



## BUSINESS RESEARCH

The **Business Research** event provides an opportunity for students to demonstrate business and marketing research skills needed by management personnel. Students will work with an existing local business or organization to conduct business and marketing research about a specific topic, with the ultimate goal of improving business operations, profitability, visibility, etc. A new research topic, or area to improve, will be presented annually in the event guidelines.

The Business Research Event involves 1 to 3 students conducting business and/or marketing research for an existing business or organization based on an annual topic. While the term “business” will be used in these guidelines for the purposes of clarity, any type of organization, or even a department, division, or specific location of a business, may be the focus of the research. Upon completion of the research, the student (or student team) will make recommendations to the business owner/manager/operator to improve operations based on the research findings.

### BUSINESS MANAGEMENT + ADMINISTRATION

### MARKETING + COMMUNICATIONS

#### EVENT OVERVIEW

The content to be evaluated is found in the standard Evaluation Forms located in these Guidelines. Preliminary round competition will consist of an evaluation of the written research report (minus deductions from the Written Entry Checklist) accounting for 50 points, and one presentation, also accounting for 50 points.

Students/teams will be ranked according to their combined score, and a predetermined number of students/teams will be named finalists. Finalists will again be evaluated based on their written research report (minus deductions) and presentation to determine final rankings. The following guidelines will be applied to the presentations at the International Career Development Conference.

The Business Research Event consists of 2 major parts, both evaluated by the judge, for a maximum 100 points:

- The written research report is limited to 15 pages, and will account for a maximum 50 points.
- The oral presentation by the students, limited to twenty minutes including set-up, presentation time, and answering questions from the judge, will also account for a maximum 50 points.

For the presentation, the students are to assume the role of management trainees in a single-unit of a large business/organization, or in an independent operation. The judge, in the role of owner/manager/operator of the business, will evaluate both the written research report and the presentation.

*Read everything carefully in the Format Guidelines for the Written Report, Guidelines for the Presentation, Written Entry Checklist, Written Event Statement of Assurances, and Evaluation Forms.*

#### LEARNING OUTCOMES

In addition to developing general and specific knowledge relating to business research and the topic for the current year, students will develop and demonstrate skills needed to address the components of the project as well as learn/understand the importance of:

- Communication skills—the ability to exchange information and ideas with others through writing, speaking, reading or listening
- Analytical skills—the ability to derive facts from data, findings from facts, conclusions from findings and recommendations from conclusions
- Production skills—the ability to take a concept from an idea and make it real
- Critical thinking/problem-solving skills
- Teamwork—the ability to be an effective member of a productive group
- Priorities/time management—the ability to determine priorities and manage time commitments and deadlines
- Identification of competitive conditions within market areas.

#### 21<sup>ST</sup> CENTURY SKILLS

Students will also develop many 21<sup>st</sup> Century Skills, in the following categories, desired by today’s employers:

- Communication and Collaboration
- Creativity and Innovation
- Critical Thinking and Problem Solving
- Flexibility and Adaptability
- Information Literacy
- Initiative and Self-direction
- Leadership and Responsibility
- Media Literacy
- Productivity and Accountability
- Social and Cross-cultural Skills

# STUDENT INSTRUCTIONS

## 2017-18 BUSINESS RESEARCH TOPIC

The 2017-2018 topic is the development or enhancement of an online presence management strategy. Students will collaborate with a local business or organization to analyze the company's current online presence and how it impacts the company's brand. Students will then develop and present a plan to improve or implement the online presence management strategy.

### **Specific Learning Objectives**

The business research event provides an opportunity for students to:

- Analyze a business's/organization's current online presence management strategy.
- Describe how the business's/organization's current strategy impacts their brand.
- Research and identify ways in which the business/organization can improve upon its online presence management strategies.
- Prepare a strategic plan for the business/organization to improve or implement an online presence management strategy.
- Present the findings and conclusions in an interactive situation.

# STUDENT INSTRUCTIONS

## FORMAT GUIDELINES FOR THE WRITTEN REPORT

The students must prepare a written research report. Read carefully and follow instructions for: Title Page, Format Guidelines for the Written Research Report and Evaluation of the Written Research Report, Checklist Standards, and Written Entry Checklist. Refer also to the Written Entry Evaluation Form.

**TITLE PAGE.** The first page of the written report is the title page. It must include in any order, but is not limited to, the following:

**BUSINESS RESEARCH**

Title of the Project

Name of Chapter/School

Name of Chapter Advisor

Chapter Advisor's Address

City, Association ZIP or Postal Code

Country

Student Name(s) and Address(es)

City, Association ZIP or Postal Code

Country

Date

A page number will not appear on the title page; however, the title page does count as one of the maximum 15 pages allowed. The page following the title page will be numbered "2".

The Written Statement of Assurances must be signed and submitted with the entry. Do not include it in the page numbering.

### FORMAT FOR THE WRITTEN RESEARCH REPORT AND EVALUATION OF THE REPORT

The body of the written research report should include:

#### I. EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

A one- to two-page description of the research, findings and conclusions

#### II. INTRODUCTION

- A. Description of the business or organization (if the research study is limited to a specific "part" of the overall business or organization, identify the specific department, division, or location)
- B. Description of the community (economic, geographic, demographic and socioeconomic factors)
- C. Description of the business's promotional strategies

#### III. RESEARCH METHODS USED IN THE STUDY

- A. Rationale and description of research methodologies selected to conduct the research study
- B. Process of conducting the selected research method(s)

#### IV. FINDINGS AND CONCLUSIONS OF THE STUDY

- A. Findings of the research study
- B. Conclusions based on the findings

#### V. PROPOSED STRATEGIC PLAN TO IMPROVE OR IMPLEMENT AN ONLINE PRESENCE MANAGEMENT STRATEGY

- A. Goals and objectives
- B. Strategies to improve or implement an online presence management strategy
- C. Methods of evaluating proposed changes

#### VI. BIBLIOGRAPHY

#### VII. APPENDIX

An appendix is optional. Include in an appendix any exhibits appropriate to the written entry, but not important enough to include in the body. These might include sample questionnaires used, letters sent and received, general background data, minutes of meetings, etc. Provided that the appendix includes such "exhibits" and is NOT used for "content" that should be included under previous sections, **the appendix does NOT count as one of the maximum 15 pages.** Any such misuse of the appendix may result in penalties under the Written Entry Checklist Guidelines

# STUDENT INSTRUCTIONS

## CHECKLIST STANDARDS

In addition to the items outlined above, students must observe the following rules. The purpose of these rules is to make the competition as fair as possible among all students. Points will be deducted for each violation. Refer to the Written Entry Checklist.

1. Two “official” written reports must be submitted. Both of these must be submitted in official Collegiate DECA (or DECA) folios. Folios are available from DECA Images (catalog # FOLIO). No markings, tape or other materials should be attached to the folios.
2. Both “official” written reports must be brought to the student briefing session to be turned in for evaluation according to the Written Entry Checklist. These will be kept by the event director and will be given to the judge prior to your presentation. The students may retain other copies (or photocopies) for their personal reference during the presentation. These do not have to be in official folios, will not be evaluated, and may not be shown to judges.
3. The written report must be limited to 15 pages, including the title page, which is not numbered. The pages must be numbered in sequence; however, a page number will not appear on the title page. The title page does count as one of the maximum 15 pages allowed. The page following the title page will be numbered “2”. One page will be counted for each 8.5 x 11-inch panel or fraction thereof (foldouts, brochures, etc.). Extra pages added as dividers or additional title pages (even if blank) are included in the maximum 15 pages.
4. Body copy of the written report must be at least double-spaced (not space-and-a-half). Title page, executive summary, bibliographical references, appendix content, footnotes, long quotes, material in tables, figures, exhibits, lists, headings, sample letters, forms, charts, graphs, etc. may be single-spaced. Material may appear on one side of the page only.
5. Entry must be typed/word processed. Handwritten corrections will be penalized. Charts, graphs, exhibits may be handwritten.
6. Colored paper, ink, pictures, etc. are allowed. Divider tabs, page borders, artwork, attachments, foldouts, paste-ups, photographs, etc. may also be used, but are still subject to number of pages and page size restrictions.

## GUIDELINES FOR THE PRESENTATION

- This event does allow the use of materials (i.e., sample brochures).
- All material must be prepared by the students, with the exception of sample materials related to the topic developed by the business or organization that is the focus of the research project.
- The students/team may bring copies of the written research report to the presentation for their personal reference. These do NOT have to be in official folios, will NOT be evaluated, and may NOT be shown to judges.
- Self-contained, state-of-the-art technology (personal or laptop computers/hand-held digital organizers) may be used. However, students must use battery power even if electrical outlets are available in the room.
- Visual aids (poster paper, flip charts) may be used.
- All materials, equipment, supplies, etc. must be provided by the students. DECA assumes no responsibility for damage/loss of materials, equipment, supplies, etc.
- Only materials that can be easily carried to and from the competition areas will be permitted (includes computer equipment, visual aids, etc.). Only the students may handle and set up their materials. No outside assistance will be allowed.
- Materials appropriate to the situation may be handed to or left with the judges. Items of monetary value may be handed to but may not be left with judges. Items such as flyers, brochures, pamphlets and business cards may be handed to or left with the judges. No food or drinks allowed.
- Students will have up to **20 minutes** to present their research, findings, conclusions and strategies for improvement, and to answer questions from the judges.
- Space provided for this event may be limited to a 6' x 8' pipe-and-drape booth in an arena atmosphere (includes judges' table and chairs).
- When using a presentation aid, such as a laptop computer, the noise level must be kept at a conversational level that does not interrupt other students. If this guideline is not followed, the students will be interrupted and asked to follow the noise policy. **Note:** The noise level may be less of an issue when only one presentation is taking place in a room at a time (often the case with this event).
- Competitors are also responsible for following the information provided in the General Rules and Regulations for competition found on page 3.

Failure to follow guidelines may result in disqualification.

## PRESENTATION SCHEDULE

10 minutes for the judges to review the written research report

20 minutes for student presentation (describe research, findings, conclusions and strategies for improvement) and questions by the judges

10 minutes for scoring by the judges



1 to 3  
STUDENTS



15  
PAGES  
ALLOWED



20  
PRESENTATION  
TIME

# JUDGE INSTRUCTIONS

The Business Research Event was created by Collegiate DECA in response to the need for college graduates to be familiar with business research processes and the impact research has on business and industry.

The students have worked with an existing business of their choice to conduct a research study on the development or enhancement of an online presence management strategy. Students have analyzed the company's current online presence and how it impacts the company's brand. The students then developed a strategic plan to improve or implement the online presence management strategy. Playing the role of the business owner/manager/operator, you are to read the written report and then interact with the writers as if you were considering implementing a new online presence management strategy.

While the term “business” will be used in these guidelines for the purposes of clarity, any type of organization, or even a department, division, or specific location of a business, may be the focus of the research.

## JUDGING THE WRITTEN ENTRY

Please familiarize yourself with all of the guidelines before reading any of the written research report. Penalty points (see Written Event Checklist) have already been assessed. Your job is to evaluate the written research report based on the Written Evaluation Form.

- Place the students' name(s) and identification number(s), using labels if provided, on the bubble score sheet as instructed (if not already done). If a bubble score sheet has not been provided, this information must be placed on the Written Evaluation Form for this event.
- You will have 10 minutes to read the research report before the students enter the judging area/room. This is an appropriate time to evaluate the research report using the Written Evaluation Form. Refer to the Evaluation Criteria section for guidelines.
- On the bubble sheet provided, please bubble in the appropriate score and write the score on the corresponding line to verify accuracy. Please make sure not to exceed the maximum score possible for each item.
- Please make sure to score all categories, add them for the total score, and then initial the total score. The maximum score for the Written Entry is 50 points.
- The written research project may include an optional appendix. An appendix may include sample questionnaires used, letters sent and received, general background data, minutes of meetings, etc.

# JUDGE INSTRUCTIONS

## JUDGING THE PRESENTATION

- Please familiarize yourself with all of the guidelines before interacting with students. Your job is to evaluate the presentation based on the Presentation Evaluation Form.
- To ensure fairness, at no time should a student be asked where he/she is from (school, state, country, etc.).
- Please place the students' name(s) and identification number(s), using labels if provided, on the bubble score sheet as instructed (if not already done). If a bubble score sheet has not been provided, this information must be placed on the Presentation Evaluation Form for this event.
- Students will be scheduled for presentations at 40-minute intervals.
- You will have 10 minutes to read the written research report before the students enter the judging area/room.
- The 20 minutes following the introduction will allow the students to outline the research, findings, conclusions and answer questions. Remember, you are role-playing as the owner/manager/operator of a business. You may refer to the student's written research report or to your notes during the interaction with the students.
- To ensure fairness, you must ask the students the same questions—one question from each of the major categories shown on the evaluation sheet would be appropriate. After asking the standard questions, you may ask other questions for clarification specific to the current students.
- Following the 20 minute interaction period, please thank the students for the research and suggestions. Please give no indication of their performance/score.
- During the last 10 minutes, after the students are excused from the judging area, you may score the students. Refer to the Evaluation Criteria section for guidelines. On the bubble sheet provided, please bubble in the appropriate score and write the score on the corresponding line to verify accuracy. Please make sure not to exceed the maximum score possible for each item.

Please make sure to record a score for all categories, add them for the total score, and then initial the total score. The maximum score for the interview is 50 points.

**Note:** If a bubble score sheet is not provided, indicate your scores on the Business Research Presentation Evaluation Form.

You may be asked to complete the Recap section and total your combined score for both the written entry and the interview. The section manager will double-check all addition.

The Presentation Evaluation Form follows the outline shown in the section entitled Guidelines for the Presentation, which explains in greater detail what should be discussed in each part.

During the presentation, ask yourself, "Will this work? Is it realistic? Do the students sound knowledgeable? Are the students communicating clearly?" Ultimately, you must decide, "Would I implement their recommendations?"

## PRESENTATION SCHEDULE

10 minutes for judges to read the written research report

20 minutes for presentation by the students and questions by the judges

10 minutes for scoring by the judges

## JUDGING SUMMARY

Maximum score is 100 points (50 points for written entry; 50 points for presentation). A score of 70 or better will earn the student a Certificate of Excellence.

We hope you are impressed by the quality of work of these students. If you have any suggestions for improving this event, please mention them to your event manager.

## EVALUATION CRITERIA

A score under the heading **Exceeds Expectations** in any category means that, in your opinion, the presentation was done in an effective, creative way; in effect, nothing more could be expected of the student.

A score under the heading **Meets Expectations** in any category means that, in your opinion, the presentation was done well. There may be a few minor problems or omissions, but they are not significant. A presentation which earns this level in every category for the presentation would probably receive strong consideration.

A score under the heading **Below Expectations or Little/No Demonstration** in any category means that some major flaw has been noted which damages the effectiveness of the presentation. This may be a major omission, a serious misstatement or any other major flaw.



# WRITTEN ENTRY CHECKLIST

Please refer to the *Format Guidelines for the Written Research Report* for a more detailed explanation of these items.

	CHECKED	PENALTY POINTS ASSESSED	PAGE NUMBER	NOTATION
1. The Written Statement of Assurances must be signed and submitted with the entry.	_____	15	_____	_____
2. Entries submitted in an official Collegiate DECA (or DECA) written event folio. Two copies submitted.	_____	5	_____	_____
3. Title page information has been provided as requested.	_____	5	_____	_____
4. Limited to the number of pages specified in the guidelines. One page will be counted for each 8.5 x 11 inch panel or fraction thereof (foldouts, brochures, etc.).	_____	5 Per Page	_____	_____
5. All pages are numbered in sequence (except for the title page, which is not numbered).	_____	5	_____	_____
6. Major content must be at least double-spaced (not space-and-a-half). Title page, executive summary, bibliographical references, appendix content, footnotes, long quotes, material in tables, figures, exhibits, lists, headings, sample letters, forms, charts, graphs, etc. may be single-spaced.	_____	5	_____	_____
7. Entry must be typed/word processed. Handwritten corrections will be penalized. Charts, graphs, exhibits may be handwritten.	_____	5	_____	_____
8. The body of the written entry follows the sequence outlined in the guidelines. Additional subsections are permitted.	_____	5	_____	_____
9. Appendix does not include content that should be included in the main body of the report.	_____	10	_____	_____

**TOTAL PENALTY POINTS ASSESSED** \_\_\_\_\_

*A check indicates that the item has been examined.  
 A circled number indicates that an infraction has been noted.  
 A page number indicates the location of the infraction.  
 Include a notation to provide clarification for penalty points.*

## INSTRUCTIONS FOR REVIEWER

Except for item #4, the penalty points assessed must be the exact number of points indicated in the Penalty Points Assessed column for the item in question. There are no partial assessment of penalty points. For example, for item #3: if the information has not been provided as requested, just circle the “5” points. You do not assess fewer than 5 points because most of the information is present.



## WRITTEN STATEMENT OF ASSURANCES

Research and report writing are important elements of modern business activities. Great care must be taken to assure that the highest ethical standards are maintained by those engaging in research and report writing. To reinforce the importance of these standards, all written entries in Collegiate DECA's Competitive Events Program must submit this statement as part of the entry. The statement must be signed by all members of the competitive team, where applicable, and should be placed at the front of the written entry binder that is submitted for penalty points. Students will NOT be permitted to present to judge unless this has been submitted.

I understand the following requirements as set forth by DECA Inc. for all Competitive Event entries containing a written component. These requirements are additional to any general competitive event rules and regulations published by DECA Inc. By signing this statement, I certify that all are true and accurate as they relate to this entry.

1. The contents of this entry are the results of the work of the team members listed below.
2. No part of this entry has been previously entered in international competition.
3. This entry has not been submitted this year for international competition in any other Collegiate DECA competitive event, nor by any other student/team in this event.
4. Credit for all secondary research has been given to the original author and is stated as such in the written project.
5. All activities or original research procedures described in this entry are accurate depictions of the efforts of the team members listed below.
6. I understand that Collegiate DECA has the right to publish this entry. Should Collegiate DECA elect to publish this entry, I will receive an honorarium from Collegiate DECA. Individuals/Teams with extenuating circumstances may appeal the right to publish the entry to the executive committee of the board of directors prior to submission of the project for competition.
7. I understand that the ideas and information presented in the written project and judge interaction will become public information. Therefore, DECA Inc., its staff, volunteers and organizational partners cannot reasonably be expected to ensure the security of my/our ideas and information.
8. DECA will retain one official copy of all written entries. The second copy may be picked up by the students or the advisor at a designated date, time, and location. This information will be announced during the event briefing session. Unclaimed written entries/folios will not be returned to the students after the conference.

*This statement of assurances must be signed by all members of the team and submitted during the Business Research event briefing, or entry will be given 15 penalty points.*

_____	_____	_____
Name of Chapter	Chapter Advisor	Chapter Advisor Email
_____	_____	_____
Student's Name	Student's Name	Student's Name
_____	_____	_____
Student's Signature	Student's Signature	Student's Signature

*Place at the front of the written entry. Do not count as a page.*



# BUSINESS RESEARCH

## WRITTEN ENTRY EVALUATION FORM

Please refer to the **Written Entry Guidelines** for a more detailed explanation of these items.

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY	LITTLE/ NO VALUE	BELOW EXPECTATIONS	MEETS EXPECTATIONS	EXCEEDS EXPECTATIONS	JUDGED SCORE
1. One-to two page description of the project	0-1	2-3	4	5	

INTRODUCTION	LITTLE/ NO VALUE	BELOW EXPECTATIONS	MEETS EXPECTATIONS	EXCEEDS EXPECTATIONS	JUDGED SCORE
2. Description of the business or organization	0-1	2-3	4	5	
3. Description of the community (economic, geographic, demographic and socioeconomic factors)	0-1	2-3	4	5	
4. Description of the business's current promotional strategies	0-1	2-3	4	5	

FINDINGS AND CONCLUSIONS OF THE STUDY	LITTLE/ NO VALUE	BELOW EXPECTATIONS	MEETS EXPECTATIONS	EXCEEDS EXPECTATIONS	JUDGED SCORE
5. Findings of the research study	0-1	2-3	4	5	
6. Conclusions based on the findings	0-1	2-3	4	5	

PROPOSED STRATEGIC PLAN TO IMPROVE EMPLOYEE RETENTION	LITTLE/ NO VALUE	BELOW EXPECTATIONS	MEETS EXPECTATIONS	EXCEEDS EXPECTATIONS	JUDGED SCORE
7. Goals and objectives	0-1	2-3	4	5	
8. Strategies to improve or implement an online presence management strategy	0-1	2-3	4	5	
9. Methods of evaluating the proposed changes	0-1	2-3	4	5	

APPEARANCE AND WORD USAGE	LITTLE/ NO VALUE	BELOW EXPECTATIONS	MEETS EXPECTATIONS	EXCEEDS EXPECTATIONS	JUDGED SCORE
10. Professional layout, neatness, proper grammar, spelling and word usage	0-1	2-3	4	5	

**WRITTEN ENTRY TOTAL POINTS (50)**

JUDGE SECTION: A B C D E F G H I J (circle one)



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## PRESENTATION EVALUATION FORM

	LITTLE/ NO VALUE	BELOW EXPECTATIONS	MEETS EXPECTATIONS	EXCEEDS EXPECTATIONS	JUDGED SCORE
1. Research Explanation	0-1-3	3-4-5	6-7-8	9-10	
2. Research Findings	0-1-2	3-4-5	6-7-8	9-10	
3. Conclusions	0-1-2	3-4-5	6-7-8	9-10	
4. Strategic Plan to Improve or implement an online presence management strategy	0-1-2	3-4-5	6-7-8	9-10	
5. Overall performance: Appropriate appearance, poise, confidence, presentation, technique, etc.	0-1-2	3-4-5	6-7-8	9-10	

<b>PRESENTATION TOTAL POINTS (50)</b>	
WRITTEN ENTRY (50)	
PRESENTATION (50)	
SUBTOTAL (100)	
LESS PENALTY POINTS	
<b>TOTAL SCORE</b>	

A score of 70 or better will earn the student a Certificate of Excellence.

JUDGE SECTION: A B C D E F G H I J (circle one)

### TIE BREAKER

For tie-breaking purposes, the following evaluation form ranking process will be used. Beginning with the Presentation Evaluation Form, the students with the highest score for item #1 wins the tie-break. If this does not break the tie, the process will continue for the remaining presentation items in the following order: 2, 3, 4, 5. If this does not break the tie, the process will continue using the Written Evaluation Form, beginning with item #5. If this does not break the tie, the process will continue for the remaining written entry items in the following order: 1, 8, 2, 4, 6, 7, 9, 3, 10.