

AN IDEA THAT WILL CHANGE THE WORLD

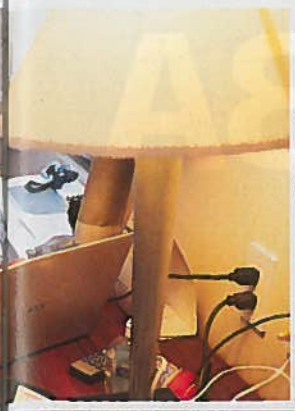
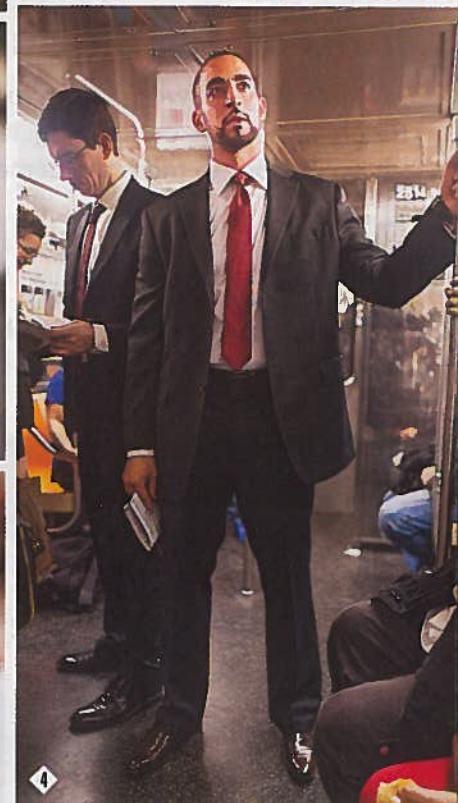
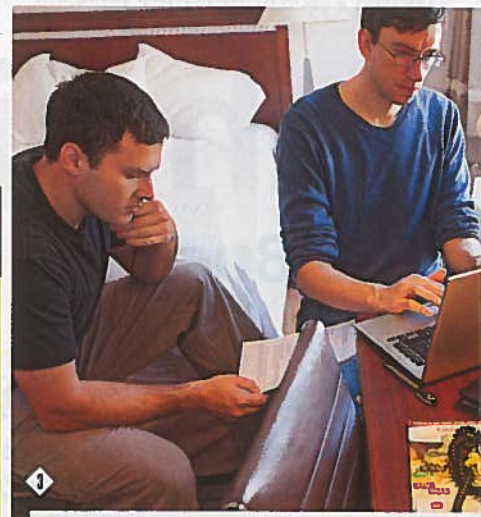
How a team of McGill MBA students beat thousands of competitors to win \$1 million for the not-so-crazy idea of farming edible insects

On Sept. 23 five McGill MBA students beat out 10,000 MBA teams from around the world to win the Hult Prize, a \$1-million global award for social enterprise. *Canadian Business* tagged along for the day as Mohammed Ashour, Gabriel Mott, Jesse Pearlstein, Shobhita Soor and Zev Thompson prepared to present their business plan to an intimidating team of judges including Nobel laureate Muhammad Yunus and former president Bill Clinton.

The team's world-changing idea? Feeding the developing world—with insects. Already a popular source of protein in many cultures, seasonal growing patterns makes insects too expensive. The team's new company, Aspire Food Group, hopes its cheaper factory farm methods for "micro-livestock" like crickets and palm weevils will cheaply feed millions and boost farmers' livelihoods in the process.

"It's an overwhelming feeling of responsibility," says Ashour of the win. "We've received this substantial funding, and a lot of people are waiting on the outcome."
—GRAHAM F. SCOTT

Photograph by Ben Stebeschulte



(1 & 2) Insect-based snacks produced by the McGill team's company, Aspire Food Group; (3) Zev Thompson and Gabriel Mott preparing in the hotel the morning of the presentation; (4) Mott and Mohammed Ashour on the subway; (5) Thompson, Jesse Pearlstein, Shobhita Soor, Ashour and Mott being interviewed by CBC News in Times Square; (6) the team consults before their presentation; (7) Ashour presenting Aspire's business plan; (8) the team waits for results; (9) Nobel laureate Muhammad Yunus addresses the competitors; (10) the team moments after the winning announcement; (11) the team poses with Bill Clinton; (12) Soor hugs Ashour's wife, Yasmeen Khattab; (13) the team with the \$1-million cheque.