

### Objective

The Business Research Event provides an opportunity for students to demonstrate business and marketing research skills needed by management personnel. Participants 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.

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### Description

The Business Research Event involves a one (1) to three (3) participants conducting business and/or marketing research for an existing “business” 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 participant (or participant team) will make recommendations to the business owner/manager/operator to improve operations based on the research findings.

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

1. The written research report is limited to ten (10) pages, and will account for a maximum fifty (50) points.
2. The oral presentation by the participants, limited to twenty minutes including set-up, presentation time, and answering questions from the judge(s), will also account for a maximum fifty (50) points.

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

### For international competition

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 fifty (50) points, and one presentation, also accounting for fifty (50) points. Participant(s) will be ranked according to their combined score, and a predetermined number of participants/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. *Read everything carefully in the Guidelines for the Format of the Written Research 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
- Critical thinking/problem-solving skills
- Production skills—the ability to take a concept from an idea and make it real
- 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

### 2011-2012 Business Research Topic

The topic for 2011-12 is the development of a plan to enhance or introduce a corporate social responsibility program and/or strategy for an existing business or organization, or department, division, or specific location of a business. Using an existing business of their choice, students will research the current and potential use of corporate social responsibility programs and strategies and their effectiveness. Students will develop a strategic plan to enhance or introduce corporate social responsibility programs into the current operations with the goal of creating a positive impact through its activities on the environment, consumers, employees, communities, and other stakeholders.

### Specific Learning Objectives

The business research event provide an opportunity for the students to:

- Identify the business's current usage of corporate social responsibility programs and strategies (if applicable)
- Design a research study to determine the appropriate uses of corporate social responsibility programs and strategies.
- Conduct the research (in depth interviews, focus groups, customer surveys, etc.).
- Based on the results of the research, develop a strategic plan to enhance or introduce a corporate social responsibility program.
- Present the research findings and proposed strategic plan in a role-play situation to the business's owner/manager.

The business research event involves the preparation of a strategic plan to enhance or introduce a corporate social responsibility program of an existing business. More specifically, the student or team of students must:

- Select an actual local business operation or organization
- Design a research study
- Conduct a research study
- Analyze the results of the research study
- Prepare a strategic plan to enhance an existing corporate social responsibility program or introduce a new corporate social responsibility program into current operations
- Prepare a proposed budget
- Develop metrics to measure return on investment (ROI)
- Present in a role-playing situation
  - The design of the research study
  - The findings and conclusions of the research study
  - The strategic plan for enhancing or introducing a corporate social responsibility program and/or strategy into current operations

**Format Guidelines for the Written Research Report**

The participant(s) must prepare a written research report. Read carefully and follow instructions for: Title Page, Format 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 research report is the title page, which lists the following:

BUSINESS RESEARCH EVENT  
Name of Chapter/School  
Name of Chapter Advisor  
Chapter Advisor's Address  
City, State/Province, ZIP or Postal Code  
Participant(s) Name(s) and Address(es)  
City, State/Province, ZIP or Postal Code  
Date

A page number will not appear on the title page; however, the title page does count as one of the maximum ten (10) pages allowed. The page following the title page will be numbered "2."

The Written Event 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:

**SECTION 1 – Executive Summary**

A one page description of the research, findings and conclusions.

**SECTION 2 - 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 target market

**SECTION 3 – 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)

**SECTION 4 – Findings and Conclusions of the Study**

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

**SECTION 5 – Proposed Strategic Plan (including application of marketing concepts)**

- A. Goals/objectives and rationale (short- and long-term benefits to the business of enhancing or introducing a corporate social responsibility program into current operations)
- B. Proposed activities and timelines
- C. Proposed budget (identify costs associated with potential strategies)
- D. Proposed metrics to measure return on investment (ROI)

**SECTION 6 – Bibliography****SECTION 7 - 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 ten (10) pages. Any such misuse of the appendix may result in penalties under the Written Entre Checklist Guidelines.

**Checklist Standards**

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

1. Two “official” written research reports must be submitted. Both of these must be submitted in official Collegiate DECA (or DECA/Delta Epsilon Chi) folios. Folios are available from DECA Images (catalog # FOLIO). No markings, tape or other materials should be attached to the folios.
2. Both written research reports must be brought to the participant 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(s) prior to your presentation. The participant(s) 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 judge(s).
3. The written research report must be limited to ten (10) 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 ten (10) 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 ten (10) pages.
4. Body copy of the written research report must be at least double-spaced (not space-and-a-half). Title page, 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** | Refer to the evaluation form.

1. This event does allow the use of materials (i.e. sample brochures).
2. All material must be prepared by the participants, with the exception of sample materials related to the topic developed by the business or organization that is the focus of the research project.
3. The participant(s) 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.
4. Self-contained, state-of-the-art technology (personal or laptop computers/hand-held digital organizers) may be used. However, participants must use battery power even if electrical outlets are available in the room.
5. Visual aids (poster paper, flip charts) may be used.
6. All materials, equipment, supplies, etc. must be provided by the participants. DECA assumes no responsibility for damage/loss of materials, equipment, supplies, etc.
7. Only materials that can be easily carried to and from the competition areas by the actual participants will be permitted (includes computer equipment, visual aids, etc.). Only the participants may handle and set up their materials. No outside assistance will be allowed.
8. Participants will have up to twenty (20) minutes to present their research, findings, conclusions and strategies for improvement, and to answer questions from the judges.
9. Space provided for this event may be limited to a 6' x 8' pipe-and-drape booth in an arena atmosphere (includes judge's table and chairs).
10. When using a presentation aid, such as a lap-top computer, the noise level must be kept at a conversational level that does not interrupt other participants. If this guideline is not followed, the participant will be interrupted and asked to follow the noise policy. Failure to do so may result in disqualification.

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).

**Presentation Schedule**

- Ten (10) minutes for the judges to review the written research report
- Twenty (20) minutes for participant presentation (describe research, findings, conclusions and strategies for improvement) and questions by the judges
- Ten (10) minutes for scoring by the judges

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.

Future business and marketing researchers have worked with an existing business of their choice to conduct a research study to see how introducing or enhancing a corporate social responsibility program would improve business operations. Playing the role of the business owner/manager/operator, you are to read the written research report and then interact with the writer(s) as if you were considering implementing a new corporate social responsibility program and/or strategy for your company/organization, or enhancing an existing one.

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 participant(s) written research report based on the Written Entry Evaluation Form.

1. Place the participant(s) 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 Entry Evaluation Form for this event.
2. You will have ten (10) minutes to read the research report before the participants enter the judging area/room. This is an appropriate time to evaluate the research report using the Written Entry Evaluation Form. Refer to the Evaluation Criteria section for guidelines.
3. 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.
4. 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 fifty (50) points.
5. 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.

### Judging the Presentation

1. Please familiarize yourself with all of the guidelines before interacting with participants. Your job is to evaluate the participant(s) presentation based on the Presentation Evaluation Form.
2. To ensure fairness, at no time should a participant be asked where he/she is from (school, state, country, etc.).
3. Please place the participant(s)' 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.
4. Participants will be scheduled for presentations at forty (40) minute intervals.
5. You will have ten (10) minutes to read the written research report before the participants enter the judging area/room.
6. The twenty (20) minutes following the introduction will allow the participant(s) to outline the research, findings, conclusions and answer questions. Remember, you are role-playing as the owner/manager/operator of a business interested in implementing or enhancing the corporate social responsibility program. You may refer to the Participant's Written Research Report or to your notes during the interaction with the participants.
7. To insure fairness, you must ask the participant(s) 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 participant(s).
8. Following the twenty (20) minute interaction period, please thank the participant(s) for the research and suggestions. Please give no indication of their performance/score.
9. During the last five (5) minutes, after the participants are excused from the judging area, you may score the participant(s). 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 fifty (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? Does the participant(s) sound knowledgeable? Is the participant(s) communicating clearly?" Ultimately, you must decide, "Would I implement these corporate social responsibility programs?"

### Presentation Schedule | In forty (40) minute intervals

- Ten (10) minutes for judges to read the written research report
- Twenty (20) minutes for presentation by the participant(s) and questions by the judges
- Ten (10) minutes for scoring by the judges

### 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 participant, and the design has been presented in a way that would initiate your purchase.

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 for purchase.

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.

### Judging Summary

Maximum score is 100 points. A score of 70 or better will earn the participant a **Certificate of Excellence**.

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

**We thank you for your help.**

Participant's Name: \_\_\_\_\_  
 I.D. Number: \_\_\_\_\_

Participant's Name: \_\_\_\_\_  
 I.D. Number: \_\_\_\_\_

Participant's Name: \_\_\_\_\_  
 I.D. Number: \_\_\_\_\_

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

	Checked	Penalty Points Assessed	Page No./ Note
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/Delta Epsilon Chi) 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, 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 includes 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.

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.

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 participant/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.

*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
Participant's Name	Participant's Name	Participant's Name
Signature	Signature	Signature

*Hole punch and place in front of the written entry. Do not count as a page.*

Participant's Name: \_\_\_\_\_  
 I.D. Number: \_\_\_\_\_

Participant's Name: \_\_\_\_\_  
 I.D. Number: \_\_\_\_\_

Participant's Name: \_\_\_\_\_  
 I.D. Number: \_\_\_\_\_

	Little/No Demonstration	Below Expectations	Meets Expectations	Exceeds Expectations	Judged Points
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**Section 1—EXECUTIVE SUMMARY**

1. One-page description of the project	0	1	2	3	_____
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**Section 2—INTRODUCTION**

2. Description of the business or organization	0-1	2	3	4	_____
3. Description of the community (economic, geographic, demographic and socioeconomic factors)	0-1	2	3	4	_____
4. Description of the business's target market	0-1	2	3	4	_____

**Section 3—RESEARCH METHODS USED IN THE STUDY**

5. Rationale and description of research methodologies selected to conduct the research study	0-1	2	3	4	_____
6. Process of conducting the selected research method(s)	0-1	2	3	4	_____

**Section 4—FINDINGS AND CONCLUSIONS OF THE STUDY**

7. Findings of the research study	0-1	2	3	4	_____
8. Conclusions based on the findings	0-1	2	3	4	_____

**Section 5—PROPOSED STRATEGIC PLAN**

9. Goals/objectives and rationale (short- and long-term benefits to the business of enhancing or introducing a corporate social responsibility program into current operations)	0-1	2	3	4	_____
10. Proposed activities and timelines	0-1	2	3	4	_____
11. Proposed budget (identify costs associated with potential strategies)	0-1	2	3	4	_____
12. Proposed metrics to measure return on investment (ROI)	0-1	2	3	4	_____

**APPEARANCE AND WORD USAGE**

13. Overall impression of written report	0	1	2	3	_____
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**Total Judged Points (50 maximum): \_\_\_\_\_**

Participant's Name: \_\_\_\_\_  
 I.D. Number: \_\_\_\_\_

Participant's Name: \_\_\_\_\_  
 I.D. Number: \_\_\_\_\_

Participant's Name: \_\_\_\_\_  
 I.D. Number: \_\_\_\_\_

	Little/No Demonstration	Below Expectations	Meets Expectations	Exceeds Expectations	Judged Points
1. Research Explanation	0-1-2	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. Strategies for Improvement	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	_____

**Total Judged Points (50 maximum):** \_\_\_\_\_

**RECAP: Written Entry (50)** \_\_\_\_\_

**Presentation (50)** \_\_\_\_\_

**Subtotal (100)** \_\_\_\_\_

**Less Penalty Points** \_\_\_\_\_

**TOTAL POINTS (100 maximum)** \_\_\_\_\_

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

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

**TIE BREAKER**

For tie-breaking purposes, the following evaluation form ranking process will be used. Beginning with the Presentation Evaluation Form, the participant(s) 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, 6. If this does not break the tie, the process will continue using the Written Entry Evaluation Form, beginning with item #3. If this does not break the tie, the process will continue for the remaining written entry items in the following order: 15, 8, 1, 2, 4, 5, 6, 7, 9, 10, 11, 12, 13, 14.