adopted a temporary solution, which it says is not good enough but represents the best alternative available so far. Like some others in the outdoor industry, it has switched from a C8 fluorocarbon-based treatment to a shorter-chain C6 treatment, also fluorocarbon-based, but with by-products that break down faster in the environment and with less potential toxicity over time to humans, wildlife and fish.

A recent Greenpeace study found traces of PFCs in the waters of high-altitude lakes around the world, illustrating why Patagonia has placed such an urgency on actively researching DWR chemistries that will afford high performance with less environmental impact. Patagonia’s mission statement reads: “Build the best product, cause no unnecessary harm, use business to inspire and implement solutions to the environmental crisis.” While using any PFCs fulfills one aspect of the company’s mission—building the best product—it fails to uphold the company’s environmental commitments, leading to a tension between quality and environmental harm.

This case focuses squarely on your team’s guidance to Patagonia for what it should do.
Proposal Details:

- After receiving the case, student teams analyze the case study while they are at their respective campuses and develop a proposal to respond to the issues.
- While the questions included within the case may be helpful for provoking useful deliberations, each student team should focus its proposal to respond to the following:
  
  - **What specifically should Patagonia do?**
    - In the immediate term (eg. next 3 months)
    - In the short-medium term (eg. next 2 years)
  - **Provide a high-level vision of the impact you expect your proposal will have over the longer term (eg. 5-10 years).**
  - **In your response, keep in mind the guidance included in the “Proposal selection criteria” section.**

- Each student team can submit only one proposal for the case study.
- All proposals and associated materials produced during the case competition are the rightful property of Patagonia. A fundamental strength of this competition is that Patagonia is utilizing it to search for a real solution to a real problem faced by the company. Senior leaders and key employees from Patagonia are eager to evaluate student solutions with the purpose of possibly implementing them.

Formatting:

- **Overall formatting:** The proposal must be written in English and should be submitted in 11-point Arial font, 1.5 spacing, letter or A4 format, 1” for both left and right margins, and 1” for top and bottom margins. Please include page numbers at the bottom, center of each page.
  - Information not contained within the proposal itself will not be considered (for example, external links will not be considered).
  - The proposal must be submitted in both Microsoft Word and PDF format. Neither file should exceed 5MB. This may require reducing image resolution if your team elects to include any imagery.
    - Therefore a total of two attachments are required. These attachments should have identical names with the only difference being their file formats (.docx and .pdf).
  - In total, with cover page and optional annexes and appendices, the submission should not exceed 12 pages.
- **Page 1: The cover page.** The cover page must include the words “2016 Patagonia Eco Innovation Case Competition”, your team name, the name of your university, the names of each member of the team along with the anticipated academic degree and the university-issued email address for each
member, the names of the accrediting bodies for the business school at your university (see examples below), and the date of submission.

- Examples of accrediting bodies (and links to perform searches for your university) include:
  - Western Association of Schools and Colleges (WASC): [http://www.wascsenior.org/institutions](http://www.wascsenior.org/institutions)

- Note: Applications are subject to rejection if any of these guidelines are not followed.

- **Page 2: Biography page.** A very brief biography of each team member and, if applicable, the faculty advisor. Consider how to best indicate that your team brings diversity of disciplinary perspectives and is well-positioned to devise an innovative solution to an eco-challenge. For example, teams may consider including a quote from each team member with respect to what specific competencies and experiences each brings that will be of service in this case competition. Do not include pictures/headshots of team members.
  - Somewhere on the page include the statement “**We, the students on the honor code of our school, confirm that this proposal is our original work.**” We expect students participating in this competition demonstrate fair-play and honesty and use their common sense to ensure this is a fair competition.

- **Page 3: Executive summary.** Use of bullet points is highly recommended.

- **Page 4 and beyond: The body.** The body should not exceed more than 5 pages of text. For example, if your team uses all 5 pages then the body of your proposal will be from page 4-8.
  - You may include up to 4 additional pages that includes references or annexes and appendices supporting data/analyses.
  - Any references that you choose to include should be included as footnotes and displayed in standard academic format or according to ISO 690:2010.

**Submission Guidelines:**

Each team is required to submit their proposals through two mediums: via [https://responsiblebusiness.submittable.com/submit](https://responsiblebusiness.submittable.com/submit) as well as emailing it to respbus@haas.berkeley.edu. Both submissions must occur prior to February 15, 2016 at 11:59pm Pacific time (GMT-7).

- Go to [https://responsiblebusiness.submittable.com/submit](https://responsiblebusiness.submittable.com/submit).
- Select "Patagonia Eco Innovation Case Competition 2016" and click the "Submit" button
PATAGONIA CASE COMPETITION as of February 9, 2016

• Create an account (this will allow you to log back in to view results at a later date)
• Scroll down, fill out the information marked with a red asterisk, and choose files to upload.
  o As described in “Proposal details” the proposal must be submitted in both Microsoft Word and PDF formats.
• Click “Submit” button. You should receive an automated confirmation of your submission.
• Send an email to respbus@haas.berkeley.edu with the subject line “Patagonia case: YOUR TEAM NAME” with the Microsoft Word and PDF attachments.

Proposal Selection Criteria:

Proposals will be reviewed by Patagonia and all decisions for selection will be made by Patagonia. Successful teams will be those that best take into account the fact that actual Patagonia employees are making the selection decisions. Criteria for selection will include considerations for the following:

• How feasible is this solution? Can it be implemented?
• How impactful is this solution? How well does it address the challenge at hand?
• How innovative is this solution?
• How well does this solution support the Patagonia mission to “Build the best product, cause no unnecessary harm, use business to inspire and implement solutions to the environmental crisis.”?
• How well does this solution support and enhance the Patagonia brand?
• How professional and appropriate for Patagonia is the submission? In other words, does this proposal reflect who Patagonia is?

Additional considerations may be made regarding characteristics for desired team compositions as described within the section “Forming a Team.”

Final Event Details:

• Eight semi-finalist teams travel to the University of California-Berkeley Haas School of Business in Berkeley, California for April 21, 2016 (evening) to April 22, 2016.
• A series of Patagonia-related activities are being planned as part of the final event. Bring your hiking boots!
• Teams present their solutions in-person to judges comprised of a suite of Patagonia senior leaders and key employees. This may include, for example, the Patagonia CEO and other senior leaders and key employees of the company working the challenge presented by this case. Each team will have window of time to expand upon the content provided in their original proposal where this will be followed by a question and answer session with the Patagonia judges. Patagonia judges will determine the top three teams.
Prizes:

- The winning team receives a $10,000 prize (intended to be evenly shared amongst team members) and is invited to Patagonia headquarters in Ventura, California. Flight, local transportation, food and hotel to attend will be paid for and arranged. Visit includes a surf outing with Patagonia. The visit to Patagonia headquarters is intended to take place during the Memorial Day long weekend, 2016.
- The top three teams receive official recognition by Patagonia for their respective contributions to the 2016 Patagonia Eco Innovation Case Competition.
- All on-site finalists will receive Patagonia swag for their participation in the event.

Additional notes:

- All submissions and associated materials presented throughout the case competition are the rightful property of Patagonia.
- The Rules and Guidelines are not all encompassing and situations may arise that have not been covered. Any issues or disputes that may arise will be resolved in good faith by the competition organizers. While highly unlikely, in the event of an irreconcilable dispute, the conference organizers reserve the right to exercise discretion to make the final decision.
- This competition is based on a system of honor. Adherence to the rules is considered a minimum where all participants are expected to use their common sense to ensure this is a fair competition.
- The conference organizers reserve the right to reject, or alter in any fashion, the involvement by any particular individual or team or take any other decision felt necessary to ensure the integrity of the competition.