

Marketing Plan

Nebraska Career Development Event
Handbook and Rules for 2026-2030

1. Event Purpose

- a. To assist students with developing practical skills in the marketing process through the development and presentation of a marketing plan. Students research and present a marketing plan for an agricultural product, supply or service for a local business, an existing or start-up enterprise. School-based enterprises **cannot** be used for the CDE. Though only three individuals are on a team, any number of students may assist with the marketing plan. For the event, a three-person team will submit the written plan and present the marketing plan involving the local community that provides a reasonable and logical solution to a marketing problem.
- b. Agriculture Education courses this CDE Aligns with include: Ag Sales & Marketing, Ag Businesses, Ag Communications, Entrepreneurship, Economics & Agribusiness Management, Leadership & Ethics in Agriculture.

2. CDE Objectives

- a. General Objectives:
 - i. Demonstrate an understanding of the marketing plan process.
 - ii. Explore and prepare for possible careers in agrimarketing.
 - iii. Develop partnerships and improve relations between industry, their local FFA chapters, and the general public.
- b. Written Marketing Plan Objectives:
 - i. Collaborate with a local company to identify a potential product that meets an unmet need or want and adds value to the business.
 - ii. Describe industry trends that help identify an immediate opportunity.
 - iii. Identify strengths, weaknesses, opportunities, and threats associated with the product you are introducing in the market as well as competitors' products.
 - iv. Design a survey to collect data needed to determine if there is demand or the product. For those who want the product, collect customer information including demographics, where they get information on new products, buying preferences, and what influences their decision-making process.
 - v. Develop an effective mission statement to describe what the product/service will provide to a customer.
 - vi. Identify key assumptions that must be in place for the plan to be successful.
 - vii. Create at least three goals (short/long term) that meet the S.M.A.R.T. goal criteria.
 - viii. Analyze and describe who would be most likely to buy the product (target market).
 - ix. Clearly identify the product/service attributes, how it will be priced and why, where customers can buy the product, how it will be promoted, and its unique selling position.
 - x. Evaluate progress on goals and what actions should be taken if goals are not met or are exceeded.
 - xi. Formulate line item expenses and income to create a comprehensive projection for a three-year budget.
- c. Presentation Objectives:
 - i. Integrate and clearly describe concepts from the written plan into the presentation, including the description of the product/client status, market analysis, business proposal, action plan strategies, budget, and evaluation.
 - ii. Determine and produce relative, logical, and detail supportive answers to questions that arise from the written plan and presentation.

- iii. Demonstrate effective communication skills (i.e. eye contact, voice tone, volume and speed, posture, etc.)
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3. Eligibility

- a. The Marketing Plan CDE is an open-enrollment event at the state level.
 - b. Agriculture Education students currently in 9th-12th grade are eligible CDE contestants.
 - i. Students who have either won the state contest and/or competed at the national level are not eligible to compete again at the state level.
 - ii. Team size shall be three students, all of whom must be pre-registered as 'participant' or 'alternate'.
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4. Required Attire

- a. All FFA members are encouraged to wear Official Dress and non-FFA members are encouraged to wear professional attire.
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5. Required Supplies & Equipment

- a. Each team is required to bring their own laptop to give the presentation including necessary adaptors.
 - b. After arriving on-campus, students should request [Guest Wireless Access](#) before the event.
 - i. Can be done through this link- <https://its.unl.edu/services/wi-fi/>
 - c. The following will be provided at the state event: LCD projector with cables, screen, a table, and two easels.
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6. Event Schedule

- a. Written Plan
 - i. Teams are to email a PDF version of the Marketing Plan DRAFTS and FINAL Marketing Plans to the event superintendent through an online form
 - 1. Submission link- <https://go.unl.edu/submission>
 - ii. The written marketing plan DRAFTS (for those who want early input on their plan) are due February 1, see CDE website for dates.
 - iii. The written marketing plan DRAFTS will be returned with feedback within 2-3 weeks.

- iv. Final plans will be due in early or mid-March; the date to be announced each fall when the CDE schedule is updated.
 - v. Written plans must be deemed complete to move to the presentation round. Complete is defined as including information (evidence levels 1-5) for each of the *Indicators* (left column) on the *Written Marketing Plan Rubric* (June 2025 revision), as listed in the National FFA [2026 Marketing Plan Handbook](#).
 - 1. Teams will be notified by noon the day before CDE registration closes or sooner if their plan qualifies for the presentation round. The number of teams invited for presentations will be determined by the superintendent each year and is based on the quality of final written plans and the room and number of judges available each year.
 - 2. This timeline allows teams to register (or withdraw their registration) by the registration deadline. A team whose written plan is deemed incomplete can optionally choose to register for the Marketing Plan CDE to show they participated. Their scores will be based on the written plan only.
- b. Presentation
- i. Teams will receive their presentation time from the superintendent after registration closes.
 - ii. Teams check-in 30 minutes prior to their presentation time.
 - iii. Teams can practice in the holding room.
 - iv. Teams are escorted by Market Plan officials to the presentation room at the scheduled time.
 - v. Teams are allowed 5 minutes for set up and can have assistance.
 - vi. Presentations are limited to 15 minutes.
 - vii. Judges are limited to 5 minutes for asking questions after the presentation.
 - viii. The number of teams in the in-person presentation round will determine whether there will be one presentation flight or the addition of a second flight. In the event there are two flights, a final round of four teams will be added, if feasible. If not feasible, all teams will be recorded, and the top four teams will be reviewed and scored by both sets of judges.

7. Annual Theme

- a. There is no annual theme for this event

8. Event Format

- a. Written Plan -8 pages in total
 - i. Cover Page - 1 Page (should include the project title, state name, chapter name, chapter number, and year)
 - ii. Text & Appendices - 7 Pages
 - b. Presentation
 - i. During the State CDEs.
 - ii. 15-minute limit
 - c. Questions
 - i. Following the presentation
 - ii. 5-minute limit
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9. Scoring

Activity	Points
Written Plan	100
Presentation	175
Questions	50
Total Points	325

10. Tiebreaker

- a. Team
 - i. Highest Questions Score
 - ii. Highest Primary Research Score
 - iii. Highest Action Plan Score
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11. Resource Materials

- a. National FFA
 - i. <https://www.ffa.org/participate/cdes/marketing-plan/>
- b. National Agri-Marketing Association (NAMA) student presentations
 - i. <https://nama.org/student-marketing-competition-winners>
- c. Past State Winners
 - i. 2018 Chase County Marketing Plan
 - 1. <https://go.unl.edu/chasecounty-marketingplan>
 - ii. 2018 Eustis Farnam Marketing Plan
 - 1. <https://go.unl.edu/eustisfarnam-marketingplan>

- iii. 2018 Fillmore Central Marketing Plan
 - 1. <https://go.unl.edu/fillmorecentral-marketingplan>
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12. Past Exams

- a. There is no exam for this CDE.
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13. Post-CDE debriefing opportunity and criteria

- a. There is no debriefing available.
- b. Teams will receive feedback on their rubrics.

APPENDIX

Appendix 1: Rubrics

Written Marketing Plan Rubric

100 POINTS

Chapter

State

Team Number

Indicator	Very strong evidence of skill 5-4 points	Moderate evidence of skill 3-2 points	Weak evidence of skill 1-0 points	Points Earned	Weight	Total Points
Description of product/client status	The plan contains details of the products/services from the customer's point of view and identifies key competitors and how the product/service is positioned to compete.	The plan describes the products/services; however, detail on the features, benefits and competitors is lacking.	Little to no information is provided on the product/service, its features and benefits or its competitors.		x 1	
Market Analysis						
Client's status in current market	Information is thoroughly and clearly reported, including such things as the type of product/service, current marketing efforts, current knowledge about customers and competitors, etc.	Information is, for the most part, thoroughly and clearly reported, but some information that may be critical to the marketing plan is missing.	Information is provided, but there is a great deal of potentially important information missing.		x 1	
Industry trends	Describes how major trends and information helped identify immediate opportunity	Describes major trends that could impact this industry in the near future	Gives a brief history of the industry but does not demonstrate understanding of trends		x 1	
Buyer profile and behavior	Describes in-depth the buyer in the customer profiles buying roles, buying behavior and buyer decision-making process	Briefly describes the buyer in the customer profiles buying roles, buying behavior and buyer decision-making process	The buyer profile section is incomplete.		x 1	
Competition's SWOT analysis	A thorough SWOT analysis is provided, and the reasoning for each item in the SWOT is provided and logical.	SWOT analysis is provided, but there are some missing points. The reasoning for each item is not always thoroughly provided and/or logical.	SWOT analysis is provided, but there are missing points, and there is no reasoning provided for the items.		x 1	
Product's/client's SWOT analysis	A thorough SWOT analysis is provided, and the reasoning for each item in the SWOT is provided and logical.	SWOT analysis is provided, but there are some missing points. The reasoning for each item is not always thoroughly provided and/or logical.	SWOT analysis is provided, but there are missing points, and there is no reasoning provided for the items.		x 1	
Primary Research results (survey, focus groups, interviews)	Excellent plan for collection of data justified with many facts from current business environment	Adequate data collection plan justified with a few facts from business environment	Data collection plan is unorganized and not supported by business environment		x 1	
Business Proposal						
Mission statement	Useful mission statement that is relevant to the business	Mission statement is not totally relevant to the business.	Irrelevant, not matching business use		x 1	
Key planning assumption	Identifies and validates key assumptions in the strategy	Identifies and validates most of the key assumptions in the strategy	Does not surface the key assumptions or validation for the strategy		x 1	
Short- and long-term goals	Short- and long-term business goals are attainable and time-bound.	Short- and long-term business goals may not be attainable or are not time-bound.	Goals are missing or are irrelevant to the business.		x 1	

Indicator	Very strong evidence of skill 5-4 points	Moderate evidence of skill 3-2 points	Weak evidence of skill 1-0 points	Points Earned	Weight	Total Points
Target market	Clearly identified by demographics and product/service meets needs/wants of target group	Somewhat identified by demographics and product/service may meet needs/wants of target group	Not identified by demographics and product/service does not meet needs/wants of target group		x 1	
Strategies and Action Plan						
Product	Clearly evident what product/service is being provided	Somewhat evident what product/service is being provided	Unclear what product/service is being provided		x 1	
Price	Includes the pricing structure and explains why/how these prices were determined	Includes the pricing structure but does not explain how the prices were determined	Does not provide complete pricing structure; some products or services are missing; No rationale for the pricing strategy is given.		x 1	
Place	Location is very convenient for target market	Location is accessible for target market	Location is not very convenient for target market		x 1	
Promotion	Promotional material makes target market clearly aware of what the product/service is, what it does and where it is available	Promotional material makes target market somewhat aware of what the product/service is, what it does and where it is available	Promotional material does not make target market aware of what the product/service is, what it does and where it is available		x 1	
Position	Unique selling position (USP) in the market clearly determined	Unique selling position (USP) in the market is somewhat determined	Unique selling position (USP) in the market is not determined		x 1	
Budget (Income statement, costs, returns, accuracy)						
	Income statement is complete and demonstrates a reasonable return on investment (ROI); all calculations are accurate and accurately categorized.	Income statement is complete and demonstrates a questionable return on investment (ROI); most calculations are accurate and accurately categorized.	Income statement is not complete and demonstrates an unreasonable return on investment (ROI); most calculations are inaccurate and inaccurately categorized.		x 2	
Evaluation						
	Evaluates data or criteria in a way that reflects an in-depth understanding of the product/service	Evaluates data or criteria in a way that reflects some basic understanding of the product/service	Has difficulty evaluating important data or criteria, which demonstrates a lack of understanding of the product/service		x 1	
Technical Business Writing						
	The plan contains no more than five spelling or grammatical errors. If any sources have been referenced, proper citations have been used. The plan is formatted according to the handbook.	The plan contains more than five spelling or grammatical errors. Citations, if needed, have been cited correctly. The plan is formatted according to the handbook.	The plan has many spelling or grammatical errors. No citations have been provided. The plan has not been formatted appropriately.		x 1	
Deduction: Late submission: Written plan received after deadline. Deduct 10 percent of possible plan score or 10 points. Submission after 7 days post deadline – 25 points						
Deduction: State name and chapter number title page. If not included, a penalty of five points will be deducted.						
Deduction: Five points deducted for incorrect written plan format. (eight (8) single-sided, 8.5 x 11-inch pages and must be 10 point or larger type size; formatted with margins no greater than 1 inch)						
WRITTEN MARKETING PLAN TOTAL POINTS						

Judge's Name

Judge's Signature

Date

Marketing Plan Presentation Rubric

225 POINTS

Chapter

State

Team Number

Indicator	Very strong evidence of skill 5-4 points	Moderate evidence of skill 3-2 points	Weak evidence of skill 1-0 points	Points Earned	Weight	Total Score
Marketing Process (Understanding and clear presentation of the six parts of the marketing plan)						
Brief description/Client status	Clear and engaging description of a want or unmet need in the market using data to support claims is presented	Somewhat clear description of a want or unmet need in the market is presented	Unclear description of a want or unmet need in the market is presented		x 1	
Marketing analysis <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Status in market Industry trends Buyer profile SWOT analysis 	Clear and compelling narrative that seamlessly integrates all important market research concepts from the written plan into the presentation	Clear narrative that integrates some market research concepts from the written plan into the presentation	No clear narrative or demonstration of market research concepts from the written plan in the presentation		x 2	
Primary research	Market is clearly explained using primary market research tools to persuasively support that the business in the presentation.	Market is somewhat explained and demonstrates the use of some primary market research tools to support the business in the presentation	Market is not explained and does not demonstrate the use of primary market research tools in the presentation		x 7	
Business proposal <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Mission statement Key planning assumptions Goals Target market 	Clear and compelling narrative that seamlessly integrates all important business concepts from the written plan into the presentation	Clear narrative that integrates some business concepts from the written plan into the presentation	No clear narrative that demonstrates business concepts from the written plan in the presentation		x 3	
Strategies/action plan <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Product Price Place Promotion Position 	Strategies/action plans from the written plan are pervasively included in the presentation	Some of the strategies/action plans from the written plan are included in the presentation	No clear presentation of strategies/action plans are included in the presentation		x 6	
Budget <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ROI Cost of strategies 	Clear and compelling narrative that seamlessly integrates all important financial concepts from the written plan into the presentation	Clear narrative that integrates some financial concepts from the written plan into the presentation	No clear narrative or demonstration of financial concepts from the written plan in the presentation		x 5	
Evaluation <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Benchmarks Measuring tools Alternative strategies 	Clear and compelling narrative that seamlessly integrates all the important evaluation information from the written plan in the presentation	A narrative that integrates some evaluation information from the written plan is included in the presentation.	No clear demonstration of evaluation information from the written plan is included in the presentation.		x 2	

Indicator	Very strong evidence of skill 5-4 points	Moderate evidence of skill 3-2 points	Weak evidence of skill 1-0 points	Points Earned	Weight	Total Score
Communication	Speaks with confidence, presence, poise and eye contact; excellent use of grammar enhances the entire presentation; All members participated equally.	Some problems with pauses, pacing and/or eye contact and language, includes grammar that is average; Two members took an active role in the presentation.	Reads from notes, rarely looks at audience; has problems with pronunciation and/or very low level of grammar is used; All members did not participate equally.		x 4	
Question and Answers	Knowledge is evident and provides a clear, concise well-thought-out answer to the questions	Provides answers that are somewhat unclear and at times does not answer questions.	Seems caught off guard by questions and either does not answer the question or provides a rambling answer		x 10	
Visual Presentation (25 points)						
Creative Quality	Provided visual aids are relevant and well-designed and add appeal to the plan and its recommendations.	Visual aids support marketing plan and showcase creative thinking. Design is adequate.	Visual aids lack refinement or don't connect to the marketing plan.		X 3	
Spelling, and grammar/ Mechanics	No misspellings or grammatical errors.	Three or fewer misspellings and or grammatical errors.	More than three misspellings and or grammatical errors.		X 1	
Clarity and neatness	Content is well-organized and visually compelling.	Content is easy to follow and laid out appropriately.	Content is disorganized or lacks readability.		X 1	
Presentation Total Points (possible 225 points)						
Deduction: Five points for each minute, or major fraction thereof, presentation went over 15 minutes.						
Written Plan Total Points (possible 100 points)						
<i>Sub-total (Written and Presentation)</i>						
NET TOTAL POINTS (325 POSSIBLE POINTS)						
TEAM RANKING						