2027 Bateman Case Study Competition
Rules and Guidelines
(As of Nov. 24, 2026)

The following are the basic rules and guidelines for participation in the 2027 Bateman Case Study Competition. PRSSA may edit these guidelines at any time during the Competition. All additions will be emailed to the specified team contacts and posted on the PRSSA website. Teams are responsible to make themselves aware of these additions by providing a valid contact email address on their intent-to-enter form and checking the PRSSA website often.

ENTERING THE COMPETITION

Team Requirements

Teams must be composed of four to six teammates who are the following:

- Full-time or part-time undergraduate students.
- Enrolled in the same school.
- Current PRSSA members who paid March 2026 or November 2026 dues.

Teams may have no less than four and no more than six members. Each team may have no more than two-part time students. In all aspects of the campaign, only team members may participate.

Team members must disclose any type of previous relationship with the client/sponsor such as an internship or volunteer experience.

Team Advisers

Each team must have a Faculty Adviser and a Professional Adviser (not necessarily the Chapter's Faculty Adviser and/or Professional Adviser). Advisers do not need to be PRSA members. The role of the advisers is to stimulate creativity and give direction, but they may not contribute to the actual creation of the campaign. PRSSA encourages advisers to assure that their teams adhere to the Competition rules. Advisers must review the goals, strategy and tactics determined by the team, as well as advise on the elements of a complete public relations campaign. (Please also encourage teams to review last year's 1st place team's winning summary.)

The same person (or people) may advise multiple teams, but they must be cautious not to share research, ideas or information between their teams. One professional cannot serve as both the Faculty and Professional Adviser for the same team.

Multiple Teams per School

A single school may submit multiple teams. There is no limit to the number of teams from the same school that can participate. Please choose distinctive team names and label entries clearly so materials from the same schools will not be confused.

If multiple entries from one school are advanced in the judging, those entries will be reviewed collectively to ensure that teams did not share research, tactics or evaluation measures, giving them an unfair advantage over schools who fielded a single team. Based on that review, the judges will determine whether all the entries continue in the judging.

Registration

An intent-to-enter form for each team are due to PRSSA Headquarters no later than Nov. 16, 2026. A confirmation email will be sent to all teams by Nov. 25, 2026 so be sure to include a valid

contact email address on your form. The registration fee for this year's Competition will be covered by PRSSA.

RULES OF PARTICIPATION

Timeline

For a complete list of competition deadlines, please see the official Bateman Case Study Competition Timeline. Teams may begin planning their campaigns immediately.

Research, Planning, Implementation and Evaluation

Each campaign should have four phases: research, planning, Implementation and evaluation. These phases are essential components of strategic, effective public relations.

The research phase may include primary and secondary research, and each team should follow its school's IRB guidelines. Judges will look to see that the research was relevant to the brief's goals and teams should clearly demonstrate in their entry how the research findings influenced their planning, execution and evaluation.

Teams must also understand the requirements for the incorporation of any brand, logo, website and messaging. Expectations and requirements are in the competition brief and can be clarified through correspondence with PRSSA Headquarters.

There is no specific timeframe for the research and planning stages (for other specific dates, see the Timeline document). Your team should set goals, objectives, strategies and tactics (see below for definitions of each) during the planning stage.

Goals: Goals are longer-term, broad, global and future statements of "being."

Objectives: Objectives focus on the shorter term. Objectives (1) define WHAT opinion, attitude or behavior you want to achieve from specific publics, (2) specify how much change you want to achieve from each public, and (3) tell by when you want to achieve that change. Objectives should be SMART:

- Specific (both action to be taken and public involved)
- Measurable
- Attainable
- Results (outcome) oriented (or relevant)
- Time-specific

Strategies: Strategies provide the road map to your objectives.

Tactics/tools: Tactics are specific elements of a strategy or tools for accomplishing a strategy.

Since one purpose of this Competition is to enhance students' professional skill, teams should utilize all of their resources, including members of their sponsoring PRSA Chapter. Professionals who assist teams act in the same capacity as the team adviser; they stimulate creativity and give direction but may not contribute to the actual construction or creation of the campaign.

The execution phase of the campaign begins February 1, 2027 and ends March 1, 2027 which means the implementation of the campaign plan (including any special events, outreach, collateral distributions, etc.) must happen within those dates. Websites, including social media, associated with a team's campaign cannot be accessible before February 1. **Website(s) or social**

media channel(s) may NOT remain open beyond March 1. For evaluation purposes, no information or statistics beyond March 1 can be used as part of the entry. Also, teams may reference media coverage that occurs after March 1 as long as the tactic that generated the media coverage was completed within the appropriate timeframe. Violation of these time limits is grounds for disqualification.

Evaluation methods should be relevant to the campaign goals and demonstrate the success of specific, measurable objectives established during the planning phase.

Finances

Teams may not spend more than $300 (expense limit) on the campaign. The value of in-kind donations cannot exceed $1,000. Money or in-kind donations are not provided by PRSSA.

An in-kind donation is any service or product that normally has a cost but is being offered "free of charge." The cash value of any item in this category must be deducted from the in-kind donation limit. If the donation has no charge to the public, such as brochures produced by a visitors' bureau, you do not have to deduct anything from the limit.

Examples of in-kind donations:

- A café provides free pizza for an event. Calculate what it would have cost to buy the pizza and deduct that amount from the In-kind Donation Limit.
- A caterer provides servers to pass hors d'oeuvres at an event. Calculate the cost of the service, including tip, and deduct that cost from the In-kind Donation Limit.

Expense Limit: $300 **In-kind Donation Limit: $1,000**

These totals cannot be combined. Entries must include separate, itemized lists of expenses and in-kind donations. The cost of producing your entry is included in these totals.

Strive to make the list of itemized expenses and in-kind donations as clear as possible. Teams may be asked to present receipts for any expenses included on the list. In-kind donations do not need a receipt, but the in-kind donator may be questioned regarding the value of the donation. Please keep in mind that successful campaigns will most likely require full use of the budget allowed.

Entries

Entries must be submitted electronically.
Entries must contain the following:

- **Cover or title page** — listing campaign title, school name, team name (if applicable), advisers and team members.
- **Table of Contents** — listing all pages within the entry.
- **Eight-page summary** — a written outline of the case study summarizing all key points. It could include a situation analysis, research, goals and objectives, strategies and tactics, and evaluations. The summary should give the judges a thorough view of the complete campaign. *Teams without an eight-page summary or with a summary longer than eight pages will be disqualified. (Cover or title page is not counted as part of the eight-page summary)*
    - **List of itemized expenses needs to be included within the eight-page summary** (see Finances above)
    - **List of itemized in-kind donations needs to be included within the eight-page summary** (see Finances above)

Also submit exhibits/appendices with detailed information validating the campaign strategy and supporting the summary. Exhibits/appendices may include the following:

- Research summaries, proposals for tangential programs.
- Samples of collateral materials, media materials and schedules.
- Photographs, video footage or audio recordings of events and promotions

Apart from the cover page, table of content and summary, entries may not include more than 50 additional pages. These additional pages include the exhibit/appendix section.

The total number of pages allowed in one entry is 60 pages (one for cover page; one for table of contents; eight for summary; 50 for appendices). Each page of the entire campaign should be numbered.

Submitting Entries

Bateman submission will be sent electronically to PRSSA Headquarters. Details regarding the submission process will be provided directly to participating team. Bateman entries are due electronically by Monday, March 22nd at 2:00 p.m. ET.

Liability

Participants agree to assume any and all risks and waive claims against PRSA and PRSSA, except in the case of willful misconduct, for any injury, death, damage, or loss of property, revenue, or profits, whether direct, indirect, or consequential, arising from their participation in this Competition, whether the injury, death, damage, or loss arises through negligence or otherwise.

JUDGING AND AWARDS

Judging Process

PRSSA Headquarters will verify that teams have followed all Competition rules. The judging process then takes place in two phases.

Phase 1 — In April 2027, several judging teams composed of PRSA members and client will select the honorable mention teams and three finalist teams. The finalist teams advance to Phase 2 of judging and will be notified shortly after.

Phase 2 — In May 2027, the three finalist teams will present their campaigns to a panel of client representatives and PRSA members in Los Angeles, California. PRSA pays travel and hotel costs (not including incidentals) for the finalist teams and one adviser from each team.

Note: Phase 1 judges may review only the content presented within the entry. Judges will not search online or use any other resource to determine additional information or content. If content is to be judged, it must be included in the entry.

Awards

The first-place team will receive $3,500 and a trophy; second-place team will receive $2,500 and a plaque; and the third-place team will receive $1,500 and a plaque. The finalist teams will be recognized during the PRSSA International Conference.

TIPS FOR SUCCESS

Use your research. Research should influence every campaign decision, and your entry needs to clearly show the judges how you used your research to make all your decisions.

Know the issue. You must know the campaign's issues and goals. This important content is detailed in the competition brief and can be clarified directly with PRSSA Headquarters.

Understand the terms. Strong entries outline important campaign elements such as the situation analysis, goals and objectives, strategies, tactics and evaluation. We caution teams to be sure they understand the definition of each element. Some teams lose points because (for example) their objectives were not actually objectives, or they confused tactics and strategies.

Measure your results. Judges may deduct points if the objectives are not measurable, or if the reported results are not relevant to the stated goals and objectives.

Follow the rules. Entries will lose points or be disqualified for not complying with the rules. Commonly missed rules include failing to include an eight-page summary or budget, not implementing the campaign and not providing justification for rule violations.

Keep online tactics on schedule. Any websites you create — including social media pages — cannot be public before Feb. 1 or after March 1.

Proofread and organize. Judges look to see a team's professionalism reflected in an entry that is well structured and thoroughly proofread. Judges may deduct points for entries with an unreasonable number of grammar and spelling errors, poor formatting or a disorganized structure.

FURTHER QUESTIONS

Questions about the Competition rules can be sent to PRSSA Headquarters at bateman@prsa.org or ben.castleman@prsa.org.