

SUCCESS!

EXCELLING IN
DECA's COMPETITIVE
EVENTS PROGRAM



- ▶ CHART YOUR COMPETITIVE EVENTS INTEREST
 - ▶ CONQUER THE COMPETITION
 - ▶ PRESENT WITH PIZZAZZ
 - ▶ EVALUATE YOUR PERFORMANCE

Chart Your DECA Competitive Events Interest

Do you like...

HAVING A PREPARED PLAN
AND AN OPPORTUNITY
TO REHEARSE?

ENGAGING
COMPUTER
SIMULATIONS

What interests you?

What interests you?

EVENT PLANNING AND
MANAGEMENT

BUSINESS RESEARCH
AND STRATEGY

*Check out DECA's
Chapter Team Events.*

*Check out DECA's Business
Operations Research Events.*

OWNING OR MANAGING
A BUSINESS

PROMOTION AND
SELLING

*Check out DECA's
Business Management and
Entrepreneurship Events.*

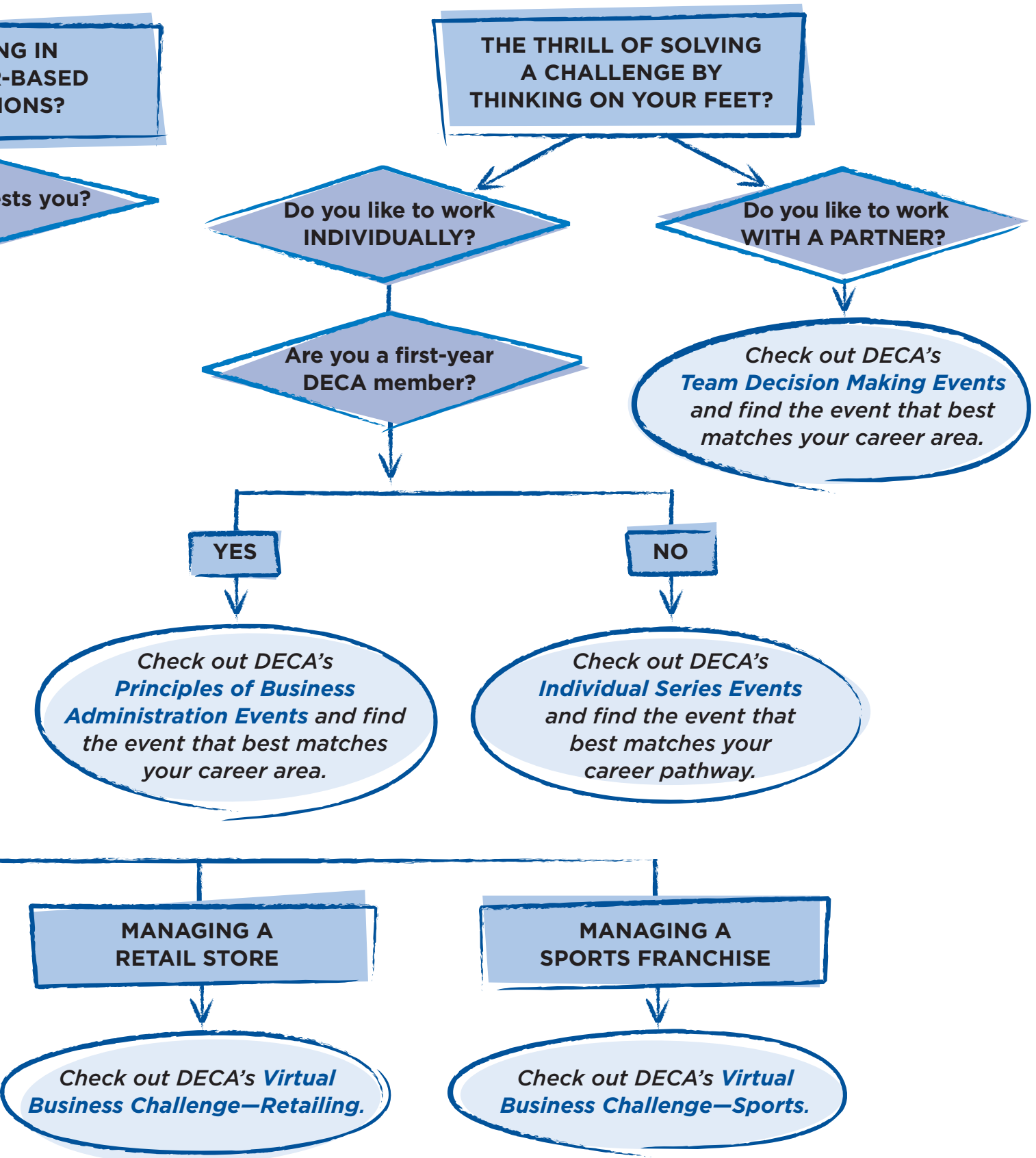
*Check out DECA's
Marketing Representative Events
and Professional Selling Events.*

MANAGING A
PORTFOLIO OF STOCKS

*Check out DECA's
Stock Market Game.*



There's nothing like sitting in the audience anxiously awaiting to hear your name when your competitive event is called. The journey to DECA's International Career Development Conference starts now by choosing the competitive event that is best for you! Visit www.deca.org/competitions/highschool for guidelines and listings.



Conquer the Competition



A three-time international champion in Apparel and Accessories, Arthi Vellore shares her secrets to success in DECA's competitive events.

1 What are some important things to remember about DECA competition?

Be calm, be professional and be enthusiastic. Don't be scared of your competition. There are many creative ways to approach a role-play, and no one way is necessarily right, so focus on adding your own creative twist to what you do. Setting yourself apart through innovation, creativity and quality ideas is the key way to stay in a judge's mind long after all the competitors have finished presenting. Balance confidence with professionalism when you present, and you'll do a great job.

2 What do you look for when you read a role-play?

When reading a role-play, I quickly skim it so I can begin to think about the objectives the judges will be looking for and the ways I can give it my own creative twist. Then, I go back to read for the details as I match parts of the role-play to the performance indicators. It's important to both solve the problem the case presents by answering the questions presented by the case (i.e., "How do I, as a manager, go about increasing credit card sales?"), as well as addressing all of the judge's expectations described in the performance indicators section. I then know exactly what knowledge I am to be demonstrating and can go back through the role-play looking for information that will help me elaborate on key points.

3 What was your "secret to success?"

I usually divided my prep sheet into sections and gave each section one of the performance indicators as a heading. When I went through the role-play, I put each of my ideas under the objective it fulfilled, making sure that I had points to discuss for every judging objective. When I presented, it was easy to signpost for the judge so they knew that I was addressing a judging objective when I discussed a certain topic. In addition, I developed a signature, or my own stamp, to put on nearly any role-play that came my way. By using terminology rather than vague descriptions, by referencing key concepts, and by developing a unique personal touch or framework to use in tackling a role-play, you can use the limited time you have efficiently while still coming up with a unique, thorough and professional presentation.



4 What type of vocabulary and speech did you use during a role-play?

I tried to be as professional as possible, while still being personable and accessible. This means using accurate marketing terminology when the situation calls for it. Do not be afraid to use sophisticated or otherwise rich vocabulary—without sounding like you're just trying too hard to impress, because, of course, you still want to be relatable, friendly, and down-to-earth.



5 What are some easy ways to make a good impression on a judge?

Be friendly, make eye contact and give a firm handshake when you first meet your judges. Do not wait for them to introduce themselves; rather, take the initiative. While you might be nervous and feel awkward, taking initiative shows that you truly are mature, confident and comfortable in your own skin. Also, adhere to the dress code, because you come across as much more professional if you really do look like a business executive. Think about the career area in which you are competing. For example, as a competitor in Apparel and Accessories Marketing, I got some good advice from a judge once. They said that while we shouldn't wear something outrageous, we are people who are supposed to be representing an interest in fashion or a more creative point-of-view. We are sort of palettes in ourselves. As such, a bright tie or eclectic necklace or unique print blouse would add the kind of personality and ease with fashion that judges in this particular event would like to see in their competitors.

Dominate the exam

Some of DECA's competitive events require participants to take an exam. Questions on DECA's competitive events exams are designed around each career cluster. Here are a few tips for success.

- Study the appropriate performance indicator lists for your exam at www.deca.org/competitions/highschool. These are the foundation for questions that can be asked on the exam.
- Utilize study groups. Since DECA only offers five exams, find DECA members that are taking the same exam as you and study together.
- Use previous exams for practice and familiarization with the format.
- Review your math skills.
- Research unfamiliar terms or ask your DECA advisor or business professional for guidance.

6 What methods help you employ creativity in a role-play?

I would often find creative ways to promote something and tried to think of innovative or unconventional ways to accomplish the various judging objectives or solve the manager's problem. I also tied in areas of outside knowledge or personal interest or things I was particularly strong in. My experience and interest in these things would more likely help me come up with something really great. It helps to just do brainstorming exercises beforehand so that you always have a handful of new ideas ready, which you can just pull out as the need arises during a role-play.





7 Please list a few “do and don’t” tips for DECA members.

DO

- ✓ Be professional yet friendly.
- ✓ Adhere to the dress code, but still make it a reflection of your personality.
- ✓ Be at your event at least 15 minutes early, with all necessary materials (pencil, pen, calculator, ID).
- ✓ Wear your DECA blazer, even when it's not required, because it looks more professional and makes you seem more put-together.
- ✓ Be confident in yourself.
- ✓ Answer every question on the multiple-choice test, whether you think you know the answer or not.
- ✓ Enjoy your time at competition!

DON'T

- ✗ Be rude or overly attached to your event competitors.
- ✗ Stress about your events or analyze them too much afterwards.
- ✗ Do anything outrageous to be noticed by a judge.

8

How do you build confidence and overcome nervousness?

If you already have a strategy or plan of attack for your role-play, you have a foundation on which to build your specific ideas and plans for the role-play problem. This takes a lot of the stress out of preparing a role-play, since a lot of it is already put together before you get there. It helps to know everything you can ahead of time, because it saves you time in trying to figure out if you've covered everything thoroughly. Also, brainstorm a pet idea. For example, since my strength was promotion and personal selling, I tried to tie in a promotional or personal selling component to every role-play, which gave it a unique twist that may have been beyond the expectations of the judge for that particular role-play. It also brought me to the well-worn and familiar territory of something I was good at. Earning the opportunity to compete means that you have the skill and talent to succeed, and that you have the ability to do a great job. Just be confident in yourself and the rest will follow.



9

In what ways did DECA prepare you for what you do now?

I have gained the ability to think quickly on my feet, to present confidently to others and to come up with fresh, innovative ways to problem-solve. I have learned to balance familiarity and personality with professionalism, and I have learned that the ideas and terminology we learn in DECA really are relevant and applicable to the world of marketing and management.

Keep your written event free from penalty

A **Competitive Event Checklist** helps ensure that all written event competitors are on a level playing field. Penalty points can often turn what could be a first-place project into one that does not even place. Here are some ways to help keep your written event free from penalty.

- Make sure the Statement of Assurances is signed by all participants *and* the advisor.
- Double-check to make sure page numbers in the table of contents correspond to pages in the report.
- Make sure the report follows the sequence outlined in the guidelines.
- Keep the report page count within the guidelines.
- Give it another check to ensure all pages are numbered in sequence starting with the executive summary. The executive summary should be numbered page 1.
- When you've completed your written entry, use the DECA Competitive Event Checklist to check yourself.



10

What else do DECA members need to know?

The most important thing is to not over think things or try too hard to remember a million tips or suggestions. Just be yourself and be confident that you can do well. Being at ease with what you're doing really shines through in your demeanor, your ideas and the overall quality of your presentation. The whole experience is a really great one.

DECA's COMPETITIVE EVENTS

Principles of Business Administration Events

1. Principles of Business Management and Administration
2. Principles of Finance
3. Principles of Hospitality and Tourism
4. Principles of Marketing

Team Decision Making Events

1. Business Law and Ethics Team Decision Making
2. Buying and Merchandising Team Decision Making
3. Financial Services Team Decision Making
4. Hospitality Services Team Decision Making
5. Marketing Communications Team Decision Making
6. Sports and Entertainment Marketing Team Decision Making
7. Travel and Tourism Team Decision Making

Individual Series Events

1. Accounting Applications Series
2. Apparel and Accessories Marketing Series
3. Automotive Services Marketing Series
4. Business Finance Series
5. Business Services Marketing Series
6. Food Marketing Series
7. Hotel and Lodging Management Series
8. Human Resources Management Series
9. Marketing Management Series
10. Quick Serve Restaurant Management Series
11. Restaurant and Food Service Management Series
12. Retail Merchandising Series
13. Sports and Entertainment Marketing Series

Business Operations Research Events

1. Business Services Operations Research
2. Buying and Merchandising Operations Research
3. Finance Operations Research
4. Hospitality and Tourism Operations Research
5. Sports and Entertainment Marketing Operations Research

Chapter Team Events

1. Community Service Project
2. Creative Marketing Project
3. Entrepreneurship Promotion Project
4. Financial Literacy Promotion Project
5. Learn and Earn Project
6. Public Relations Project

Business Management and Entrepreneurship Events

1. Entrepreneurship Written
2. International Business Plan
3. Entrepreneurship Participating
(Creating an Independent Business or Franchising Business)

Marketing Representative Events

1. Advertising Campaign
2. Fashion Merchandising Promotion Plan
3. Sports and Entertainment Promotion Plan

Professional Selling Events

1. Hospitality and Tourism Professional Selling
2. Professional Selling

Online Events

1. Stock Market Game
2. Virtual Business Challenge Retail
3. Virtual Business Challenge Sports

Present with Pizzazz!



by Julia Pitlyk

After months of research and rewrites, your DECA written event is ready to face competitors from schools across your state/province (and possibly around the world!) in the heat of DECA's competitive event season! After all your prep work, now only one obstacle stands between you and your moment of first-place glory on stage: your presentation. Even if your write-up is flawless from an exceptional executive summary to an amazing appendix, your presentation is the single element that allows you to express your expertise and passion for your project. This can make or break the outcome

of success for all your hard work.

It's no secret that all good presentations involve a neat visual aid, compelling opening and conclusion, and streamlined organization of all your information. As a DECA member, you probably have these skills mastered. If you're looking to create a presentation that can bring you to a DECA victory at districts and beyond, read on for some finishing touches for a premium presentation. Just beware: these may lead you to on-stage success at DECA's International Career Development Conference.



Stop, Look, Listen

A great portion of your presentation's success isn't dependent on what you say, but how you say it. Like any good speech, the judge may not recall every statistic, market segment or promotional idea that you deliver, but they will remember how you made them feel. That's where confidence in your delivery comes in. Being excited, nervous and anxious about your presentation can cause your rate of speech to increase rapidly, making your words fly by in a blur. Always remember the power of pause. When practicing your presentation, incorporate pauses into your phrases. This will create a dramatic, ear-catching effect to keep your judge attentive to your presentation, plus it will emphasize important points and information.

Eye contact is another way to connect with your judge. Locking eyes shows confidence in the points you're delivering and is another way to keep your judge engaged in your delivery. Eye contact can be awkward at first, especially with a judge you don't know. Weeks before your presentation, practice holding gazes with your friends, family members and teachers when you converse with them. Eventually, eye contact will become like second nature to your everyday conversations.

Brand Yourself A Winner

When creating your project and delivering your presentation, you are essentially developing a brand for yourself and your ideas. Make your presentation's brand attractive and easy for your judge to remember by wrapping it in a strong visual package. Tie together all the elements of your project, from the charts and graphs of your written document, to your slide backgrounds, to the shirt you wear with a signature element, such as a particular color palette or pattern. Not only will this make your presentation aesthetically sound, but it will also create an image for you and your ideas that the judge can recognize and recall at a later time. For inspiration of colors and patterns that will add a splash of success to your presentation, check out *Colour-Lovers.com*, a creative social Web site that compiles color schemes for various uses.



A memorable part of your delivery that will greatly affect how your judge feels is your tone of voice. Your tone should vary depending on the subjects you're covering in your presentation. For example, presenting a charity that your Community Service Project supports would be most effective with a serious, earnest tone, yet in sharing your visual merchandising ideas for a Fashion Merchandising Promotion Plan, an excitable, vibrant tone would be great for expressing your creativity. No matter what tone you use, make sure you vary your expression. Nothing will lose a judge's attention more than a flat, boring delivery that gives them no feeling about your topic.





Wrap It Up

Just because you reach your last slide doesn't mean it's time to thank your judge, shake hands and flee the room. The time after your formal presentation is crucial for further interaction with your judge. Take this opportunity to clarify parts of your presentation, show more of your personality and impress your judge with an ability to provide thorough answers to any questions they may have. The best way to flawlessly answer these questions is to prepare for them in advance. Use your advisors and peers as practice judges for your presentation, and request that they each ask you at least three follow-up questions to your presentation. You begin to become more confident



delivering answers off-the-cuff and will begin to learn the most commonly asked questions of your presentation. Should your judge not immediately ask any questions, ask for them! Your judge will be impressed that you are open to more dialogue, and it will show that you value their thoughts and opinions. To leave even more of an impact on your judge, provide them with a handout before you walk out the door, such as a brochure or outline. Use this strategy to highlight important takeaway points from your presentation, further brand yourself and your ideas, and keep a presence in front of your judge, even long after your final handshake. Make sure to have a final statement or call to action to show your judge that you're interested in following through.

In DECA, the strength of your presentation comes from the content, but the power comes from the details. Putting these finishing touches to polish up your points will improve your confidence, speaking ability, visual presence and most importantly, your impact on your judge. Work these ideas into your project to find success in your event this competition season!

Take Note

While relying on your innate ability to "wing it" is never recommended for competition, writing down paragraphs of perfect phrases, word-for-word, doesn't guarantee that your presentation will turn out trophies either. Note cards are a handy tool to remember specific numerical data and exact quotes, but using them as a crutch for your memory could reduce your confident delivery, especially in form of eye contact with your judges. Instead, commit your presentation to memory as best as possible. If you thought it, developed it and wrote about it, you should be able, with a bit of practice, to present it well. Use your visual aid to help guide your talking points, with illustrations, diagrams or other images to help cue your words.

Choose from DECA's Written Events

Business Operations Research Events

1. Business Services Operations Research Event
2. Buying and Merchandising Operations Research Event
3. Finance Operations Research Event
4. Hospitality and Tourism Operations Research Event
5. Sports and Entertainment Marketing Operations Research Event

Chapter Team Events

1. Community Service Project
2. Creative Marketing Project
3. Entrepreneurship Promotion Project
4. Financial Literacy Promotion Project
5. Learn and Earn Project
6. Public Relations Project

Business Management and Entrepreneurship Events

1. Entrepreneurship Written Event
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(Creating an Independent Business or Franchising Business)

Marketing Representative Events

1. Advertising Campaign Event
2. Fashion Merchandising Promotion Plan Event
3. Sports and Entertainment Promotion Plan Event

Professional Selling Events

1. Hospitality and Tourism Professional Selling Event
2. Professional Selling Event

Evaluate Your Performance



by Julia Pitlyk

The minute you walk out of the room, a wave of relief washes over you—you just finished competing in your DECA competitive event! Whether you dazzled with a Fashion Merchandising Promotion Plan, thought quickly on your feet with a Sports and Entertainment Marketing role-play or participated in one or more of DECA's other competitive events, you're bound to face the most common question heard at DECA conferences around the globe, "Well, how did

you do?!" Your advisors, parents, friends and competitors will all be asking you this same question, but how do you come up with more than a one-word response? The answer is self-evaluation, and the keys to assessing each performance you deliver are right here. By practicing these methods, you'll not only be able to answer one of DECA's most commonly asked question more effectively, but you'll be setting yourself up for success in your performances for many times to come!

Setting the standard

The first way to evaluate your performance begins even before you start delivering. Whether in a written event or a role-play, create a checklist or goal sheet for yourself that includes objectives and performance points that you want to make sure you complete each time you perform. Your objectives should range from presentation fundamentals, such as making eye contact with your judges and



delivering a firm handshake, to event specific points, such as mocking up a sample brochure to leave with your judge in a role-play. Don't shy away from putting anything and everything on this checklist; though the points may seem obvious, you never know what may slip your mind in the heat of competition. Review your checklist before you go into your event so your goals are top-of-mind, and review it again immediately after you exit the room. Check off what you completed and jot down any notes or new objectives that come to mind. Congratulate yourself for the areas you excelled in and improved upon, and keep in mind what objectives you have to work on for next time.

Following-up

After your performance, an easy way to evaluate yourself is by recalling the performance indicators stated at the beginning of your event's official description. This set of indicators is essentially another checklist for you and will help you measure your delivery based upon the judges' criteria. Performance indicators vary among the various events, but they are usually based upon assessing and analyzing the scenario, addressing the problem, providing a solution and de-

livering methods to evaluate your solution. By running through these standards post-performance, you'll be able to make yourself mentally aware of the quality of content you delivered. You may find that you focused only slightly on providing an actual solution to a dissatisfied customer, for example, and gave much more time and attention to simply pacifying the customer and addressing the problem. Going over these performance indicators will help you learn your habits and cover all your bases in your next performance.


For another assessment of your performance, think back to what happened after the formal delivery of your presentation. Did you interact well with your judge(s)? Did you answer their questions thoroughly? Did you engaged them in your topic and ideas? Did you end the presentation on a high note? Going to the judges' debriefing, if offered, is also an excellent way that DECA allows you to evaluate your personal performance and improve for the future.

Continually improving

Competitors now have an opportunity to receive competitive events transcripts that detail their performance at the International Career Development Conference on the career cluster exam, written component (if applicable) and oral presentation. As a learning tool, this feedback allows members to examine areas of strength and improvement to develop an improvement plan. For example, if a

member scored low in certain instructional areas of the career cluster exam, the member may want to review concepts or seek additional education.

Keeping a plan in place to deliver your best performance possible and practicing methods of self-evaluation will make sure that your competitive event presentations grow more successful each time you deliver! Taking steps to

assess your performance after each delivery will not only help you improve, but it will always prepare you with a thorough answer when you're asked, "Well, how did you do?!" 



Spread the DECA Word

How to Share Your DECA Successes

Whether you secure a top DECA leadership position, dominate—hands down—in competition or generously raise money and awareness for a worthy cause, DECA gives you and your chapters an unparalleled amount of successes to share with the world! Going public with the work you and/or your chapter have done in DECA keeps a positive light shining on yourself and the organization, bringing you well-deserved goodwill, recognition and future opportunities.

How do you make sure you get more than just pat on the back and a “good job,” without sounding like a DECA braggadocio? The key is to find people and channels that want to hear and be a part of stories like yours. Here are a few avenues to explore the next time you want to share your DECA successes:

School/Community Publications

These news sources crave positive pieces about student involvement. Focusing on community or school-centric publications will increase the recognition of your chapter. Get in touch with the editors for various publications, usually via the web or through your school, and send them a quick press release of your success. Be sure to include your contact information, a detailed quote in the release and a quality image they can use, if they so choose. The easier you can make it for them to get the word out, the more likely it will happen!

School Board Meetings

Rules, regulations, budgets and bills can make school board meetings hectic and dreary. Breathe some fresh air into the routine by putting yourself on the speakers’ list

to announce your positive DECA experience to the Board and those in attendance. Being able to hear the successful stories of their students will boost the morale of the school board by bringing their focus back on the students. They’ll be thrilled to hear you share the positive experiences you had from a school organization!

Local Government Officials

With demanding, on-the-go careers, your local government officials love to hear good news from students like you in their community. Local leaders, such as mayors and aldermen, strive to be accessible by their constituents, so get in touch with them when you have a victory to share. The more your story impacts the community, the more they’ll love it! See if your official can give a mention to your performance on their website or newsletter, or even see if they can issue a courtesy resolution to congratulate you and DECA chapter for your positive experiences and impact.

DECA Dimensions

We want to know! With chapter updates in every issue, DECA members, advisors, alumni and professionals from around the world love to see the creative and successful activities of other chapters. Share your news directly with DECA by submitting your story to deca_dimensions@deca.org.

Community Groups

Did you work with a particular charity, group or business through your DECA activities? Send them an update on the success of your projects, and even offer to deliver your presentation to them so they can see first-hand how much dedication and experience the both of you gained through DECA. They’ll love seeing what you were able to accomplish, and may even incorporate some of your ideas into their real-world operations!

Social Media Outlets

The World Wide Web is full of information, so why not put your success story on there, too? Blog, tweet, post or share about your positive DECA experiences. You’ll reach a whole new audience of people that can help continue sharing your great performances across the digital platform.

