



Get an Edge in Competitive Events

Throughout your life you will be faced with many types of competitions—in school, in sporting events, for jobs and even competition with yourself for self-improvement. How do you prepare for this and work to achieve success?

Both DECA and Delta Epsilon Chi, a College Division of DECA, offer high-quality competitive events, unmatched by any other organization. Whether you choose to participate in business simulations, case studies or prepared business presentations, you will have a jump-start on your rivals in marketing, management, entrepreneurship and other related programs. Participating in these events is also a great learning experience for you, a way to demonstrate your proficiency and skills, and an opportunity to be rewarded for your efforts.

Now that you know what competitive events can do for you, what can you do to get ready for them? Here are a few suggestions that will give you an edge before the conference, before your event and when it's your time to compete.

Before the Conference

1. Decide on an event. Choose an event that best suits your interest and time commitment. Use your advisor and the *DECA Guide*, published every

year, as resources to learn more about each event. Your advisor has a copy of the *Guide*, and it's also available at www.deca.org.

2. After deciding what you'll compete in, go back to the *DECA Guide* to get information on the objective of the event, the competition format, the competencies you will develop and specific guidelines and judging information.

3. Acquire study tools. Ask your advisor for sample role-plays, exams and written events from previous years. (Samples can also be purchased from DECA IMAGES. Visit www.deca.org for more information.) Also, talk to others who have competed in your event and find out what their recommendations are.

4. Practice, practice, practice. Team up with another student to practice role-plays—being the judge in a role-play is an enlightening experience. You should also give your presentation to different people, in addition to your advisor, and ask them to identify areas of improvement, whether it is raising your voice volume or perfecting your presentation and delivery skills.

Before Your Event

1. Dress professionally. Make sure you are freshly showered and your clothes are conservative and neatly pressed. (If you compete in the afternoon, shower after lunch and change into your competition clothes then.) Cologne and large jewelry can be distracting, so wear it sparingly. An official DECA blazer is required at the international conference; be sure to find out the rules for your qualifying competitions to see if blazers are required there, too.

2. Find your competition room ahead of time. If you are allowed to use audiovisuals, find out what types of electrical outlets are available and where they are located, and be prepared to run your equipment on bat-

tery power, if necessary. Don't assume the room has everything you need, such as computer outlets and light dimmers. Audiovisual equipment is often the competitor's responsibility.

3. Arrive at your event 30 minutes early and stay in the area where you will compete because students ahead of you may not show up, and you should be ready to go in their place.

While You Are Competing

1. When the judges greet you, give them a firm handshake and a confident hello. Introduce yourself based on the role-play, case or presentation.

2. Be organized and control the overall situation in the most *appropriate* way. (The methods you can use to control the situation may depend on whether you're playing the role of the boss or the employee, for example.) If there seems to be an obvious solution that you did not choose, explain why. Address the most likely expectation and move on.

3. Close as strongly as you opened. Don't just walk away. Keep your confidence and thank the judges for their time and input.

Win or lose, if you make the commitment and take the time to prepare yourself, you will be satisfied. The learning experience and being happy with yourself is worth more than any medal. ❖

Kassie Jo Krueger
Central Region Vice President,
Delta Epsilon Chi
kassie_jo@hotmail.com



Competitors and judges at the 2003 ICDC.

