



BUSINESS OPERATIONS RESEARCH EVENTS

Business Services Operations Research **BOR**

Sponsored by Piper Sandler

Buying and Merchandising Operations Research **BMOR**

Sponsored by Piper Sandler

Finance Operations Research **FOR**

Sponsored by Piper Sandler

Hospitality and Tourism Operations Research **HTOR**

Sponsored by Piper Sandler

Sports and Entertainment Marketing Operations Research **SEOR**

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The **Business Operations Research Events** provide an opportunity for participants to demonstrate knowledge and skills needed by management personnel through the preparation of a detailed written strategic plan and presentation based on the results of a research study.

Participants in the Business Operations Research Events will:

- select an actual local business operation
- design a research study
- conduct a research study
- analyze the results of the research study
- prepare a strategic plan
- prepare a proposed budget
- present in a role-play situation
 - the design of the research study
 - the findings and conclusions of the research study
 - the proposed strategic plan
 - the proposed budget to enact the suggested strategies

The guidelines for each of the Business Operations Research Events are consolidated to facilitate coordination of participant activities in each of the career categories. This means the guidelines will be exactly the same for each career category. However, each career category will be treated separately as a competitive event.

CAREER CLUSTERS + DEFINITIONS

The following definitions are used to determine the activities or careers that are included in each of the Business Operations Research Events. These career categories are connected to career clusters.

BUSINESS MANAGEMENT + ADMINISTRATION

Business Services: Providing services to businesses on a fee or contract basis or providing services to consumers. Examples may include: human resources companies, information technology companies, legal services firms, training and development organizations, health care service providers, libraries, construction companies, real estate firms, landscaping companies, beauty salons, car washes, automotive repair companies, interior decorating, child care services, photography and tutoring services.

FINANCE

Finance: Providing financial services to commercial and retail customers. Examples may include: banks, credit unions, accounting firms, investment companies and insurance companies.

KNOWLEDGE AND SKILLS DEVELOPED

Participants will demonstrate knowledge and skills needed to address the components of the project as described in the content outline and evaluation forms.

Participants will also develop Career Competencies, in the following categories, desired by today's employers:

- **Critical Thinking**
Thinks critically to understand and solve problems.
- **Communication**
Communicates clearly, effectively, and with reason.
- **Decision Making**
Considers the impacts of decisions.
- **Collaboration**
Participates and advocates in groups of all sizes to achieve common goals.
- **Innovation**
Demonstrates a creative and innovative mindset.
- **Technology**
Ethically leverages technologies to enhance efficiencies, complete tasks, and accomplish goals.

Hospitality and Tourism: Providing products and services related to event management, lodging, restaurant management and travel and tourism industries. Examples may include: hotels, lodging services, convention services, food and beverage services, restaurants, museums, amusement parks, zoos and other tourism-related businesses.

MARKETING

Buying and Merchandising: Getting the product into the hands of the customer through forecasting, planning, buying, displaying, selling and providing customer service. Examples may include any retail or wholesale business that provides consumer goods: specialty stores, department stores, shopping malls, grocery stores, convenience stores, pharmacies, discount stores, farmers markets and car dealerships.

Sports and Entertainment Marketing: Providing products, services or experiences relating to amateur or professional sports or sporting events, entertainment or entertainment events, selling or renting of supplies and equipment (other than vehicles) used for recreational or sporting purposes or products and services related to hobbies, leisure or cultural events. Examples may include: sports team, movie theaters, waterparks, music venues, concerts, festivals, amateur practice facilities, tournaments, summer camps, outdoor adventure companies and craft/music classes.

EVENT OVERVIEW

- The Business Operations Research Events consists of two major parts: the **written document** and the **oral presentation**. The written document will account for 100 points, and the oral presentation will account for 100 points for a total of 200 points.
- Each Business Operations Research entry will be composed of **one to three members** of the DECA chapter. All participants must present the project to the judges.
- The body of the written entry must be limited to **20 numbered pages**, including the appendix (if an appendix is attached), but excluding the title page and the table of contents.
- The **Prepared Event Statement of Assurances and Academic Integrity** must be signed and submitted with the entry. Do not include it in the page numbering.
- The oral presentation may be a maximum **15 minutes** in length, including time for the judge's questions.
- For the presentation, the participants are to assume the role of hired consultants. The judge will assume the role of the owner/manager of the business/organization and will evaluate the presentation, focusing on the content and effectiveness of the presentation technique.

2026-2027 TOPIC

The 2026-2027 topic for each career category is for participants to collaborate with a local business or organization to research what drives customer loyalty and repeat engagement. Using the research findings, participants will develop a strategic plan to strengthen customer retention through loyalty programs, personalized experiences or relationship-building initiatives.



1-3 PARTICIPANTS



20 PAGES
ALLOWED



PRESENT PLAN



15 MINUTES
INTERVIEW TIME

WRITTEN ENTRY GUIDELINES

The written entry must follow these specifications. Refer also to the Penalty Point Checklist and the Written Entry Evaluation Form.

PREPARED EVENT STATEMENT OF ASSURANCES AND ACADEMIC INTEGRITY. This must be signed and submitted with the entry. Do **not** include it in the page numbering.

TITLE PAGE. The first page of the written entry is the title page. It must include in any order, but is not limited to, the following:

NAME OF THE EVENT (one of the following):

- BUSINESS SERVICES OPERATIONS RESEARCH EVENT
- BUYING AND MERCHANDISING OPERATIONS RESEARCH EVENT
- FINANCE OPERATIONS RESEARCH EVENT
- HOSPITALITY AND TOURISM OPERATIONS RESEARCH EVENT
- SPORTS AND ENTERTAINMENT MARKETING OPERATIONS RESEARCH EVENT

Name of high school

School address

City, State/Province, ZIP/Postal Code

Names of participants

Date

Title page will **not** be numbered.

TABLE OF CONTENTS. The table of contents should follow the title page. The table of contents may be single-spaced and may be one or more pages long. The table of contents page(s) will **not** be numbered.

BODY OF THE WRITTEN ENTRY. The body of the written entry begins with Section I, Executive Summary, and continues in the sequence outlined here. The first page of the body is numbered "1" and all following pages are numbered in sequence. Page numbers continue through the bibliography (required) and the appendix (optional).

This outline must be followed. Points for each section are included on the Written Entry Evaluation Form. Each section must be titled, including the bibliography and the appendix.

I. EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

One-to three-page description of the project

II. INTRODUCTION

- A. Description of the business or organization, including its purpose
- B. Description of the primary products or services of the business or organization
- C. Description of the target market (demographics and psychographics)
- D. Overview of the business or organization's current business strategy relating to customer loyalty and repeat engagement

III. RESEARCH METHODS USED IN THE STUDY

- A. Description and rationale of research methodologies selected to conduct the research study
- B. Process used to conduct the selected research methods

IV. FINDINGS AND CONCLUSIONS OF THE STUDY

- A. Findings of the research study
- B. Conclusions based on the findings

V. PROPOSED STRATEGIC PLAN

- A. Objectives and rationale of the proposed strategic plan
- B. Proposed activities and timelines
- C. Proposed metrics or key performance indicators to measure plan effectiveness

VI. PROPOSED BUDGET

Costs and rationale associated with proposed strategies, financial viability and ROI

VII. BIBLIOGRAPHY

A bibliography is required. Include a list of the sources of information used in the written document.

VIII. APPENDIX

An appendix is optional. If additional material is appended, all pages must be numbered as noted previously. Include in an appendix any exhibits appropriate to the written entry, but not important enough to include in the body. These might include sample questionnaires used, letters sent and received, general background data, minutes of meetings, etc.

PENALTY POINT CHECKLIST

In addition to the Written Entry Guidelines, participants must observe all of the standards on the Penalty Point Checklist on page 60. These standards are designed to make competition as fair as possible.

WRITTEN ENTRY JUDGING

A judge will evaluate the written portion of the entry. The major emphasis of the written entry is on the content. Any visual elements (where allowed) will be evaluated on how clearly and effectively they support the content.

PRESENTATION GUIDELINES

- The participants are to assume the role of hired consultants. The judge is to assume the role of the business's/organization's owner/manager.
- The participants will present the plan to the judge in a 15-minute presentation worth 100 points. (See Presentation Judging.)
- The presentation begins immediately after the introduction of the participants to the judge by the adult assistant. Each participant must take part in the presentation.
- Each participant may bring a copy of the written entry or note cards pertaining to the written entry to use as reference during the presentation.
- Only visual aids that can be easily hand carried to the presentation by the actual participant(s) will be permitted. The participants themselves must set up the visuals. Wheeled carts, moving straps or similar items may not be used to bring visuals into the area. Set up time is included in the total presentation time. Participants must furnish their own materials and equipment. No electrical power or internet connection will be supplied. Alternate power sources such as small generators are not allowed. Sound may be used, as long as the volume is kept at a conversational level.
- Materials appropriate to the situation may be handed to or left with judges in all competitive events. Items of monetary value may be handed to but may not be left with judges. Items such as flyers, brochures, pamphlets and business cards may be handed to or left with the judge. No food or drinks allowed.
- If any of these rules are violated, the adult assistant must be notified by the judge.

PRESENTATION JUDGING

The participants are to assume the role of hired consultants. You are to assume the role of the business's/organization's owner/manager.

Participants will make a 15-minute presentation to you.

At the beginning of the presentation (after introductions), the participants will explain the proposed strategic plan. Allow the participants to complete this portion without interruption, unless you are asked to respond. Each participant must take part in the presentation.

If time remains, you may ask questions that seem appropriate, based on your notes or on the written entry (if provided).

At the conclusion of the presentation, thank the participant(s). Then complete the Presentation Evaluation Form, making sure to record a score for all categories. The maximum score for the presentation is 100 points.



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WRITTEN ENTRY EVALUATION FORM

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY	NOVICE	DEVELOPING	PROFICIENT	EXEMPLARY	JUDGED SCORE
1. A clear, concise and well-structured executive summary (one to three pages) covering key aspects of the project.	0-1-2-3	4-5-6	7-8-9	10	
INTRODUCTION	NOVICE	DEVELOPING	PROFICIENT	EXEMPLARY	JUDGED SCORE
2. Description of the business or organization including its primary products or services, purpose/mission, target market and current business strategy.	0-1-2	3-4-5	6-7	8	
RESEARCH METHODS USED IN THE STUDY	NOVICE	DEVELOPING	PROFICIENT	EXEMPLARY	JUDGED SCORE
3. Description and rationale of the research methodologies (e.g., qualitative, quantitative, primary and secondary, etc.) in relation to the study's goals and research topic, with a clear explanation of the data collection process.	0-1-2	3-4-5	6-7	8	
4. Conducts, implements, and executes the selected research methods in a clear organized and professional manner. The research methods are easy to understand, logical, and thorough.	0-1-2	3-4-5	6-7	8	
FINDINGS AND CONCLUSIONS OF THE STUDY	NOVICE	DEVELOPING	PROFICIENT	EXEMPLARY	JUDGED SCORE
5. Interprets and connects the research findings to the study's objectives and questions, demonstrating clarity, understanding, and support for the objectives.	0-1-2	3-4-5	6-7	8	
6. Draws logical, evidence-based conclusions that are supported by the research findings.	0-1-2	3-4-5	6-7	8	
PROPOSED STRATEGIC PLAN	NOVICE	DEVELOPING	PROFICIENT	EXEMPLARY	JUDGED SCORE
7. Proposes actionable objectives and provides a practical rationale for the proposed strategic plan based on data, research, and logical analysis.	0-1-2-3	4-5-6-7	8-9-10-11	12	
8. Proposes actionable, logical strategic activities with realistic timelines to support the implementation of the strategic plan.	0-1-2-3	4-5-6-7	8-9-10-11	12	
9. Proposes effective metrics or key performance indicators to measure the plan's effectiveness.	0-1-2-3	4-5-6-7	8-9-10-11	12	
PROPOSED BUDGET	NOVICE	DEVELOPING	PROFICIENT	EXEMPLARY	JUDGED SCORE
10. Evaluates and justifies the financial costs of the proposed strategies, identifies all costs, explains the cost rationale, addresses financial viability, and considers potential ROI/financial benefits.	0-1-2	3-4-5	6-7	8	
PROFESSIONAL STANDARDS	NOVICE	DEVELOPING	PROFICIENT	EXEMPLARY	JUDGED SCORE
11. Displays a professional layout using appropriate business language and correct grammar.	0-1	2-3	4-5	6	

WRITTEN ENTRY TOTAL POINTS (100)



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PRESENTATION EVALUATION FORM

PRESENTATION CONTENT	NOVICE	DEVELOPING	PROFICIENT	EXEMPLARY	JUDGED SCORE
1. Business Need, Process and Methodology Explains the business need, data collection and tools process, and research methods related to the project's goals.	0-1-2-3-4-5	6-7-8-9-10	11-12-13-14	15	
2. Key Findings Accurately interprets research findings and draws logical, evidence-based conclusions that are supported by the data.	0-1-2-3-4-5	6-7-8-9-10	11-12-13-14	15	
3. Proposed Strategic Plan Proposes feasible strategic actions and solutions based on data and analysis that effectively solve the business need.	0-1-2-3-4-5	6-7-8-9-10	11-12-13-14	15	
4. Proposed Budget Justifies strategy costs, identifies key expenses, and addresses financial viability and ROI.	0-1-2-3-4-5	6-7-8-9-10	11-12-13-14	15	
5. Impact and Measurement Proposes relevant metrics/key indicators to capture and measure the results and effectiveness of the solution.	0-1-2-3-4-5	6-7-8-9-10	11-12-13-14	15	

PRESENTATION TECHNIQUE	NOVICE	DEVELOPING	PROFICIENT	EXEMPLARY	JUDGED SCORE
6. Organization Information is presented in a logical sequence that can be easily followed and understood.	0-1	2-3	4	5	
7. Effectiveness Presentation effectively persuades, informs, or inspires by communicating a clear message.	0-1	2-3	4	5	
8. Delivery Presentation engages the audience through interactive techniques (e.g., visual storytelling, etc.).	0-1	2-3	4	5	
9. Presentation Design Visual aids and themes are used throughout and are appropriate, professional, and add value to the presentation.	0-1	2-3	4	5	
10. Overall Impression Demonstrates overall career readiness through professionalism, poise and confidence.	0-1	2-3	4	5	

PRESENTATION TOTAL POINTS (100)	
WRITTEN ENTRY (100)	
PRESENTATION (100)	
SUBTOTAL (200)	
LESS PENALTY POINTS	
TOTAL SCORE	