

Annex C: Guidelines for Participants

Introduction

The teams are evaluated based on how they have performed against the competition criteria. In the evaluation process, the judges assess, by assigning scores, to what extent the evaluated mini-company meets the competition criteria. The evaluation of the companies is undertaken in stages against each of the criteria listed in the Annex B: Competition Criteria.

At each stage of the competition, the judges make an assessment of the mini-company's performance against the criteria as revealed at that stage and score the mini-company performance. The scores will be amended (could be up or down) at each stage as the judges learn more about the mini-company.

Each criterion is given equal weighting. In scoring each criterion, judges examine how well the mini-company performed against it and to what extent mini-company members have shown that they understand their performance and the business principles involved.

It is not expected that all criteria will be covered at every stage. Companies should consider how best to communicate their performance in each of the criteria across the different judging stages. For example, the members of one mini-company might give prominence to the mini-company's marketing and customer focus during their stage presentation to strengthen their response to that criterion. The members of another mini-company may choose to emphasise the research and development of their product range as a key element of their stage presentation.

There is no winning formula. Each mini-company is different and must use its own judgement to decide how best to convey the strengths of its members' experience and how to demonstrate the mini-company's success to the judges, telling appropriate elements of their unique story through the competition stages. After the final stage, the judges have the complete picture and will decide the final scores against each of the criteria. The final score serves as an entry point to the final deliberation.

Company Report

Purpose: The Company Report provides an opportunity to demonstrate how effective the team is in presenting, to a business partner, the processes, performance, results, and future potential of the company using a report format; and how successful the team is in presenting the mini-company activity to show the learning outcomes of their participation in the Company Programme.

Questions or actions a team should consider

The Company Report is to summarise the team's year in business. It is an important record of what they achieved. The report is a mixture of a standard annual report (presenting Mini-company's processes, performance, results, and future potential of the mini-company to a business partner) with reflective writing addressing issues of personal as well as team learning (presenting the learning outcomes of their participation in the Company Programme).

The Report is also to demonstrate the skills in creating a printed document that gets the reader excited about the Mini-company and its business.

Executive Summary

The executive summary may not exceed one page and should provide the essential information related to the mini-company performance. The executive summary is the most important part of a business document. It is the first (and sometimes the only) thing others will read and the last thing you should write. It is simply a brief summary of the document, given so that the busy people who will read your document know at a glance how much to read and what actions will probably be needed. It should tell the reader why your business is special. It is usually the first page of the body of a company report.

There are many online resources about how to write an effective executive summary – search/find/use them. (To score maximum, it must be Clear, Exciting and Effective as a stand-alone overview of the plan)

Analysis of Overall Business Performance and Profitability

Should not exceed one page. Presents the profitability of the mini-company – where the profits came from and why (gross and net margin, fixed versus variable costs). Explains the determinants of the profitability, how scalable the business is and how revenues, costs and profit would change with an expansion. You can choose where you want to place this section within the company report document. Just have in mind that the readers should easily find it in there.

Analysis of Financials

Presented in summary form that makes it easy to read and understand. Recommended extent is one page. Consistent with the overall information in the Company Report and effective in capturing financial performance; provides analysis of financials as well as the information about (a) liquidation and proposed allocation of earnings, (b) required funds and utilization of funds, (c) share-holder capital, (d) financial assumptions, and (e) comparison with the initial financial forecasts. You can choose where you want to place this section within the company report document. Just have in mind that the readers should easily find it in there.

Profit and Loss Account		Balance Sheet	
A	Sales	Current Assets:	
B	Purchases	Stock	
C	Production Wages	Debtors	
D	Closing Stock	Cash at Bank	
E	Cost of Sales (B + C - D)	Cash in Hand	
	(A - E)	(A) TOTAL CURRENT ASSETS	
	Gross Profit	Less:	
		Current Liabilities:	
F	Salaries, commissions and Bonuses	Bank Overdraft	
G	Stationery	Loans	
H	Rent & Hire	Creditors	
I	Miscellaneous Expenditure	Corporation Tax Payable	
J	Registration Fee	VAT Due	
	Total Expenses (F + G + H + I + J)	(B) TOTAL CURRENT LIABILITIES	
K	Gross Profit Less Total Expenses	(C) BALANCE (A - B)	
	Operating Profit (or Loss)	Represented by:	
L	Miscellaneous Income	(D) Issued Share Capital:	
M	Net Profit (or Loss) (K + L)	shares at €	
N	Corporation Tax Payable	(E) Profit & Loss Account (Profit after Tax)	
	Profit after Tax (M - N)	(F) Shareholders' Funds (D + E)	
P	Appropriations of Profit (Q + R + S):		
Q	Dividends:		
R	Donations:		
S	Other:		
	Balance (should be nil) (O - P)		

Income Statement/Profit and Loss Account and Balance Sheet will be presented in the structure as outlined above. Additional line items are allowed if needed for creating a true picture of the Company's finances. The statements may be presented Monthly, quarterly or as an annual summary (recommended) and should include footnotes, and must be verified and signed by a Mini-company business adviser or an accountant.

Overall Presentation

The report is expected to provide information and make the reader comfortable finding and reading it. In addition to the above, the mini-company may consider the structure as presented below.

- a) *Company Overview*
Business purpose, history, genesis of concept, current status, overall strategy and objectives. To what problem are they providing a solution?
- b) *Products or Services*
Description of products or services. Features and benefits of the products or services. Pricing strategy and current stage of development. Proprietary or not and perhaps an innovative approach.
- c) *Operations*
Plan for production/delivery of product or services, product cost, margins, operation complexity, resources required.
- d) *Market and Marketing Strategy*
Description of market, competitive analysis, needs identification and marketing strategy, market acceptance and market opportunities, unique capabilities.
- e) *Sales/Promotion*
Company's Promotion and Marketing activities, Sales strategy, Sales objectives, Training and Current sales.
- f) *Management*
Organizational structure and communication structure/activities. The team's ability (management understanding) to execute strategy according to the learning demonstrated by the team in accordance to experienced difficulties and positive reinforcements during the company performance. Use of business advisor and link-teacher.
- g) *Future Potential of the Mini-company*
Future potential of the mini-company, or investment potential. Does the mini-company present ideas about the future? Even though the company program runs for a year and then the mini-company is liquidated, the assumptions the members of the mini-company do about the future is of vital importance. How would they go about continuing the mini-company to make it a sustainable business? Do the owners understand how their business model works and on what skills and strengths it is built? What is the sustainable competitive advantage of the business? Next steps – are they realistic according to their business mission.

Submission Rules

- A copy of the report must be submitted to the host Member through the national JA office at least four weeks prior to the competition. If the due date cannot be met due to the schedule of the national Company Competition finals, alternative dates must be agreed between the host Member (or JA Europe) and the participating Member at least five weeks prior to the JA Europe Competition (see Joining Instructions for the due dates).
- Language – the report must be submitted in English language.
- Maximum 10 pages of A4. No appendices are allowed. The 10 pages exclude the Front and Back cover pages. Minimum font size to be used is 12.
- The Front cover page (not counted in the permitted 10 pages) should include:
 - Mini-company Name
 - Year of Operation
 - Name of Adviser(s) and Link Teacher(s)
 - “Country”
- The report must include the Mini-company’s Final Accounts (i.e. Profit and Loss Statement and Balance Sheet, prepared as of the Mini-company liquidation date) in the structure presented above in this document. The Accounts presented in the report should be verified and signed by the Mini-company’s adviser or an accountant.
- The report should be submitted in PDF format. The size of the file is limited to 5 MB max. The JA Member organisation is responsible for submitting the report to the competition before the due date and through a submission channel as specified by JA Europe and/or the host Member.

Additional Guidance

The report should be designed as a consistent business-like document as opposed to a series of individual directors’ reports. The report should demonstrate the Mini-company’s achievements.

The report must be written by the Achievers and should be original and innovative in approach, as opposed to being based on a template from previous years.

An approach a mini-company may choose to take is to ask each company participant to write a brief report of his/her activities and then appoint one of them to draw the information together into a consistent document.

- A review of all achievers’ development as individuals and as a team should be presented.
- Mini-company membership and structure should be illustrated.
- Special activities undertaken by the Mini-company should be included.
- Companies are encouraged to include photographs of their product or service.

Stage Presentation

Purpose: The Stage Presentation provides an opportunity to demonstrate, by making a presentation in front of the public, how effective the team is in getting a potential business partner (e.g. an investor, a distributor, etc.) excited about the business.

Questions or actions a team should consider

The presentation should summarise the key experiences and achievements of the mini-company. It should bring life to the highs and lows of the mini-company year; what they have learnt from mistakes as well as what they achieved; and demonstrate the learning outcomes of the Company Programme. This is not a mere product commercial. . The teams are expected to make a professional presentation of their product/service in the context of the value they have created and their experience in the mini-company.

Each team has a four (4) minutes' long time slot to make their stage presentation. All presentation-related actions (such as videos) must be performed within the allocated time slot.

The presentation team should consist only of the achievers who represent the Mini-company in all other "onsite" stages and there should be no more than 5 achievers on stage.

Structure and relevance of the presentation

The presentation should summarise the key experiences and achievements of the mini-company. It should bring life to the highs and lows of the mini-company year.

Are they telling their unique mini-company story or are they merely presenting their product or service?

The structure of the business presentation may include:

- Introduction
- Product/Service
- Focus on priority areas of their business experience
 - Highs and Lows
 - Learning and continuous improvements in the business, and innovative and successful exploitations of new ideas in these aspects of running the mini-company.
- Future
- Closure

Are the presented areas relevant to the business performance? Does the presentation provide a professional presentation of the product/service in the context of the value the mini-company have created and of the experience the team members acquired (as opposed to presenting a commercial for the product)? Does the presentation show continuous improvements in their business operations in reference to mistakes and successes they have made? Have they transformed the successes and failures into innovative ideas that were implemented in the mini company and resulted in new learning?

Delivery technique and visual aids, originality

Does the team use the tools to maintain the contact with the audience such as the use of humour, speed and movements in the presentation? Is there a successful contact with the audience? Is the team spirit visible in their stage performance, which would include interaction between the team members, supporting each other? Is it a “team presentation” rather than a presentation made by individuals? Does the delivery technique help convey the message/content of the presentation?

The visuals, such as pictures, symbols, models, keywords, support the oral presentation in a creative way and are not just a repetition of what they are talking about nor reading from.

Note: Summary of the presentation can be provided to the judges as a hand-out. The hand-outs must be submitted to the competition staff in minimum five copies no later than at the scheduled rehearsal for the stage presentation. Late submissions will not be accepted. No promotional materials, gifts, or products are allowed to give away during the presentation.

While presenting the company in a professional style or in a style that corresponds to the image of the mini-company, the presentation is expected to be original. The originality factor may take different shapes such as movements on stage that capture the audience, visuals that are original or surprising, an innovative structure of the presentation, humour, etc.. Is the humour well received by the audience?

Additional Guidance

- All presentations must be made in English (greetings and similar expressions in another language are acceptable)
- Presentations will normally take place before a large audience in an auditorium. There will be a rehearsal prior to the presentation, at a time decided by the host organisation. Time for rehearsal of the presentation for all participating companies is allocated at the venue the presentations will later be held in front of the judges.
- Each team has a four (4) minutes’ long time slot to make their stage presentation. All presentation-related actions must be performed within the allocated time slot. Entrée music can be played max 20 seconds before the start of the four minutes’ long time slot – during walking to the stage (it will not count against the allocated 4 minutes time). The mini-company must inquire at the competition staff (host JA organisation) about the capacity and schedule to allow for playing the entrée. The inquiry should be made no later than four weeks before the competition.
- The style of presentation should be business-like but may include the use of some humour.
- The presentation team may not at any time exceed five achievers.
- The teams are allowed to make use of an official JA staff member or a person designated by the official JA staff member for handling the visual aids from a PC or likewise.
- The host Member will provide, preferably in the joining instructions, a set of specifications regarding technical support and presentation software available at the venue. The technical support should include reasonable facilities for multimedia enhancements. To minimise technical failure there should be a back-up system in place ready to be deployed.
- Multimedia enhancements are permitted during the stage presentation but they should be kept to a reasonable minimum. Notwithstanding the risk of technical failure which always goes with such enhancements, there are no additional points the jury awards for such elements. In no way should these enhancements overshadow the stage performance or impair the judge’s ability to assess the students’ teamwork and the company’s results.

- If such enhancements are to be used, participating teams are required to advise the host JA organisation at least two (2) weeks in advance. Teams must bear in mind that the host may or may not be able to accommodate all requests if they are beyond the support the host JA organisation has available.
- Remember, there is no time to ask/answer questions. Make sure your presentation provides answers to key points to make the audience happy.

Panel Interview

Purpose: The Panel Interview provides an opportunity to demonstrate the qualities of each individual and of the team as well as the scope of qualities that have been acquired by participating in the Company Programme.

Questions or actions a team should consider

The panel interview provides an opportunity to answer questions about the mini-company and clarify any issues the judges may have after having read the report, or seen the team in action. It is an opportunity to explain how and why the mini-company performed as they did and what lessons the team learnt. It is also an opportunity to demonstrate the team's ability to explain how they worked and solved issues, how they worked as a team, and how they searched for innovative solutions.

The team may consider to show, at the panel interview, their ability to

- Explain or demonstrate how the **knowledge and understanding of how business functions** helped the team run a successful mini-company; what issues have been important for the mini-company in its progress; why some things have gone well and others not; what abilities, competences, and skills the team members acquired and how they can use them (or have used them) in new situations;
- Demonstrate how the knowledge and understanding of business and the **lessons learnt** can be (or have been) **applied in a real business context as well as in new situations**;
- Show the ability to explain or demonstrate how the team members have learnt, personally and as a team, from the Company Programme experience.

Additional Guidance

Mini-company members without their Advisor or Link-Teacher will be questioned by the panel of judges for a maximum of 10 minutes (or max. 15 minutes in the case of teams using interpreters), about different aspects of their Mini-company. They can bring supporting materials to show to the judges if.

The team should consist only of the achievers who represent the Mini-company in all other "onsite" stages of the competition.

All team members are expected to be involved in answering the questions, sometimes as a group, sometimes being addressed as individuals.

This is a very important aspect of the competition since the judges have the opportunity to ask any questions regarding the Mini-company as well as clear any queries they may have after having read the reports or seen the team in action.

Interview at a Company Exhibition Stand

Purpose: The Stand Interview provides an opportunity to demonstrate how effective the team is in utilising the trade fair setting for presenting their business and their selling techniques when offering the product/service to a potential customer.

Questions or actions a team should consider

Acting as if on a real trade fair and guiding the potential customer through the selling process to a closure; using listening skills, questions, selling points, showing product knowledge. Is the stand an integral part in the selling process or is it only a “stand alone”? Is the crew working as a team? Does the customer feel to be an important part of the process?

What visual impact the stand makes? Is the purpose of the stand clear and in line with the visual impact? Is it relevant to the company or the mini-company's product/service? Does the stand make it possible to guess, when being looked at from a distance, what the mini-company does? What is the availability and quality of the promotional materials? What learning outcomes of having created (or creatively planned) the stand by themselves the team demonstrated? Are there any unique/creative features about the stand (e.g. an interesting or fun product display, creativeness in arranging the stand, an activity that really connects to the product or the mini-company, questions or things that capture the interest, tagline for the mini-company, etc.)? Does the team understand what their unique features are and what they are for?

The team is expected to demonstrate how good they are in “tailoring” their activity at the stand to satisfy different needs of different customers. Is the team active from the start? Do they have knowledge about the product and the mini-company? Do they show interest in their customers? Are they good listeners? Are they trying to provide solutions to the needs of the customers? Do they use their stand to support the presentation? How long does it take to move to selling? Are they able to guide a customer to a decision/closure of the (selling) deal? Do the team members assist each other in their work in the stand as well as during the interview with Judges?

Additional Guidance

The stand must display: (1) Name of the Mini-company and the country; (2) Name of the Adviser and the Link-Teacher; (3) Product and/or demonstration of Service; and (4) Highlights of sales and financial performance of the mini-company. **Note:** The company report must be made available to the stand visitor (or a judge) but only on request. The team should consist only of the achievers who represent the Mini-company in all other “onsite” stages of the competition.

This stage is personal encounter that the team will have with the members of the judging panel - the best chance to interact with them and strengthen the message/impression you have made at the previous stages. Keep that in mind when preparing for this stage of the competition.

- The period of time allocated for the “exhibition” should not exceed a reasonable level (3 hours are recommended).
- One Adviser or Link Teacher is allowed to be at the stand during the interviews with the judges. Although the Judges may also ask him/her a question, he/she is expected to stay passive during the interview with the students.
- The interview will take max. 10 minutes, or max. 15 minutes in case a team uses an interpreter (the actual time of an interview can be further limited by the judges).
- The judges may also use the opportunity to observe teams in action when presenting to the public/visitors.