

Marketing Plan

Rule years 2027–2030 · Revision 1 · Published October 10, 2026

0. General Rules & Eligibility

Career Development Events are governed by the NAEA CDE Committee. All events follow [CDE General Rules and Eligibility](#).

Qualification for this event

District qualification	Open to all schools; complete written plan required, selected teams invited to present
Students per team	3
Grades	9–12
National qualifying event?	Yes
Timeframe	FFA Convention
Host	UNL Ag Economics Division
Event Superintendent	Rosalee Swartz

1. Overview

To help students develop practical marketing skills by creating and presenting a marketing plan. Students research and present a marketing plan for an agricultural product, supply, or service.

This CDE aligns with the following Agricultural Education courses: Ag Sales & Marketing, Ag Businesses, Ag Communications, Entrepreneurship, Economics & Agribusiness Management, Leadership, and Ethics in Agriculture.

Objectives

- Demonstrate an understanding of the marketing plan process.
- Explore and prepare for possible careers in marketing.
- Develop partnerships and improve relations between industry, their local FFA chapters, and the general public.

2. Eligibility & Team

Open to students in Grades 9–12. Teams are 3 students. Open to all schools; complete written plan required, selected teams invited to present. This event is national-qualifying.

- 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.
- Team size shall be three students, all of whom must be pre-registered as 'participant' or 'alternate'. Any number of students may assist with the plan's development, but only three will present the plan.
- Every team must submit a written marketing plan by early to mid-March (see the CDE website for the date). To advance to the presentation round, the plan must be judged complete, covering every indicator on the Written Marketing Plan Rubric (Appendix A). The superintendent determines how many teams present, based on plan

quality and the rooms and judges available. Teams are notified by noon the day before CDE registration closes. A team whose plan is incomplete may still register; it is scored on the written plan only.

3. What to Bring

Attire

- It's recommended that FFA members wear Official FFA Dress. Non-FFA members should wear professional dress.

Supplies

- Each team must bring their own laptop for the presentation, including any necessary adapters.
- After arriving on campus, students should request Guest Wireless Access before the event, which can be done through this link: <https://its.unl.edu/services/wi-fi/>
- The following will be provided at the state event: an LCD projector with cables, a screen, a table, and two easels.

4. Event Format

Timing

A. Written Plan

- I. Teams are to upload a PDF version of the Marketing Plan DRAFTS (optional) and FINAL Marketing Plans (required) to the event superintendent through an online form. 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 5.
- III. The written marketing plan DRAFTS will be returned with feedback within 2–3 weeks.
- IV. Final plans will be due in early to mid-March; the date will 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 (Appendix A).
 1. Teams will be notified no later than noon the day before CDE registration closes 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 available rooms and judges 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 will check in within 30 minutes prior to their presentation time.
- III. Teams can practice in the holding room.
- IV. Teams are escorted by Marketing Plan officials to the presentation room at the scheduled time.
- V. Teams are allowed 5 minutes for setup and can have assistance.

- VI. Before the presentation, teams are allowed to hand judges one single-sided, 8.5 × 11-inch page with changes/corrections to the written plan. **No other handouts or samples are permitted.**
- VII. Presentations are limited to 15 minutes. Five points are deducted for each minute or fraction thereof over the 15-minute limit.
- VIII. Judges are limited to 7 minutes for asking questions after the presentation.
- IX. 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.

Format

The Marketing Plan CDE includes a written marketing plan and a live presentation. The marketing plan is focused on solving relevant, real-world business objectives through sound research, pertinent insights, and clear recommendations. The marketing plan rubric thoroughly reviews marketing plan components and attributes.

A. Written Plan (9 pages total)

- I. Cover Page – 1 page (should include the project title, state name, chapter name, chapter number, and year)
- II. Content & Appendices – 8 pages
- III. All pages must be formatted on 8½ × 11-inch paper with at least 1-inch margins and use 12-point Times New Roman, Cambria, Arial, or Calibri font.
- IV. The 12-point font requirement applies to all narrative text and tables. Text within charts, graphs, maps, and promotional materials may be smaller when necessary, provided it remains clear and legible when printed.
- V. Active hyperlinks or QR codes are **not permitted** in the plan, as it must be fully reviewable in print.
- VI. A five-point deduction will be applied to any marketing plan that does not follow these formatting requirements.

B. Presentation

- I. During the State CDEs
- II. 15-minute limit

C. Questions

- I. Following the presentation
- II. 7-minute limit

Client Selection

The team selects an actual, existing local agribusiness, either an established or start-up enterprise that serves the community, further referred to as the 'client.' Teams will decide on the product or service for the marketing plan. The team should serve as the business's marketing agency, collaborating with the client to deliver insights into the company and identify marketing opportunities for growth.

The team should work with an off-campus organization. The effectiveness of a marketing plan depends largely on responding to learning and understanding the needs of an outside client. To emphasize the importance of the client-agency relationship in forming the marketing plan, the following are **not permitted** as 'clients':

- A. Teams **should not** use their chapter as a client.*
- B. Teams **should not** develop a business or product for the marketing plan development project. See the National FFA 2027 Marketing Plan Handbook for guidance on proposing realistic product extensions or innovations when working with an existing company or business.

- C. Teams **should not** use a start-up or business owned by one of their team members or in which a current team member provides the client relationship.

*If a chapter has a certified state business LLC operating before plan development, it may use its business as its marketing plan development project.

Written Marketing Plan (100 points)

A marketing plan should be focused on the end consumer. This is different from a business plan.

Emphasis should be placed on using marketing techniques to increase the value of the client's products or services to its determined target audience. Marketing strategies should be informed by primary and secondary research and show a clear understanding of the client's needs.

- A. Collaborate with a local company to identify a potential product that meets an unmet need or want and adds value to the business.
- B. Determine the company's current status in the market.
- C. Describe industry trends that help identify an immediate opportunity.
- D. Identify strengths, weaknesses, opportunities, and threats associated with the product you are introducing in the market as well as competitors' products.
- E. Primary research. Design a method to collect data needed to determine demand for the product and the customers most likely to need/purchase the product (target market). Collect data that will help establish demographics, buying roles, buying behavior, buyer decision-making process, and how the product/service meets the needs/wants of the target market.
- F. Develop a buyer profile and behavior based on primary and secondary research, if applicable.
- G. Develop an effective mission statement to describe what the product/service will provide to a customer.
- H. Identify key assumptions that must be in place for the plan to be successful.
 - I. Create at least three goals (short/long term) that meet the S.M.A.R.T. goal criteria.
- J. Analyze and describe who would be most likely to buy the product (target market). This should correspond with primary research.
- K. Clearly identify the product/service attributes and how it will be priced and why, where customers can buy the product, how it will be promoted, and its unique selling position. The buyer profile/behaviors developed by primary research should be evident in the team's decisions on pricing, placement, and promotion strategies.
- L. Formulate the marketing budget line-item expenses and income to create a comprehensive three-year budget projection. The budget should be future-oriented and include the current year plus two additional years in advance, detailing:
 - I. Cost of marketing strategies
 - II. Pro forma income statement that details the realistic costs and returns of the marketing strategies
 - III. Calculated financial return of the marketing plan

The budget should **not** illustrate the client's entire financials; it should only detail those financial items directly impacted by value-added marketing efforts. The agency's objective is to showcase the true value and specific returns of its marketing recommendations, delivering enticing and effective solutions to its client(s).

ROI should be specific to marketing recommendations. *Teams should utilize the following formula to calculate ROI:* **$ROI: [(\$ \text{ Sales} - \$ \text{ Marketing Cost}) / \$ \text{ Marketing Cost}] \times 100 = \% \text{ Marketing ROI}$**

- M. Establish benchmarks to track progress toward goals, identify tools to measure them, and recommend alternative strategies if benchmarks are not met.

Note: Refer to the Written Marketing Plan Rubric (Appendix A) for details.

Presentation (225 points)

The team assumes the role of a marketing consultant. The judges take the role of the selected client.

- A. 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.
- B. Determine and produce relevant, logical, and detailed supportive answers to questions that arise from the written plan and presentation.
- C. Demonstrate effective communication skills (i.e., eye contact, voice tone, volume and speed, posture, etc.).

Note: Refer to the Presentation Rubric (Appendix B) for details.

5. Scoring & Tiebreakers

Team Scoring

Component	Detail	Points
Written Plan	Scored by rubric (Appendix A: Written Marketing Plan Rubric)	100
Presentation	Scored by rubric (Appendix B: Marketing Plan Presentation Rubric)	175
Questions	Scored by rubric (Appendix B: Marketing Plan Presentation Rubric)	50
Grand total		325

Team Tiebreakers

Team tiebreakers are resolved in the order listed below.

- A. Highest Questions Score
- B. Highest Primary Research Score
- C. Highest Action Plan Score

6. Study Resources

Approved study resources

- [UNL CDE Study Materials Folder \(OneDrive\)](#) — Practice materials and examples for this CDE.
- [National FFA](#) — Click on Marketing Plan and Preparation
- [Designing Your Marketing Survey](#)
- [Developing a Marketing Plan: Key Points](#)
- **Past Years' Winning Plans** — See the Marketing Plan page on the Nebraska CDE site.

7. After the Event

Teams will receive their rubrics with feedback.

List of Appendices

- [Appendix A: Written Marketing Plan Rubric \(100 points\)](#)
- [Appendix B: Marketing Plan Presentation Rubric \(225 points\)](#)

Appendix A: Written Marketing Plan Rubric (100 points)

School:

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

Indicator	Very strong evidence of skill	Moderate evidence of skill	Weak evidence of skill	Points Earned
Strategies and Action Plan				
Product	5–4 points: Clearly evident what product/service is being provided	3–2 points: Somewhat evident what product/service is being provided	1–0 points: Unclear what product/service is being provided	/5
Price	5–4 points: Includes the pricing structure and explains why/how these prices were determined	3–2 points: Includes the pricing structure but does not explain how the prices were determined	1–0 points: Does not provide complete pricing structure; some products or services are missing; No rationale for the pricing strategy is given.	/5
Place	5–4 points: Location is very convenient for target market	3–2 points: Location is accessible for target market	1–0 points: Location is not very convenient for target market	/5
Promotion	5–4 points: Promotional material makes target market clearly aware of what the product/service is, what it does and where it is available	3–2 points: Promotional material makes target market somewhat aware of what the product/service is, what it does and where it is available	1–0 points: Promotional material does not make target market aware of what the product/service is, what it does and where it is available	/5
Position	5–4 points: Unique selling position (USP) in the market clearly determined	3–2 points: Unique selling position (USP) in the market is somewhat determined	1–0 points: Unique selling position (USP) in the market is not determined	/5
Budget (income statement, costs, returns, accuracy). Must be for 3 years (current year and the following two years)				
Budget	10–7 points: Income statement is complete and demonstrates a reasonable return on investment (ROI); all calculations are accurate and accurately categorized. Includes current year plus 2 years beyond.	6–3 points: Income statement is complete and demonstrates a questionable return on investment (ROI); most calculations are accurate and accurately categorized.	2–0 points: Income statement is not complete and demonstrates an unreasonable return on investment (ROI); most calculations are inaccurate and inaccurately categorized.	/10
Evaluation				
Evaluation	5–4 points: Evaluates data or criteria in a way that reflects an in-depth understanding of the product/service	3–2 points: Evaluates data or criteria in a way that reflects some basic understanding of the product/service	1–0 points: Has difficulty evaluating important data or criteria, which demonstrates a lack of understanding of the product/service	/5
Technical Business Writing				
Technical Business Writing	5–4 points: 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.	3–2 points: 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.	1–0 points: The plan has many spelling or grammatical errors. No citations have been provided. The plan has not been formatted appropriately.	/5
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 on 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 × 11-inch pages and must be 12-point or larger type size; formatted with margins no less than 1 inch). No active links or QR codes permitted.				
WRITTEN MARKETING PLAN TOTAL POINTS (100 possible points)				
Judge's Name / Judge's Signature / Date				

Appendix B: Marketing Plan Presentation Rubric (225 points)

School:

Indicator	Very strong evidence of skill	Moderate evidence of skill	Weak evidence of skill	Points Earned
Marketing Process (Understanding and clear presentation of the six parts of the marketing plan)				
Brief description/ Client status	5–4 points: Clear and engaging description of a want or unmet need in the market using data to support claims is presented	3–2 points: Somewhat clear description of a want or unmet need in the market is presented	1–0 points: Unclear description of a want or unmet need in the market is presented	/5
Marketing analysis • Status in market • Industry trends • Buyer profile • SWOT analysis	10–7 points: Clear and compelling narrative that seamlessly integrates all important market research concepts from the written plan into the presentation	6–3 points: Clear narrative that integrates some market research concepts from the written plan into the presentation	2–0 points: No clear narrative or demonstration of market research concepts from the written plan in the presentation	/10
Primary research	35–22 points: Market is clearly explained using primary market research tools to persuasively support that the business in the presentation.	21–8 points: Market is somewhat explained and demonstrates the use of some primary market research tools to support the business in the presentation	7–0 points: Market is not explained and does not demonstrate the use of primary market research tools in the presentation	/35
Business proposal • Mission statement • Key planning assumptions • Goals • Target market	15–10 points: Clear and compelling narrative that seamlessly integrates all important business concepts from the written plan into the presentation	9–4 points: Clear narrative that integrates some business concepts from the written plan into the presentation	3–0 points: No clear narrative that demonstrates business concepts from the written plan in the presentation	/15
Strategies/action plan • Product • Price • Place • Promotion • Position	30–19 points: Strategies/action plans from the written plan are pervasively included in the presentation	18–7 points: Some of the strategies/action plans from the written plan are included in the presentation	6–0 points: No clear presentation of strategies/action plans are included in the presentation	/30
Budget • 3-Years • ROI • Cost of strategies	25–16 points: Clear and compelling narrative that seamlessly integrates all important financial concepts from the written plan into the presentation	15–6 points: Clear narrative that integrates some financial concepts from the written plan into the presentation	5–0 points: No clear narrative or demonstration of financial concepts from the written plan in the presentation	/25
Evaluation • Benchmarks • Measuring tools • Alternative strategies	10–7 points: Clear and compelling narrative that seamlessly integrates all the important evaluation information from the written plan in the presentation	6–3 points: A narrative that integrates some evaluation information from the written plan is included in the presentation.	2–0 points: No clear demonstration of evaluation information from the written plan is included in the presentation.	/10
Communication	20–13 points: Speaks with confidence, presence, poise and eye contact; excellent use of grammar enhances the entire presentation; all members participated equally.	12–5 points: 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.	4–0 points: 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.	/20
Question and Answers	50–31 points: Knowledge is evident and provides a clear, concise well-thought-out answer to the questions	30–11 points: Provides answers that are somewhat unclear and at times does not answer questions.	10–0 points: Seems caught off guard by questions and either does not answer the question or provides a rambling answer	/50

Indicator	Very strong evidence of skill	Moderate evidence of skill	Weak evidence of skill	Points Earned
Visual Presentation (25 points)				
Creative Quality	15–10 points: Provided visual aids are relevant and well-designed and add appeal to the plan and its recommendations.	9–4 points: Visual aids support marketing plan and showcase creative thinking. Design is adequate.	3–0 points: Visual aids lack refinement or don't connect to the marketing plan.	/15
Spelling, and grammar/ Mechanics	5–4 points: No misspellings or grammatical errors.	3–2 points: Three or fewer misspellings and or grammatical errors.	1–0 points: More than three misspellings and or grammatical errors.	/5
Clarity and neatness	5–4 points: Content is well-organized and visually compelling.	3–2 points: Content is easy to follow and laid out appropriately.	1–0 points: Content is disorganized or lacks readability.	/5
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)				
Sub-total (Written and Presentation)				
NET TOTAL POINTS (325 POSSIBLE POINTS)				
TEAM RANKING				

Subcommittee

Standing subcommittee for this event

Name	School / Organization	Role
Katie Nolles Smith	Stuart	Chair
Rosalee Swartz	UNL — Agricultural Economics	Superintendent
Chad Schimmels	Eustis-Farnam	Exec liaison
Stacie Turnbull	UNL	Exec liaison
David Gibbens	West Holt	Member
Jason Hirschfeld	York	Member
Nicole Mowry	Syracuse-Dunbar-Avoca	Member

What changed — 2027–2030 rev 1 EDITORIAL

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