
Tennessee FFA Association
Agriculture
Communications
Handbook

2017-2021

Purpose

The purpose of the Tennessee Agricultural Communications Career Development Event is to excite and inspire students to develop basic skills relevant to the agricultural communications industry. Students will be equipped with strong communication skills and will have developed the ability to work collaboratively to effectively communicate and advocate for the agriculture industry.

Event Rules

- Teams will consist of four members.
- FFA Official Dress is required for this event.
- Team members will work together to prepare a written media plan prior to the Tennessee State FFA CDE. The team will also be responsible for presenting the plan at the state event and completing individual practicums and tests.
- Any participant in possession of an electronic device during the quizzes, is subject to disqualification. Recording devices are not allowed during the press conference.

Event Format

Each November following the national FFA convention and expo, the agricultural communications CDE committee will release event specifications for the next year. The specifications will outline the scenario to be used for the media plan and presentation as well as the specific practicum activities and software. This information can be found on *FFA.org* and *tnffa.org*.

Equipment

Needed: Students must provide pens and pencils. For practicums, writers and designers are encouraged to bring laptop or other device for word processing or design.

Note: Teams may bring additional equipment for the media plan presentation as long as they are able to set up and tear down equipment in the time allowed for the presentation.

For practicums, members may be provided:

- PC computer
- Easel
- Projector
- Blank paper
- Any other necessary materials

Team Activities

AGRICULTURE-RELATED MEDIA PLAN (200 POINTS/TEAM)

Teams will play the role of communications consultants and will develop a media plan for an assigned scenario. The scenario will identify a client with a communications need and a budget. Please reference the current event specifications on the CDE webpage. At the state event, the team will make a pitch (oral presentation) of the media plan.

Scenarios are based on the ideas of agricultural advocacy. Teams will develop a media plan from the following rotating topics.

Tell a local FFA Story

- The focus could include one of the following:
 - FFA member
 - FFA chapter
 - FFA advisor
 - State FFA Association
 - FFA Alumni/supporter

Advocate the agricultural industry to consumers

- The focus could include one of the following:
 - Farmer/rancher
 - Commodity
 - Farmers market
 - Community garden
 - Farm to table
 - Identify a local opportunity for public relations not tied to FFA

A media plan is a written document that describes the following:

- **Objectives:** What the group wants to accomplish with the media plan.
- **Target Audience:** Description of who the client is trying to reach, including demographic data.
- **Strategic plan and tactics:** Ways in which the objectives can be accomplished.

- Including social media plan
- **Timeline:** When the objectives will be accomplished.
- **Evaluation:** How the results will be measured.
- **Budget:** Teams may not go over a maximum of \$5,000.
- **References**

Guidelines for media plan

- Eight to 10 typed pages not including cover page, table of contents, references or appendices.
- Double-spaced with 1" margins.
- Paginated (numbered pages not including cover page).
- 12-point Times New Roman font (not including display text or headings).
- Submitted electronically in PDF format to National FFA Organization by the designated deadline at FFA.org on the CDE certification page.
- Formatted and edited according to the Publication Manual of the American Psychological Association (APA) when citing sources.

The media plan must include the following sections (points will be deducted for missing or incomplete sections):

Cover page

- Must include the title of the media plan, CDE name, state, chapter name, team member names and year.
- May include a creative design.

Table of contents

Introduction and Overview

- Two pages maximum.
- Introduction
 - A brief background of the issue/topic and a statement of the problem establishing the need for this media plan.
- Overview

- A brief preview of what is contained in the plan and how it will benefit the client.
- Objectives of the media plan

Audience

- One page maximum.
- Who the client is trying to reach (target audience) with the media plan.
- The demographic characteristics of the intended audience.
- Note: teams may have a primary and a secondary audience.

Strategic plan

- Three to four pages maximum.
- Key messages or themes to communicate to the audience.
- Explanation of how the objectives will be met.
- Plan to attract media attention using social media.
- Description of how the plan will be executed.

Social Media Tactic of the Strategic Plan

A social media plan is required addressing the following:

- Social media platforms to be used.
- Plan to gain followers.
- Plan to engage followers.
- General idea for the messages to be posted.
- One page example post must be provided as an appendix (can include Facebook posts, tweets, Instagram photos and others).
- Content of the “About” section of pages.

Timeline

- One page maximum.
- Explanation of the duration of the plan and the timing of the media tactics.

Evaluation

- One page maximum.
- Description of proposed methods to determine if the media plan objectives were met.

- What are the key performances? (How will you measure that you are successful?)
- Examples may include number of participants, impressions, likes, shares, retweets, circulation of publications, number of video views.

Budget and Justification

- One page maximum.
- Table of all costs associated with implementing the media plan.
- Explain why you have allocated this amount for each activity.

Conclusion

- One page maximum.
- A final summary of key points related to the strategic plan and a statement persuading the client that the plan is a good solution to the communication problem.
- Not a restatement of the introduction and overview.

References

- Formatted and edited according to the Publication Manual of the American Psychological Association (APA).
- Appendices/Examples.
- One page of social media posts.
- Three to five other communication examples.
- Suggestions include mock up or example of website, links to student created video, press releases, blogs, op-eds.

Appendices

- Include three to five examples in the appendices.
- Examples of tactics include but are not limited to:
 - broadcast advertising
 - print advertising
 - press releases
 - fliers
 - brochure

- web site
- blogging
- displays.

Submission

An electronic copy of the media plan in PDF format (no larger than 20 megabytes) must be emailed/uploaded to designated Tennessee FFA State Staff by the date listed annually on tnffa.org. A penalty of 10 percent of available media plan points will be assessed for any late submissions.

MEDIA PLAN PITCH — PRESENTATION (175 POINTS/TEAM)

- The team should present the media plan as if pitching it to the client identified in the scenario.
- The presentation should follow the structure of the written media plan.
- Teams should bring examples of materials that would be used in the execution of the plan (e.g., social media, broadcast advertising, print advertising, press releases, fliers, brochures, website, blogging and displays).
- Each team member must participate in the presentation.
- Each team will be allowed 15 minutes to present its media plan to a panel of judges, who will play the role of the client. Five points will be deducted for each major fraction of a minute over the 15 minutes allowed for the presentation. Following the presentation, judges will be allowed five minutes to ask questions.
- Teams will have a total of 10 minutes for setting-up and tearing-down equipment (e.g., five minutes to set up and five minutes to tear down).
- Provided equipment includes an easel, projector screen and table.
- In the case of equipment failure, the team may be asked to move forward with the presentation. A back-up plan is recommended.

Note: Teams may bring additional equipment for the presentation as long as they are able to set up and tear down equipment in the time allowed.

JOURNALISTIC WRITING TEAM PRACTICUM (400 POINTS/TEAM)

The practicums will consist of a Journalistic Writing team event.

All teams will meet in a central location for an orientation and press conference. All team

members will be given an orientation at the beginning of the practicums to last no more than 10 minutes.

The press conference will be held immediately before the scheduled practicum. Each team member will receive a press packet with background information on the agricultural topic and expert to use during the event. An expert will speak on a current agricultural topic for 20 minutes. Students will be provided with paper to take notes if they wish.

The writers will then be involved in a 10 minute question and answer period with the expert (speaker). Each writer will stand to be recognized before asking a question. Writers may ask more than one question; however, the expert will attempt to address questions from as many different participants as possible. No electronic devices of any kind, including tape recorders and cell phones, will be allowed during this portion of the event.

Journalistic Writers

As a team, writers are to write a journalistic piece based on the press packet and information that was gathered in the press conference. It should be written for an appropriate audience, have a strong focus and lead (opening paragraph) and include a headline. The story will then be word processed by the student on a computer and turned in to be scored. Participants will have 90 minutes to complete the practicum.

The activity will rotate annually from the following:

- Press release (2017, 2020)
- News story (2018, 2021)
- Feature story (2019)

Individual Activities

TESTS

EDITING EXERCISE (25 POINTS/INDIVIDUAL; 100 POINTS/TEAM)

Because editing is a critical skill for all communicators, each team member will complete an editing exercise. They will be given a printed document that contains 25 mistakes. In correcting the mistakes, team members will be required to use correct proofreading marks (see

Associated Press Stylebook). Style, grammar, punctuation and spelling mistakes will be included. Team members will NOT be able to use the style manual or a dictionary during this exercise.

COMMUNICATIONS QUIZ (25 POINTS/INDIVIDUAL; 100 POINTS/TEAM)

Each team member will complete a quiz that covers general knowledge of the agricultural communications industry. The quiz will come from the past five years National Communications Quizzes which can be found on ffa.org.

Event	Points
Media Plan — Proposal	200
Media Plan Pitch — Presentation	175
Tests- 200 points possible	
Communications Quiz	100 (25 pts/member)
Editing Exercise	100 (25 pts/member)
Practicums- 100 points possible	
Team Journalistic writing practicum	100
Total individual score possible	200
Total team score possible	675

Scoring

Participants will be ranked in numerical order on the basis of the final score to be determined by each judge without consultation. The judge's ranking of each participant then shall be added, and the winner will be that participant whose total ranking is the lowest. Other placings will be determined in the same manner (low point method of selection). Weighted rank scoring will be implemented to maintain point value emphasis between individual and team events. The criteria and points can be found on the scorecards.

TIEBREAKERS

Team tiebreakers will be settled in the following order:

1. Combined individual practicum rank score
2. Proposal rank
3. Presentation rank
4. Media plan

References

This list of references is not intended to be all-inclusive.

Other sources may be utilized, and teachers are encouraged to make use of the very best instructional materials available. The following list contains references that may prove helpful during event preparation.

- National FFA CDE Page Past CDE Material (<https://www.ffa.org/resources/cde/questions-and-answers>)
- Associated Press Stylebook and Libel Manual
- Microsoft® Office computer program
- Adobe® Creative Suite (most current edition)
- Bivins, T. Public Relations Writings: The Essentials of Style and Format, 4th edition. McGraw-Hill Higher Education, ISBN 0-844-20351-3
- Harrower, T. Newspaper Designer’s Handbook, 5th edition. McGraw-Hill Higher Education. ISBN 0-07-249291-0
- Kalbfeld, B. Associated Press Broadcast News Handbook. McGraw-Hill Higher Education, ISBN 0-07-136388-2
- Telg, R. and T. Irani. Agricultural Communication in Action: A Hands-On Approach, 1st edition. Cengage/Delmar Publishing, ISBN 1111317143 (Online versions available)

Media Plan — Proposal Scorecard

CHAPTER	STATE	TEAM NUMBER	Possible Score	Team Score
Plan Includes all Requirements <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Cover page, titles and names on cover page, table of contents, does not exceed page limit, double spaced, one inch margins, page numbers, required headings (-1 point per missing item) 			10	
Proposal is Relevant to Scenario <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Entire narrative focuses on addressing client’s specific public communication needs. 			10	
Overview (Excutive Summary) <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Adequately explains the plan without reading the entire document. 			10	
Introduction <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Provides adequate background of the issue; clearly states the problem objectives and need for plan; describes how the plan will benefit the client. 			15	
Description of Audience <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Clearly describes (including demographics) who is targeted with the media plan. 			15	
Detailed Strategic Plan <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Clearly states objectives; explains how objectives will be met; explains why chosen mediums are appropriate to meet objectives; describes how plan will be executed. Clearly states and explains social media plan tactics. 			30	
Timeline <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Explains duration of plan and timing of media tactics. 			10	
Evaluation <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Proposes methods to determine if the objectives were met. 			15	
Budget			20	

<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Explains all costs associated with implementing the media plan. 				
Conclusion			10	
Appendices <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Quality of communications documents. (Three required) 			30	
Quality of writing <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Grammar, spelling, punctuation, capitalization, sentence structure. 			25	
TOTAL POINTS			200	

Media Plan Pitch — Presentation Scorecard

175 points

CHAPTER				STATE	TEAM NUMBER	
INDICATOR	Very strong evidence of skill is present 5-4 points	Moderate evidence of skill is present 3-2 points	Strong evidence of skill is not present 1-0 points	Points Earned	Weight	Total Score
Examples	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Examples are vivid, precise and clearly explained. • Examples are original, logical and relevant. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Examples are usually concrete, sometimes needs clarification. • Examples are effective, but need more originality or thought. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Examples are abstract or not clearly defined. • Examples are sometimes confusing, leaving the listeners with questions. 		X 5	
Confidence in speaking	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Speaks very articulately. • Never has the need for unnecessary pauses or hesitation when speaking. • Speaks at the right pace to be clear. • Pronunciation of words is very clear and intent is apparent. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Sometimes speaks articulately. • Occasionally has the need for a long pause or moderate hesitation when speaking. • Speaks at the right pace most of the time, but shows some nervousness. • Pronunciation of words is usually clear, sometimes vague. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Rarely articulate. • Frequently hesitates or has long, awkward pauses while speaking. • Pace is too fast; nervous. • Pronunciation of words is difficult to understand; unclear. 		X 3	

INDICATOR	Very strong evidence of skill is present 5-4 points	Moderate evidence of skill is present 3-2 points	Strong evidence of skill is not present 1-0 points	Points Earned	Weight	Total Score
Being detail-oriented; provide details	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Is able to stay fully detail-oriented. Always provides details which support the issue to communicate the key concepts of the plan; is well organized. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Is mostly good at being detail-oriented. Usually provides details which are supportive of the issue communicate the plan; displays good organizational skills. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Has difficulty being detail-oriented. Sometimes overlooks details that could be very beneficial to the issue; Not enough detail provided lacks organization. 		X 3	
Speaking unrehearsed and natural	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Speaks unrehearsed with comfort and ease. Is able to speak effectively without losing focus and with organized thoughts and concise answers. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Speaks unrehearsed mostly with comfort and ease, but sometimes seems nervous or unsure. Is able to speak effectively, has to stop and think and sometimes gets off focus. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Shows nervousness or seems unprepared when speaking unrehearsed. Seems to ramble or speaks before thinking. 		X 3	
All team members participated	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> All team members took an active role in the presentation. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Two to three team members took an active role in the presentation. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> One team member took an active role in the presentation. 		X 3	
Use of visual aids	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Visual aids add clarity and support what is being said during the presentation. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Visual aids add some clarity and support to what is being said during the presentation. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Visual aids add little to no clarity and support to what is being said during the presentation. 		X 3	

INDICATOR	Very strong evidence of skill is present 5-4 points	Moderate evidence of skill is present 3-2 points	Strong evidence of skill is not present 1-0 points	Points Earned	Weight	Total Score
Media plan	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Key elements of the media plan are clearly communicated. Strong understanding of chosen media is present. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Key elements of the media plan are vaguely communicated. Vague understanding of chosen media is present. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Key elements of the media plan are not communicated. Little to no understanding of chosen media is present. 		X 3	
Questions and answers	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Is able to correctly respond to judges' questions. Answers show familiarity with subject matter. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Is somewhat able to correctly respond to judges' questions. Answers show vague familiarity with subject matter. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Is unable to correctly respond to judges' questions. Answers do not reflect any familiarity with subject matter. 		X 12	
TOTAL POINTS						

Journalistic Writing Practicum Scorecard

CHAPTER

STATE

TEAM NUMBER

	High 5–4 points	Middle 3–2 points	Low 1–0 points	Weight	Total Points
Lead/focus				x 3	
Accuracy of information and quotes				x 3	
Clarity and conciseness				X 2	
Correct style (AP)				X 2	
Depth of coverage				X 2	
Header/headline				X 2	
Grammar, spelling, punctuation and word choice				X 2	
Organization and format				X 2	
Accomplishment of purpose				X 2	
TOTAL POINTS (100 POINTS POSSIBLE)					

Team Scorecard

CHAPTER

STATE

TEAM NUMBER

	Possible Score	Member Score
Practicum scores	100	
Media plan proposal	200	
Media plan presentation	175	
Test scores Communications quiz – 100 points (25 points/member) Editing exercise – 100 points (25 points/member)	200	
TOTAL POINTS	675	