



Junior Achievement®

JA Student Company of the Year

North American Competition

July 2009

Boston, Massachusetts, USA

Guidelines and Criteria for Participants

JA Worldwide Core Purpose

To inspire and prepare young people to succeed in a global economy.

JA Worldwide Core Values

Belief in the boundless potential of young people.

Commitment to the principles of market based economics and entrepreneurship.

Passion for what we do and honesty, integrity, and excellence in how we do it.

Respect for the talents, creativity, perspectives and background of all individuals.

Belief in the power of partnership and collaboration

Conviction in the educational and motivational impact of relevant, hands-on learning.

The Competition

The competition is JA Worldwide's annual celebration of the achievements of *JA Company* students across North America (USA and Canada). At this event, JA Companies proudly present the results of the enterprise and learning experience.

JA Companies appear before a panel of independent judges who determine company performance against the competition criteria as compared with other JA Companies at each stage of the competition process.

The JA Student Company of the Year competition is not simply a business competition for young people. The goal is to balance the business achievements of each team as a whole with members' individual personal development.

Therefore, for a team to win this award, it is not sufficient just to run a financially successful JA Company or to have created an exciting product and service. JA Company members also must demonstrate that they understand how and why the company performed as it did.

Judges will also be looking for evidence of innovation and the successful exploitation of new ideas in all aspects of running the company. They also will look for an understanding that continuous improvement through innovation is essential to the success of a business.

Permitted Minimum and Maximum Age of Participants

Students representing their companies in the competition must be at least 15 years old and no more than 19 years old on the 31st of July of the year of participation. Younger or older students will automatically be asked to withdraw from the competition.

Maximum Number of Participants per Company

The maximum number of participants per company is limited to five students.

Official Language of JA Worldwide

The language to be used at all stages of the competition is English. Companies have the option of using an interpreter for stages three (Trade stand interviews) and four (Interviews with the judging panel).

Unless members of a JA Company have good command of both conversational and business English, an interpreter should be used. It is imperative that all teams should be able to convey their practical achievements and their understanding of key business principles to the judges. Teams that rely on linguistic competence of just one of their members may be at a disadvantage.

Judging

There are four stages to the competition. These are:

- Company report
- Oral presentation before an audience
- Trade stand display and interviews at the stand
- Interview with the judging panel

Full details on the separate stages follow. At each stage, the judges make an assessment of the aspects of the company. There is no winning formula. Each JA Company is different and its members must use judgment to decide how best to convey the strength of their experience to the judges.

Stage One – Written JA Company Report

The JA Company Report is an opportunity to summarize your team's business operations and reports. It is an important record of what you have learned and achieved.

Criteria

- A PDF copy of the report must be submitted electronically to JA Worldwide from your local JA office as part of the company's competition registration. A hard copy of the report must be sent by mail to JA Worldwide and should arrive no later than April 30, 2009.
- Language: The report must be submitted in English – no exceptions.
- A maximum of 10 sides (or fewer) of 8.5 x 11 sheets are permitted. No appendices are allowed. The 10 pages excludes the front and back cover. The minimum font size to be used is 12 point.
- The cover is in addition to the 10 pages. It should include:
 - Company name
 - Year of operation
 - Name of adviser, teacher/school, and local JA office
 - City, state, and country
- Page one must be an Executive Summary and include:
 - Company name
 - Mission statement
 - Product/service
 - Summary of financial results
 - Summary statement of JA Company performance
 - Index
- The report must include statements of the JA Company financial accounts up to the company liquidation date (i.e. profit and loss, balance sheet). The accounts presented in the report should be verified and signed by your adviser or an accountant prior to submission.

Guidelines

The rest of the report should read as a single business document, not as a series of repetitive directors' reports. The report should demonstrate the JA Company achievements.

The report must be written by members and should be original and innovative in approach, not based on a template from previous years. A recommended approach is to ask each director to write a brief report of his/her activities and then have one director combine the information into one cohesive document.

- There should be a review of members' development as individuals and as a team.
- JA Company membership and structure should be illustrated.

- Any special activities undertaken by the JA Company should be included.
- Companies are encouraged to include photographs of their product or service.

Key Points Assessed by Judges

Maximum score, 100 points, will be assessed on the following basis:

- Overall written presentation.
- Overall business performance (e.g. marketing, finance).
- Learning demonstrated as a team.
- Future potential of the JA Company.

Stage Two – Business Presentation

Criteria

- All presentations must be made in English (greetings and similar in another language are acceptable).
- Presentations will normally take place in an auditorium setting before a large audience and the judging panel.
- The maximum time allocated for each presentation is 4 minutes.
- The narrative style should be business-like, but may include the use of some humor.
- The presentation team must not at any time exceed five members.
- The teams are allowed to make use of an official Junior Achievement staff member handling the visual aids from a computer or likewise. JA Worldwide will provide a set of specifications regarding technical support available. This will include reasonable facilities for multimedia enhancements.
- Multimedia enhancements are permitted during the stage presentation, but should be kept to a minimum. Notwithstanding the risk of technical failure, there are no additional points for multimedia elements. In no way should these enhancements overshadow the stage performance or impair the judges' ability to assess the members' teamwork and the company's results. If enhancements are to be used, participating teams are required to advise JA Worldwide at least two weeks in advance. Companies must keep in mind that JA Worldwide may or may not be able to accommodate all requests.

Guidelines

- The presentation should summarize the key experiences and achievements of the company. Try to bring to life and include the accomplishments and challenges of your business's endeavor for the audience. What you have learned from your mistakes and subsequent solutions is as important as your achievements.

Key Points Assessed by Judges

Maximum score, 100 points, will be assessed on the following basis:

- Structure of presentation
- Relevance and content
- Delivery technique
- Visual aids and hand-outs

Stage Three – Trade Fair Stand

This is the first encounter that your company's team will have with the members of the judging panel. We all know that first impressions count. Keep this in mind when preparing for this stage of the competition.

Criteria

- One advisor or teacher is allowed to be at the stand during the interviews with the judges. Members of the judging panel also may interview him or her.
- The interviews will last up to 10 minutes (15 minutes in the case of teams during interpreters, subject to the judges' discretion).
- Judges will visit each stand individually to examine the display and interview the company members. Stands should display the following:
 - Name of the company
 - City, state, and country
 - Supporting or sponsoring companies (if any)
 - Names of advisers and teachers
 - Product and/or demonstration of service
 - Highlights of sales and final performance
- The stand contents (excluding the provided shell system), should have been produced and funded by the company.

Guidelines

- As judges also will be given the opportunity to observe company members in action when the stands are open to the public, it is suggested teams keep this in mind during the public viewing times.

Key Points Assessed by Judges

Maximum score, 100 points, will be assessed on the following basis:

- Visual display
- Product/service idea
- Team spirit
- Sales techniques and product knowledge
- Unique features

Stage Four – Interview with the Panel of Judges

This is a very important aspect of the competition because the judges can ask any questions about the company, its reports and trade fair stand. Judges likely will probe company members on their understanding of how and why the company performed as it did, the general lessons they gained from the experience, and how these lessons might be applied in a new business context.

Company members (without their advisors or teachers) will be questioned by the panel of judges for a maximum of 10 minutes (15 minutes in the case of teams with interpreters) about different aspects of their business.

Key Points Assessed by Judges

Maximum score, 100 points, will be assessed on the following basis:

- Development of personal skills
- Team spirit
- Knowledge and understanding of how businesses function
- Ability to apply lessons learned to new situations