

**ORGANIZATION** USG Corporation, Chicago  
**DATE** August 20 – October 11

### **CHALLENGE BACKGROUND**

Packaging in our (the USG) space is typically very industrial and not focused on the customer. Global Harmonization – an OSHA requirement that requires standardization of warnings on packaging – is requiring USG to change the majority of our packaging by June 2015. As a result, we have an opportunity to lead our industry in packaging design.

Our products are sold through specialty dealers as well as big box retailers, such as The Home Depot (THD) and Lowes. In the retail space, we have limited opportunities for in-aisle promotions. Packaging is our best opportunity to grab the attention of our customers and get them to buy USG over other options. Our research tells us that customers are looking for packaging that helps them easily understand what the product is and what it does. As we rethink our packaging as part of Global Harmonization, we want to optimize the customer experience as they walk the retail aisles so that we sell more products to more people.

A couple months ago, the marketing leadership team met with the Chief Marketing Officer of The Home Depot. She noted that, aside from Makino Tools and Quickcrete, she does not believe many manufacturers do a good job with packaging. She'd like to see packaging that optimizes the customer experience, helps customers make easy and quick decisions around product choices, and increases sales at the retail locations. With Global Harmonization coming, USG is looking at this as an opportunity to better promote and highlight our product brands through innovative packaging design.

### **THE CHALLENGE: PACKAGING COMPETITIVE ANALYSIS AND AUDIT**

Over the next eight (8) weeks, you will work in teams to:

- Conduct a packaging audit and competitive analysis of packaging in the building materials space
- Document and report on packaging best practices
- Recommend strategic changes/direction for USG as it looks to redefine their packaging

You will select your team for this challenge – though all teams must range between 3-5 members. We recommend that you make your selections with the following considerations in mind:

- Balance of strengths
- Diversity of perspectives
- Broad range of areas of expertise

All teams must be selected by the evening of Tuesday, August 20 and reported to the BLF staff.

### **ABOUT USG<sup>1</sup>**

For more than 110 years, Chicago-based USG has been a leader in exceeding customer expectations with innovative products and systems to build the environments in which people live, work and play. As the inventor of wallboard and mineral wool ceiling tile, USG created North America's building materials industry. Our products are used in everything from major commercial developments and residential housing to simple home improvements. Our flagship brands include SHEETROCK® Brand gypsum panels and DUROCK® cement board, which are recognized around the world. We consistently help our customers succeed, understanding their needs and providing world class solutions and customer service.

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<sup>1</sup> Retrieved from: <http://www.usg.com/company/about-usg.html>

## LEARNING OUTCOMES

1. Understand the work of the USG, a leader in the building materials industry
2. Engage in the process of researching, developing a product, and pitching an idea
3. Work collaboratively within a team of your peers to create a project design that meets the needs of the USG Corporation
4. Compose and deliver a persuasive presentation that pitches your idea
5. Practice positive group behaviors: effective teamwork, follow-through, proactive communication, immediate and actionable feedback, etc.
6. Build relationships and networks with members of the USG Corporation and other materials organizations

## PARAMETERS

1. Fellows must make all team selections by the evening of Tuesday, August 20 and report their selections to the BLF staff.
2. Each team of Fellows must develop a written strategy articulating their challenge objectives and how they will meet them. These must be submitted to the BLF Program staff by the second week of the challenge. These will be used as additional benchmarks for determining success during the challenge conclusion presentations.
3. Each Fellow must complete and submit challenge checkpoint documents (offered on the Pathbrite course) by their stated deadline.

## PROJECT PROCESSES AND TIMELINE

This challenge will conclude with an immersive experience to Chicago, Illinois. You and your team will complete a formal, final presentation to USG representatives on Friday, October 11. Upon the conclusions of the presentations, the judging panel will provide feedback to all teams and announce the winning team.

For the remainder of the October 11 - October 13 weekend, you will be engaged in an immersive experience in Chicago – traveling to other corporations, organizations, and alumni networking opportunities.

Throughout the duration of this challenge, please keep in mind the importance of implementing your leadership skills, your ability to:

- Establish a vision
- Unite others around a cause
- Motivate others to action
- Hold yourself and others accountable
- Deliver results which align with the goal and vision
- Achieve the success you seek

## RESOURCES

Linda McGovern – VP Marketing

Mark Joseph – Senior Manager, Marketing Communications

Aisha Barnes – Manager of Channel Marketing

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