

Topic: Competitive Events—2001-2 Tips for the Marketing Research Events

Topic (2001-02) is developing a strategic plan for increasing the level of existing customer satisfaction and/or loyalty

Advisor: Dennis Sweetapple

The word “co-curricular” only begins to describe DECA’s Marketing Research Events. Advisors who use these events as the backbone of their marketing classes point out that they parallel the curriculum so completely that every marketing teacher should take advantage of them. In addition, they provide an activity that every member of the class can use to enhance learning.

Dennis Sweetapple, chapter advisor at Spanish River H.S. in Florida, again has offered helpful comments on this year’s events.

First Dennis points out that this year’s topic, developing a strategic plan for increasing the level of existing customer satisfaction and/or loyalty, appeals to kids. After their research, they plan promotions. This, he says, can be a lot of fun. His students are excited by it.

If you haven’t tried these events before, this is a good year to start. Try to approach the process with enthusiasm, because the students will reflect your attitude. You can begin with just a few students the first time through and learn how to do it along with them. (Sweetapple did an event himself, even approaching a business about the survey, to get the feel of it.) One of the great things about these events is that even students with limited skills can complete a manual. Their projects may not be competition quality, but the students will feel a sense of pride and accomplishment at producing a piece of research—and they will have expanded their skill level whatever the starting point.

As Dennis plans for his teaching year, his first topic for the class is marketing research. He starts with the textbook chapters on marketing research and then fills in the content of marketing as the students proceed on their own projects. This approach underlines the utility of the marketing research events for delivering marketing concepts. The substance of an area is learned best in the context of using it.

With politicians and administrators increasingly demanding comprehensive testing for fundamentals, Dennis is confident that he can demonstrate how the research events deliver skills. For a start, marketing research involves writing and rewriting, a process that raises language competence. The surveys and budgets that students produce and process call for computation skills. And if asked how the skills cross over, teachers can point out that the projects require students to write about math, explaining how the figures they produce furnish the rationale for their plans. Higher level skills are present in abundance as well.

Thanks, Dennis, for more good advice on approaching the marketing research events. If you want to review the tips in his last three columns, go to the Web site’s advisor section and click on the research events topic.

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