



Greetings!

The team at Walmart is very excited to sponsor the Collegiate Challenge, co-sponsored by the **Council for Retail and Sales, located at DeSales University College of Business**. This team-based competition is tasked to solve a real business opportunity for our company.

The top team will be awarded \$1,200 to be divided by team members, a trophy and their names on the CRS Big Trophy which will be housed at DeSales University. The second-place team will be awarded \$400 to be divided by the team.

The competition culminates in a regional competition to be held on October 31, 2024, at the DeSales University campus. Each school or branch may submit up to 2 teams. **Last year some of the colleges ran a local competition and then sent their top team(s) to the final competition. This is a great class or club (e.g., Enactus, Business Clubs, LaunchBox) project!** The competition will be judged on the written executive summary and the presentation.

Details of the Challenge are in the following pages. We believe presenting students with real business problems and having them develop solutions to those problems will help them bridge the gap between academics and the business world. Thanks for participating!

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2024 Collegiate Challenge

Powered By



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Important Dates

Case Information Released	By the end of August 2024
Wednesday Sep 18, 2024	Intent to Participate Form is Due
Wednesday Sep 18, 2024 7 – 8 p.m.	Information session -- Zoom meeting with Walmart Personnel
Saturday Oct 19, 2024	Executive Summary due by 5:00 pm. Send to Elaine Thode, CRS Program Director, elaine.thode@desales.edu
Tuesday Oct 29	Downloadable presentation due by 5 p.m. Send to Elaine Thode, CRS Program Director, elaine.thode@desales.edu
Thursday Oct 31	Presentations by Teams to Judges at DeSales University.

Direct questions about the competition to: Elaine Thode, CRS Program Director, elaine.thode@desales.edu

Introduction

You've heard of the Shark Tank television show. We're taking that concept and applying it to a collegiate competition in retailing and sales! When you enter the **CRS Collegiate Challenge, Powered by Walmart**, you gain both practical and theoretical experience in the development of recommendations for a major corporate client. This challenge allows you the ability to bring your lifelong learning skills to a competition that will help to build a great base for your personal career in business. The focus of the competition will be on helping Walmart develop ideas on how to reduce retail shrinkage, specifically theft, which are cost-effective. The competition will be held Oct 31, 2024, at DeSales University, Center Valley, PA. The Collegiate Challenge will surface ideas and creative solutions that will directly impact the company.

Case Information

Walmart Background / Overview

Walmart is one of the biggest retailers in the world, with the company and its subsidiaries employing approximately 2.3 million associates worldwide.



According to their [annual report](#), “Walmart Inc. is a people-led, technology-powered omni-channel retailer dedicated to help people around the world save money and live better – anytime and anywhere – by providing the opportunity to shop in both retail stores and through eCommerce, and to access our other service offerings. Through innovation, we strive to continuously improve a customer-centric experience that seamlessly integrates our eCommerce and retail stores in an omni-channel offering that saves time for our customers. Each week, we serve approximately 240 million customers who visit more than 10,500 stores and numerous eCommerce websites in 20 countries. (p. 6).”

Their mission statement is simple: We save people money so they can live better.

This case focuses on ways to reduce shrinkage in Walmart stores. Shrinkage is a loss of inventory due to damage, spoilage, or theft both online and in-store. Most losses are attributed to theft whether by employees, customers, or organized retail crime (ORC) theft, which is a coordinated large-scale theft with the intent to resell the stolen items.

In 2022, the retail industry experienced \$112 billion in shrinkage losses, up from about \$94 billion in 2021 ([NRF Security Survey 2023](#)). The National Retail Federation (NRF) reports that theft accounts for about 65% of overall shrink, with some sectors experiencing theft rates as high as 70%. In recent years, incidents of violence or threats of violence have also increased, especially with the rise in ORC.

Case Focus and Opportunity

This case focuses on providing Walmart ideas on how to reduce shrinkage in their stores. Retail theft not only impacts profits but also impacts the customer experience in various ways.

In addition to proprietary practices, Walmart uses a number of methods to curtail retail theft including ([Kline, 2023](#))

- Utilizing loss prevention personnel
- Closely monitoring self-checkout lanes
- Removing self-checkout in some locations
- Closing select locations if theft is unmanageable
- Adding a police station to an Atlanta store

According to John Furner, President and CEO, Walmart U.S. (Kline, 2023)



"And as we've said in the past, it's been challenging for us. It's been challenging really for — for all of retail. So, we're going to actively manage this issue. We always do, we always have, and we're going to continue to take the steps that are reasonable and required to make sure we're protecting our customers, protecting our associates, and protecting our assets and inventory," he said.

Case Question:

Walmart is seeking new ideas on how to approach the rise in retail theft. What programs or activities can Walmart implement at the store level without significantly impacting sales and profits? Ideas should be replicable across Walmart stores. While not required, it is highly recommended that members of the team visit a Walmart store.

Assignment / Deliverables

Assignment: Approach this as if your team is a part of a consulting company.

Create a strategic business plan that incorporates ideas/recommendations around the question posed above.

Ideas can include all aspects that are relevant to the questions posed. Teams will be responsible for researching the budget needed for their plan. Each team will then pitch their plan to the judges, detailing their recommendations, implementation, timeline, and financial costs to the company. The team should provide rationale for recommendations.

Deliverables are as follows:

1. An expanded executive summary (5-8 pages)
2. Presentation (15 minutes max)

Ideas presented should be actionable. This means that the Walmart team can implement the idea in a short period of time and that the idea deserves time, money, and energy to expand the idea.

On Oct 31, teams will present to judges, followed immediately by a 10-minute question and answer session with the judges. The winners will be announced on that day.



Useful Sites

How to Write a Case Study: <https://www.thoughtco.com/how-to-write-a-case-study-analysis-466329>

How to Write Executive Summaries:

<https://www.uakron.edu/cba/docs/communications/WritingExecutiveSummaries.pdf>

Rules and Procedures

1. The competition will be held Oct 31, 2024, at DeSales University, 2755 Station Ave., Center Valley, PA. More information on the venue will be sent to participating schools as we approach the deadlines.
2. Each college or university invited to compete is allowed two (2) teams in the competition. If the institution has multiple campuses (i.e., Penn State), each campus will be counted as a separate college and can send up to two teams. Each team must be comprised of at least 3 but no more than 4 students. If a team of three, at least 2 team members must also present at the competition. If a team of four, at least three of the four team members must also present at the competition. The challenge may be a class project, a club project or, if there is enough interest among students, a group of students may get together and compete. There **MUST** be a faculty advisor to the team. One faculty advisor **MUST** accompany the team to the competition venue. Special exceptions may be made for illness, etc. and are at the discretion of the sponsoring organization.
3. Each school entering the Collegiate Challenge must submit their intent to participate form by Sept 18, 2024, on the Council for Retail and Sales website.
4. Students working on the project must be undergraduates from a 2-year or 4-year college/university, with a graduation date of 2024 or later.
5. Each team is responsible for their own expenses (i.e., travel, transportation, lodging, materials for the presentation). Food will be provided on site (free of charge) and typically includes a light breakfast and full lunch.
6. **The finished executive summary must be received by Saturday, Oct 19 at 5:00 p.m.** Projects should be sent by email to Elaine Thode, Council for Retail and Sales, DeSales University: elaine.thode@desales.edu. **NEW RULE FOR 2024:** Teams must submit a downloadable copy of the presentation by Tuesday, Oct 29 by 5 p.m. No changes can be made to the presentation after Oct 29. The presentation will be loaded onto the computer the morning of the presentation by Elaine. Presentations should be sent by email to Elaine Thode, Council for Retail and Sales, DeSales University: elaine.thode@desales.edu In case of technical issues, bring a thumb drive with a copy of your presentation to the event.
7. **Contacting Walmart:** Each team advisor (after submitting the intent to participate form) should collect questions that students may have regarding the competition as the semester progresses. These questions will then be submitted to the company representative at the end of each week (assuming there are questions). The company representative will assemble the questions and



provide general answers to the requesting advisor. The company representative at Walmart is Jonathan Vazques.

8. When entering the challenge all students and faculty advisors agree that all the ideas from the competition become the property of Walmart. They further agree that all the ideas for the paper, and the representative information provided within the paper are the work of the students. All competitors agree that they will receive no compensation for their work.

The Written Portion – Expanded Executive Summary

1. This challenge requires the development of a 5 – 8 page expanded executive summary. The expanded executive summary may NOT exceed the page limit. All pages, except the cover page, should be numbered. **All pages, including the cover page count in the page limit.**
2. The name of the competing college or university should appear on the cover page along with the company logo (which must conform to Walmart Communication Standards), the team's name, the students' names, and the name and contact information for the faculty advisor. Other information, graphics, etc., are acceptable.
3. Each team should generate secondary data to substantiate all material found within their executive summary. APA (American Psychological Association) style should be used for referencing purposes within the expanded executive summary. Primary research is accepted and encouraged.

Suggested Expanded Executive Summary Contents

Team members may decide on the contents. Shown below are suggested areas to include.

Introduction

Situation/SWOT

1. Current situation (research that describes current situation with regards to case)
2. Competitive Analysis (What are other competitors doing in this area)
3. SWOT analysis of the current situation

Objectives – use SMART objectives – Describe what your team wants to achieve as it relates to the case.

Recommendations – Provide recommendations and how to implement (including budget)



Evaluation– Provides ideas on how the recommendations will be evaluated

Conclusion

Works Cited – Include the research used in development of the expanded executive summary in APA (American Psychological Association) style.

The Presentation

1. Teams: Each team must be comprised of at least 3 but no more than 4 students. If a team of three, at least 2 team members must also present at the competition. If a team of four, at least three of the four team members must also present at the competition. Any work must be done by the students on the team. Exceptions are subject to the discretion of the sponsoring organization.
2. Timing: Each team will be required to make a 15-minute (limit) presentation to the judges. Following the presentation there will be a 10-minute (limit) question and answer (Q&A) session with the judges. The 15-minute limit is hard, meaning that, at the end of the 15 minutes, the person timing will say, “stop” and the presenting team must stop their presentation. A two-minute warning will be provided. The person timing will stop the judges Q&A sessions at the 10-minute mark, no matter where the teams or judges are in asking/answering the questions. The faculty advisor may attend the Q&A session but may not participate and should stand/sit away from the main table.
3. **NEW RULE FOR 2024:** Teams must submit a downloadable copy of the presentation by Tue. Oct 29 by 5 p.m. No changes can be made to the presentation after Oct 29. The presentation will be loaded onto the computer the morning of the presentation by Elaine. Presentations should be sent by email to Elaine Thode, Council for Retail and Sales, DeSales University: elaine.thode@desales.edu In case of technical issues, bring a thumb drive with a copy of your presentation to the event.
4. The team members MUST operate all electronic presentation devices. No one who is not a member of the team (including the team’s advisor) may help during the presentation. Teams are responsible for all their own equipment. The facility will have a computer with PowerPoint and Internet capabilities, a presentation remote control, and a screen to project the presentation.
5. The presentations may be made utilizing any method desired. Graphs, layouts, charts, etc. may be used and displayed. Computer-generated presentations are allowed. Students may show and/or hand the judges items (such as examples of creative ideas); however, students may not GIVE them any items (such as food, gifts etc.). Corrections to errors made in the expanded executive summary may not be made and given to the judges during the presentation.
6. Anyone may be present during presentations. No one may enter the presentation rooms after the start of the presentations. Latecomers will be turned away.



Awards

Awards are determined by the combined score of the expanded executive summary and presentation.

Award	Description
1st place	The team will receive a trophy that will be housed at the winner’s school, award certificate, plus the following: \$1,200 total to be divided equally among team members The team members’ names will be added to the Big Trophy, housed at DeSales University. This trophy contains team member’s names and sponsors from previous competitions.
2nd Place	The team will receive a trophy that can be housed at the winner’s school, award certificate and \$400 total to be divided equally among team members.
3rd Place	Certificate for each team member
Other awards	There may be other awards presented by the judges if outstanding performance is indicated. This will be up to the judges’ discretion. For example, awards MAY be given for “Best Presenter,” or for other achievements that exceed the minimum expectations.

Scoring

1. Scoring sheets for both the expanded executive summary and presentation will be used to choose winners. These score sheets should help the teams develop their expanded executive summary content and are included below.
2. Judges’ decisions are final.
3. The penalty for all violations is disqualification. Whether or not a disqualification is warranted is up to Walmart representatives.

Judges

There will be three to five judges. The judges for the challenge will be individuals who are experts in their areas. There will be judges from the sponsoring company (Walmart) and if needed, faculty and/or practitioners.



Tentative Score Sheets

CRS Collegiate Challenge - Expanded Executive Summary

	Must Improve	Should Improve	Satisfactory	Very Good	Excellent	Score
Situation/Strategy						
Current Situation	0-3	4-5	6-7	8-9	10	
Competitive Analysis	0-3	4-5	6-7	8-9	10	
SWOT	0-8	9-10	11	12-13	14-15	
Objectives	0-3	4-5	6-7	8-9	10	
Ideas						
Recommendations	0-19	20-23	24-27	28-31	32-35	
Evaluation and Control	0-1	2	3	4	5	
Other						
Introduction	0-1	2	3	4	5	
Conclusion	0-1	2	3	4	5	
Documentation of sources	0-1	2	3	4	5	
	TOTAL					

CRS Collegiate Challenge – Presentation

	Must Improve	Should Improve	Satisfactory	Very Good	Excellent	SCORE
Opening – Attention getting, led into topic	0-1	2	3	4	5	
Current Situation/Competitive Analysis/SWOT	0-17	18-20	21-23	24-26	27-30	
Recommendations	0-19	20-23	24-27	28-31	32-35	
Conclusion – Effective	0-1	2	3	4	5	
Overall Delivery, gestures, energy level, voice	0-3	4-5	6-7	8-9	10	
Visual Aids	0-3	4-5	6-7	8-9	10	
Appearance – dressed for a professional presentation	0-1	2	3	4	5	

Contact Information

Questions or concerns should be directed to: Elaine Thode, CRS Program Director,
elaine.thode@desales.edu **Note: Any contact must be initiated by the faculty advisor.**