



Marketing Plan

Updates

HANDBOOK UPDATE:

- Marketing Plan format changes
 - Exclude the title page from the count of eight allowed pages, thus a nine-page limit with the title page.
 - Update to require double-spaced & formatted to 8½ x 11-inch paper with no less than 1-inch margins on every side of the page. 12-point font size, using Times New Roman, Cambria, Arial, or Calibri font.
 - Active links or QR Codes are not permitted.
- Presentations — Advise teams to have a PDF of the presentation, particularly if using special fonts.

***Rationale:** Require material to be presented in a readable format and limit the material to be evaluated to the document. Material presented as a link is not evaluated and is not allowed.*

Use of Artificial Intelligence (AI) for National Programs and Events

Artificial intelligence (AI) refers to computer systems capable of performing complex tasks that historically only a human could do, such as reasoning, making decisions, or solving problems. As AI continues to evolve, it can be a tremendous tool to help companies, organizations and individuals enhance their productivity and work. Therefore, the National FFA Organization allows the use of AI tools. FFA members may use AI tools, such as ChatGPT, Gemini, and CoPilot, to assist them in their learning.

Appropriate uses of AI may include:

- generating ideas for any FFA-related assignments, projects, contests and award applications
- checking facts of a phenomenon
- checking for and correcting grammatical errors in a paper written by a member

For more information, please see the [Standard Operating Procedures on the Use of Artificial Intelligence \(AI\) for National Programs and Events document](#).

Purpose

The marketing plan career development event is designed to assist students with developing practical skills in marketing through creating and presenting a marketing plan. Students research and present a marketing plan for an agricultural product, supply or service. Students will experience a client-consultant relationship that further connects them to their community and prepares them for potential future careers in marketing.

Objectives

Through participation in the national event, participants will:

- 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.

Event Rules

- A team representing a chapter will consist of three members from the same chapter.
- FFA official dress is required for this event.
- The top two chapters from each region will compete on the state level.

Program Structure

The marketing plan career development event includes a written marketing plan and 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.

PARTICIPATING TEAM

Local chapters may involve the entire chapter, a specific agriculture class or a three-person team in the plan's development. A three-person pitch team will represent the chapter in presenting the marketing plan's sections and solutions. This three-person team delivers primary research, analysis, and the marketing plan's ultimate client recommendations. Though only three individuals are on a team, any number of students may assist with the primary and secondary research.

CLIENT SELECTION

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

Teams should work with an off-campus organization. The effectiveness of a marketing plan is based mainly on a response to learning and understanding an outside client's needs. To emphasize the importance of the client-agency relationship in forming the marketing plan, the following are not permitted as selected 'clients:'

- Teams should not use their chapter as a client*
- Teams should not develop their business or product for their marketing plan development project.

Teams should not use a start-up or business owned by one of its 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.*

Event Format

EQUIPMENT

Tennessee FFA will make every effort to provide equipment needed such as projectors, extension cords, tables, etc. However, teams are encouraged to bring any necessary equipment to present their marketing plan.

Students should not assume there will be internet connectivity at the event site. If teams plan to use internet resources, it is recommended that they be embedded into the media presentations.

WRITTEN PLAN (100 POINTS)

Instructions

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 selected client's products or services to its determined target audience. Marketing techniques should be informed by primary and secondary research and show a clear understanding of the client's needs.
- A marketing plan is concerned with the future. Historical information is very valuable, but the plan must be a projection. A plan presented in the current year should be developed for the following year. A three-year timeframe is suggested, including the two years following the current year.
- The project outline should include the following aspects of the marketing process:

Brief description of the client and its product or service attributes (5 points).

Situational analysis (30 points).

- Client's status in the current market
- Trends in the industry
- Competitor analysis (displayed as SWOT analysis)
- Client's SWOT analysis, with consideration to service or product
- Primary research results (surveys, focus groups, interviews)
- Buyer profile and behavior, as discovered through primary and secondary research

Business proposition (20 points).

- Develop a mission statement
- Make key planning assumptions (cite sources of information).
- Identify the target market and its attributes.
- Have short and long-term objectives — must be specific, measurable, attainable and have completion dates (SMART objectives)

Strategies and action plan (25 points).

- Product
- Price
- Place
- Promotion
- Position

Projected budget (10 points).

- The marketing budget should outline realistic, specific costs connected to the recommendations as outlined throughout the plan. The budget should be future-oriented and include the current year plus two additional years in advance, detailing:
 - Cost of marketing strategies
 - Pro forma income statement that details the realistic costs and returns of the marketing strategies
 - 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 return specific to its marketing recommendations to deliver enticing and effective solutions to its selected clients.

- Teams should utilize the following formula to calculate ROI. ROI should be specific to marketing recommendations:

$$[(\$ \text{ Sales} - \$ \text{ Marketing Cost}) / \$ \text{ Marketing Cost}] \times 100 = \% \text{ Marketing ROI}$$

Evaluation (5 points).

- Benchmarks to track progress toward goals.
- Identify tools to measure established benchmarks.
- Recommendations for alternative strategies if benchmarks are not reached.

Technical and business writing skills (5 points).

Procedures

A copy of the written plan in PDF format (no larger than 20 megabytes) must be uploaded by the posted deadline.

- A penalty of 10 percent will be assessed for documents received after the specified upload deadline as communicated by Tennessee FFA State staff.
- If the written plan is not received seven (7) days after the upload deadline, the team will receive a score of 0 for the manuscript.
- State name and chapter number MUST be on the written plan title page. If not included, a penalty of five points will be deducted

The document excludes the title page from the count of eight allowed pages. It should be double-spaced and formatted on 8½ x 11-inch paper with at least 1-inch margins on all sides, using 12-point Times New Roman, Cambria, Arial, or Calibri.

Font sizes apply to all text and tables, if applicable. Active links or QR Codes are not permitted in the plan. A five-point deduction will be applied to all marketing plans that do not follow these guidelines.

Title page — one page; the *Title page is not included in the page count.*

- Project title
- State name
- Chapter name
- Chapter number
- Year

Text and appendices — seven pages

- Marketing plan
- Supplemental surveys, graphs, maps and promotional pieces

Written expression is important. Attention should be given to language, general appearance, structure and format. These components impact how your plan is scored.

LIVE PRESENTATION (225 POINTS)

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

Each team will be allowed five minutes to set up before their 15-minute presentation time allowance begins. Before the presentation, teams are allowed to hand judges one single-sided, 8.5 x 11-inch page with changes/corrections to the written plan. No other handouts or samples are permitted.

The live presentation should not exceed 15 minutes. Five points will be deducted from the final score for each minute, or a major fraction thereof, over 15 minutes for the presentation. An assigned timekeeper shall be responsible for keeping an accurate record of time.

In the case of equipment failure, every effort will be made to rectify the problem as quickly as possible; however, at the judges' discretion, a team may be asked to move forward with the presentation. A backup plan is recommended. After the presentation, teams must reset the equipment as they found it.

LIVE PRESENTATION ROUNDS

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

Each team will be allowed five minutes to set up before their 15-minute presentation time allowance begins. Before the presentation, teams are allowed to hand judges one single-sided, 8.5 x 11-inch page with changes/corrections to the written plan. No other handouts or samples are permitted.

The live presentation should not exceed 15 minutes. Five points will be deducted from the final score for each minute, or a major fraction thereof, over 15 minutes for the presentation. An assigned timekeeper shall be responsible for keeping an accurate record of time.

In the case of equipment failure, every effort will be made to rectify the problem as quickly as possible; however, at the judges' discretion, a team may be asked to move forward with the presentation. A backup plan is recommended. After the presentation, teams must reset the equipment as they found it.

Visual Aids

Visual aids outside of the team's presentation are not required but can be used to elevate presentation points and exemplify marketing recommendations. Scoring will be based on how effectively visual aids are used, not how elaborate they are. Visual aids should be pertinent to the presentation and referenced appropriately throughout. If props do not enhance the presentation, they should not be used.

Remember that visual aids should enhance and clarify the speaker's words, not replace them. Visual aids (i.e., flyers, promotional materials, webpages, advertisements, mailers, etc.) should support the marketing effort, not the product itself.

Question & Answer

Each member of the team will participate in the question-and-answer session. The judges will continue to act as the client, asking the presentation team questions relevant to their marketing recommendations. Questions will be asked to all or individual team members.

Each team will be asked questions for up to ten minutes. Questions will be clarifying questions regarding the specific marketing plan.

Judges & Volunteers

At least three qualified judges will be used. Judges will be selected to represent a diverse background in industry, education, and communication experience. All will have a sufficient understanding of the marketing plan process. Judges will be given a preview of written plans before the team's presentation, but it should be assumed that judges will not have a thorough background on a team's plans or findings before the presentation.

Scoring

Teams will be ranked in numerical order based on the final score determined by each judge without consultation.

The judges' rankings of each team shall then be added. The winner will be the team whose added total is the lowest. The lower total score indicates a higher team ranking. Other placings will be determined in the same manner (ranking method of selection). All event scorecards are at the end of this chapter of the handbook.

TIEBREAKER

Ties will be broken based on the greatest number of high team rankings. As teams are ranked in numerical order, lower numbers indicate a higher ranking. Team ranks will be counted, and the team with the most high ranks will be declared the winner.

If a tie still exists, written plan scores will be used, and the same ranking method will be followed. The team with the highest ranking will proceed. If a tie still exists, the team with the highest Q&A rank will be declared the winner.

References

This list of references is not intended to be all-inclusive. Other sources may be utilized, and teachers are encouraged to use the best instructional materials available. The following list contains references that may prove helpful during event preparation.

Past CDE materials and other resources are available on FFA.org.

- Agricultural Marketing Resource Center, <http://www.agmrc.org/>
- Finals Hall presentations and resources on FFA.org, FFA.org/participate/cdes/marketing-plan

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 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 x 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						

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 - 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 - 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 - 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 - 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 - 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						