**First Time Competitors Survival Guide**

Go and grab your DECA blazer and your nicest tie, because the competition season is upon us!

For some, districts and regionals will be the very first time some of you are experiencing a DECA competition.

Here’s a three-step guide to get you through your first competitive conference:

**Dress for Success**

Chances are if you’re a DECA member, this philosophy has been drilled into your heads. I’m sure you’ve ever heard the phrase, “Dress for the job you want, not the job you have.” It speaks a lot about who you are, and who you want to be, and translates to DECA as well as to your personal and professional life.

It is essential to be well groomed, have good hygiene, and clothes free of visible stains and wrinkles. The judges are there to do just that…JUDGE! So give them a positive and clear first impression.

**Take Advantage of Your Surroundings**

Your high school is flowing with experts on all sorts of topics—many of whom may be willing to help you refine your skills and prepare for DECA competition! The evaluation criteria of each event is different. Ask a teacher within the field of your category to review your projects, or ask an English teacher to look over your presentation for spelling and grammatical errors.

DECA members are experts on a lot of things, so ask your peers to help review and develop your business proposal and marketing plan. A different perspective and fresh eyes may be the game-changer for you and your team.

**Study the Performance Indicators
(link to:** <https://www.deca.org/high-school-programs/high-school-competitive-events/>**)**

Get into the habit of studying the indicators to your event. A performance indicator is used to measure and evaluate knowledge of a specific skill. You can use the performance indicator listed for your competitive event to help you study for the written exam and prepare yourself for your role-play or presentation.

Each individual role-play or team decision making event scenario has one dominant instructional area that is the focus of the role-play scenario. That means that the majority of the performance indicators will be taken from that dominant instructional area. It is a good idea to review all of the instructional areas located in your career cluster. If you feel uncertain about any of them, ask your advisor to help you. A confident knowledge will make you a better competitor and increase your chances of success!

With these three key ideas to keep fresh in your mind, your first competitive conference will go more smoothly than you could imagine. Win at your district/regional conference, you’ll progress to your state conference. Be awarded there, and you are on your way to ICDC! Your first competition should be a breeze!