



NORDIC CASE CHALLENGE

A Week of Strategy, Bonding & Bananas

Introduction

A Week of Strategy, Friendships, and a Lot of Bananas



In early March 2025, four LAB students boarded a plane bound for Kristiansand, Norway—not for a vacation, but to represent their university in one of the most exciting business competitions in the Nordics: the Nordic Case Challenge (NCC).

Hosted by the University of Agder, NCC brings together teams from Finland, Sweden, Norway, Denmark, and Iceland to solve real-world business problems in a high-pressure, real-time consulting format. Over one intense and unforgettable week, we Crest Consulting competed, collaborated, presented, laughed, learned, and maybe even panicked just a little bit.

But NCC was more than just a case competition. It was a chance to meet like-minded students from across the region, test our skills under pressure, and grow both personally and professionally. From solving banana return problems to feeding deer at Norway's largest zoo, every day brought a new challenge—and a new memory.

This is our story of NCC 2025.

“Norway, Here We Come”

DAY 1
SUNDAY,
02, MARCH, 2025

First Impressions Matter—But Curiosity Matters More

After weeks of case assignments, class debates, and caffeine fueled strategy sessions, we found ourselves at Helsinki Airport, buzzing with excitement. We, Crest Consulting—Pasan, Rangana, Ronja, Werner, and our coach Jonathan Bradshaw—were about to board a plane to Kristiansand, Norway, to represent LAB at the Nordic Case Challenge 2025.



From Oslo airport’s Viking swords to our flower-on-a-first-date debates, the journey was already memorable before we even landed.

After a brief layover, we reached Kristiansand. The city greeted us with a cool breeze, a 5°C welcome, and a bus ride to our hotel. No time to unpack though—we were due at the welcome dinner, hosted by Spareskillingsbanken, a partner company and the first case provider.

The venue? Elegant. The vibe? Buzzing. We were warmly greeted, handed sparkling drinks and gift bags, and seated among new faces. We drew our case divisions, had great food (Nordic-Mediterranean fusion, who knew?), and left with a task in hand—and some new friends.

“Case One & Social Night”

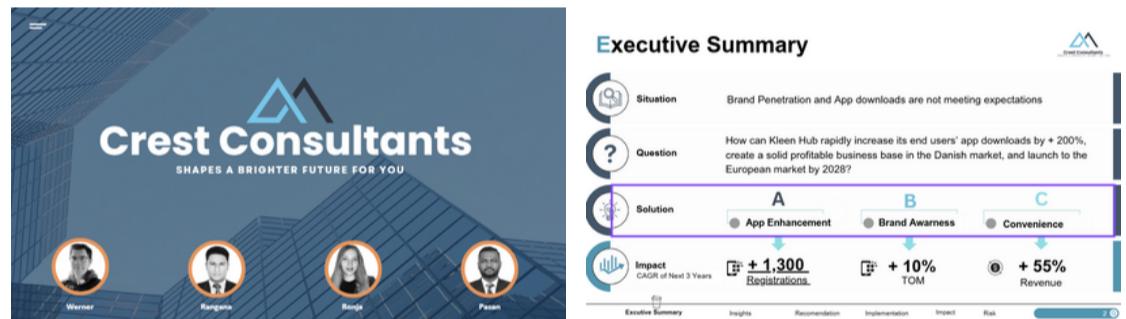
DAY 2
MONDAY,
03, MARCH, 2025

Preparation Builds Confidence—But Flexibility Seals the Deal



The first case presentations kicked off early. This was the case we had worked on for weeks beforehand—our warm-up before the big final. Breakfast was an indulgent hotel buffet, but soon we were in business mode, presenting at the University of Agder (UiA) before our Icelandic and Norwegian counterparts.

We nailed the 10-minute pitch, received thoughtful feedback, and, we left confident and hungry (not for food this time) to do even better in Case Two.



Our team's rehearsal showed its value, but real growth came from adapting on the spot and handling curveball questions with poise.

The rest of the day?

A social dinner with pizza, beer, and quizzes. The awkward “strangers sizing each other up” vibe of Day 1? Gone. We were now laughing, debating pop culture, and forming alliances for the dance floor instead of the boardroom.



“Kristiansand & Tigers”

DAY 3
TUESDAY,
04, MARCH, 2025

Reflection & Recouperation



It was a free day, giving us the entire morning to explore the city and take in the beautiful landscapes. Naturally, we made our way to the scenic fortifications on Odderøya—where the views were nothing short of breathtaking.



After breakfast we all boarded a bus for “Dyreparken”, Norway’s biggest zoo. Taking a break at the zoo wasn’t just fun—it gave our minds space to breathe, reflect, and absorb feedback before diving back in.



“The Case: Bananas & Brainstorms”

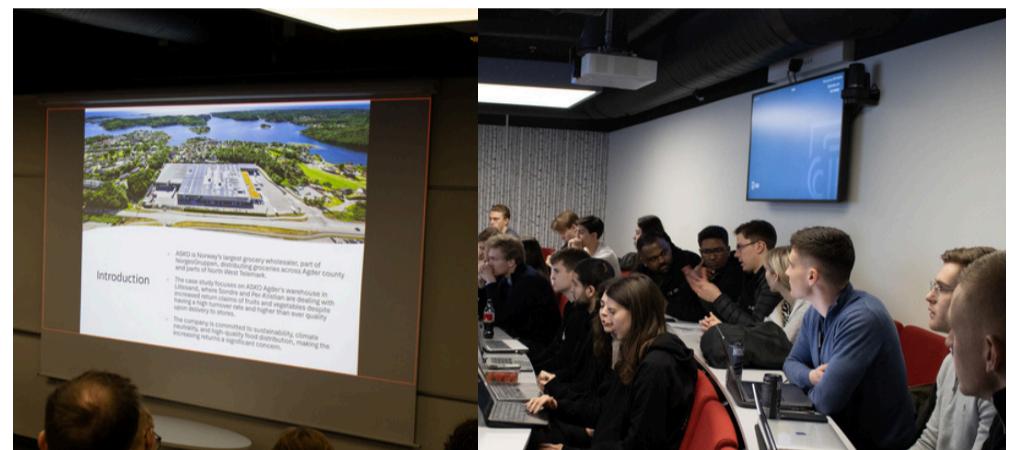
DAY 4

WEDNESDAY,
05, MARCH, 2025

Strategy Is a Team Sport

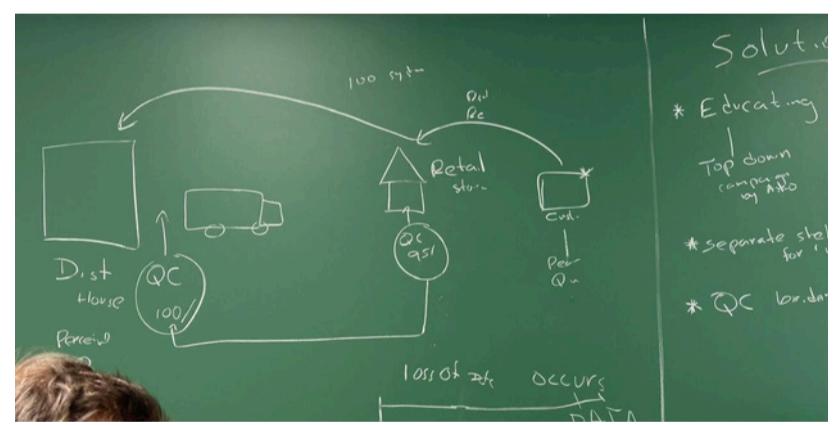
It was the morning of the second and final case. Breakfast was as appetizing as usual, but, the nerves dampened appetite. However, we were in good spirits – excited and ready to tackle whatever was to come. Jonathan, our coach, gave his final words of encouragement – as he would not be permitted to engage us – once the case introduction begins, and until after the presentations.

It was here. The final case. At 9:00 AM, we were introduced to the company: ASKO, a national distributor facing an increase in returned bananas (yes, bananas). Our mission: reduce food waste and cut these claims.

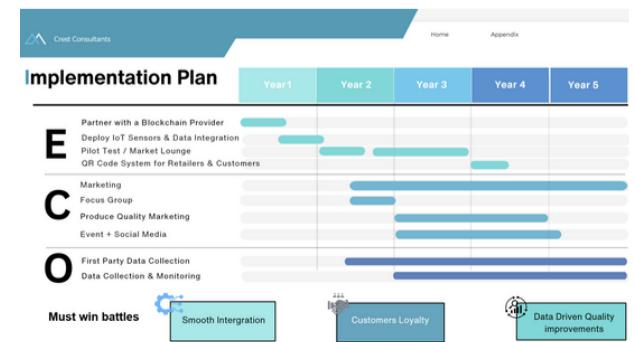
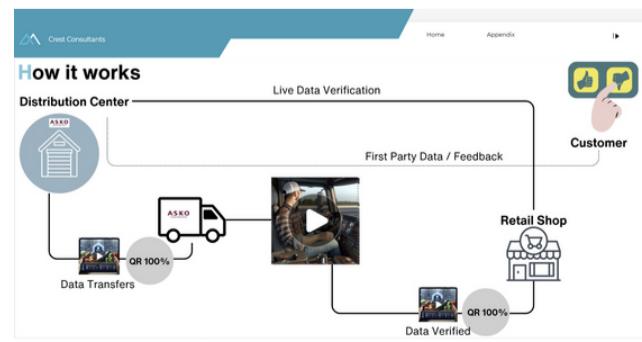


At 10:00, teams moved to separate rooms to strategize. They planned to agree on a strategy in 3 hours and finish their parts by 19:00 for rehearsal. Ideas were discussed and noted on a blackboard, and after lunch, they aligned before working individually on their sections.

Rangana focused on strategy, Pasan handled financials, Ronja worked on marketing, and Werner addressed risk analysis. After a final practice and group huddle, we went to bed, ready to take the stage the next day.



Dividing and conquering only works when there's a clear, shared strategy—and ours came to life on that whiteboard, with markers, arguments, and laughs.



Presenting Isn’t Just Speaking—It’s Storytelling



After a short night's rest—common across teams—we regrouped in the boys' hotel room to rehearse our final presentation one last time, keeping it under 15 minutes. By 8:15, we dashed downstairs for a quick breakfast (no one wanted to present on an empty stomach) and headed to the university

We were placed in a division with Agder and Copenhagen—and drew the first presentation slot. A blessing in disguise, as it set the tone.



Despite the pressure, our presentation went smoothly. We answered all questions confidently. We had done our best—and it felt good. And we are so proud that we got to know from the jury that our solution is almost to be implemented by the company soon.

While the jury deliberated, we enjoyed coffee and sandwiches. Eventually, the top three teams were announced: Lund, Reykjavik, and Copenhagen. The room erupted in applause, and the atmosphere remained positive—highlighting the sportsmanship that defined NCC. Finalists re-presented their ideas in front of the full jury and audience.

“Heading Home”

DAY 6

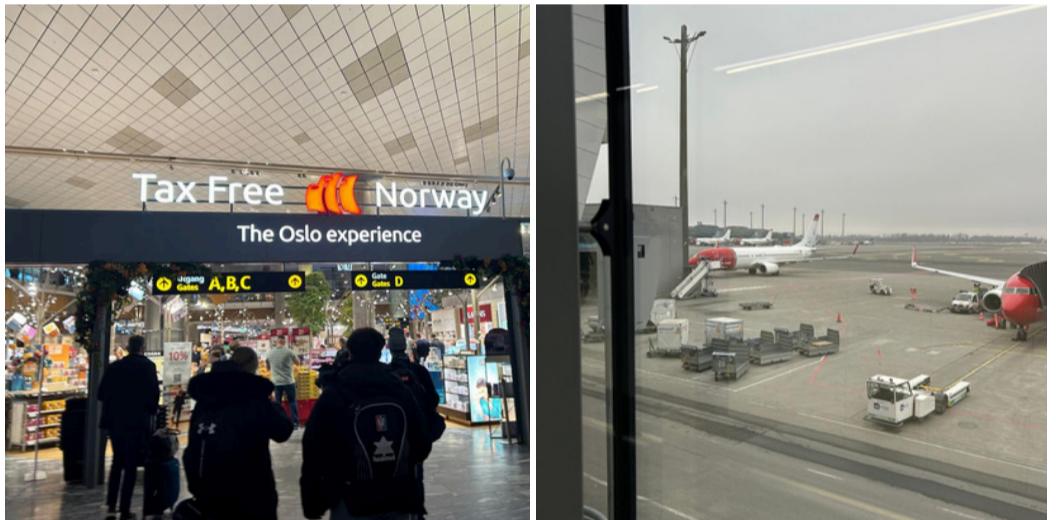
FRIDAY,
07, MARCH, 2025

Growth Happens Outside the Classroom



With a refreshing 4-5 hours of sleep, we hauled ourselves out of bed. It was dark as we climbed into the 5:00 cab to catch our flight to Finland. The previous evening, the team coach from TAMK University, who was joining our flight, had humorously asked if we could remain “decidedly Finnish” in the morning – and not chat in the cab. Collectively exhausted, I think this was a good call.

The airport was bustling with early travellers, but checking in and getting through security was smooth enough. And some coffee, water, and croissant later, the grogginess of the early morning was beginning to dissipate.



From a competition stand-point, you never know what your competitors will be like, but over the week, they overwhelmingly proved themselves to be friendly, smart and sportsmanlike. We were all in the same challenge. Bachelor and Masters students, roughly equal in our skills and talents, undertaking a task with the same constraints. As students, we were all there to test ourselves and have fun. How do we solve a problem as a team? How do we communicate ourselves to the best of our ability? What skills we can demonstrate?

We had tasted victory, but our trip to Norway had proved itself to be much more than a competition – we had met new people, experienced a slice of Norway, and challenged ourselves to grow and improve.



On arrival in Helsinki, there was no question about it, the new acquaintances and friends had made NCC a once-in-a-lifetime experience

Our Heartful Thanks to....

We'd like to extend a heartfelt thank you to everyone who made Nordic Case Challenge 2025 such a memorable experience.

To **Jonathan Bradshaw**, our dedicated coach – thank you for your constant encouragement, guidance, and belief in us. You kept us focused, motivated, and laughing when we needed it most. We couldn't have asked for a better mentor.

To Marja Viljanen for initiating the Business Competition, International Business Strategy program and selecting us along with Jonathan for this wonderful event.

To our **fellow teams** and new friends – thank you for the camaraderie, the conversations, and the shared excitement. Competing alongside such talented and kind individuals was truly inspiring.

To the **University of Agder (UiA)** and the incredible **UiA Case Club** – thank you for hosting us with professionalism, warmth, and care. Every detail was handled with excellence.

To **Spareskillingsbanken and ASKO** – thank you for sharing real-world challenges that pushed us to think critically and creatively. Your insights gave the competition purpose and depth.

And lastly, thank you to **LAB University of Applied Sciences** for the opportunity to represent our school and for supporting our journey every step of the way.

This week was more than a competition – it was a chance to grow, connect, and create memories that will last a lifetime



Werner Blanco



Rangana Lakmal



Ronja Laine



Pasan Dissanayake