

# Student Guidelines

## SUCCESSFUL PRESENTATION PLANNING GUIDE FOR STUDENTS

### What kind of events should we have?

There is no limit to the kind of events that your chapter can have! Most chapters host lunch or dinner events with business speakers or local practitioners, but other successful events have included etiquette dinners, networking socials, tours of local hospitals that include meeting the business managers and owners, and orientation programs for first year students. The most important thing to ask yourself when planning an event is how that particular event contributes to the business education of your members. Additionally, the National VBMA offers the BCP, a national business certificate curriculum that you can implement at your chapter. This program rewards active members for their participate with the awarding of a business certificate following the completion of the program. In order for an event to count for BCP credit, it must be a lecture that fits under one of the four categories.

If you are looking for more ideas for events, information on the business certificate course, or ways to contact speakers, take a look at the VBMA website, talk to other chapters in your region and nationally, or ask your RL for more ideas.

### Specific ideas and advice:

- Utilize the speaker database to find quality speakers across the nation, and be sure to leave reviews for them
- Ask other VBMA chapters and past officers for advice on speakers they have used
- Find local speakers from nearby clinics, your university's business college, or CVM professors or clinicians

### How do we recruit speakers?

The National VBMA Speaker Database is a great resource, especially for contacting nationally recognized speakers. The speaker database is a compiled list of current speakers that chapters around the nation have utilized for business education. This list will help chapters find new topics and new contacts to not only get a broader business background, but also assist them in networking throughout the veterinary community! This, however, is just the beginning! We know our individual chapters have plenty of fantastic speakers and topics out there still to add to the database. We ask your help in providing us the name and contact info of great speakers your chapter has had that you think should be added to our database, or direct them to the *Become a VBMA Speaker* tab on [vbmacommunity.com](http://vbmacommunity.com)! Contact the National Vice President ([vicepresident@vbma.biz](mailto:vicepresident@vbma.biz)) with any questions. One of the easiest groups to contact to find speakers and presenters is your state's veterinary medical association. Many private practitioners have great advice and are willing to come speak for a minimal fee or no cost.

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### Specific ideas and advice:

- Contact speakers from your school email address so it is more professional and is less likely to go to their spam folder
- Set clear expectations early in the process
  - Ask your speaker the topics they offer and clearly state your desired topic, important information to be covered, and the BCP category (if applicable) their lecture will fit under
  - Explain the lecture length requirements for BCP credits (1 credit = 1 hour +/- 15 minutes at most). Many do not understand that student credit within the program hinges on their timing as a speaker, thinking that finishing early allows more study time for them (especially true for dinner lectures).
  - As a consistent, professional way to accomplish your expectation setting with speakers, we highly recommend your chapter develops a speaker contract for every speaker to review and sign in advance of their lecture, or utilize the same contract provided by the National VBMA on [vbmacommunity.com](http://vbmacommunity.com)
- Presentation planning details to consider and clearly communicate with speakers far in advance (at least 2-4 weeks):
  - Date of program and time of day (remember to account for time zone changes)
  - What the exam schedule is during the day the next day or two following the presentation
  - What conflicting classes or lectures are competing with the scheduled presentation
  - Whether food refreshments will be provided
  - What kind of compensation will the speaker require for an honorarium, travel, lodging, meals, etc.
  - How the program will be marketed to the student body and who is in charge of this incredibly important task. The success of the lectures and workshops can be significantly impacted by inadequate marketing to the student body.

### How do we pay for events?

Each year the National VBMA disperses \$2000 to each chapter to use for events. Additionally, several sponsors provide extra funding opportunities to chapters. The applications and funding guidelines can be found in myVBMA and on [vbma.biz](http://vbma.biz) under *Chapter Officers*. Many funding opportunities are available on a rolling basis throughout the year, so apply early before funding is exhausted.

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Local sponsorship is another way that VBMA chapters can fund events. You can find local sponsorship by contacting businesses that veterinarians and veterinary students patronize regularly to give money or provide door prizes for local events. Call the manager and set up a time to meet and discuss what exactly you are requesting. We suggest you write a proposal that outlines all details, provides a budget and includes contact information that you can share with the businesses.

### *How do we find additional sponsorship?*

Sponsors can be found in a multitude of places. The first place to start is on the VBMA website. Several of the National VBMA sponsors are also willing to sponsor local VBMA events. Visit our sponsor page (on the VBMA community website, under the *Sponsors* tab) to find out who our national sponsors are. You can then contact the local representative for that sponsor to inquire about local sponsorship opportunities. Another great source of sponsors for your events includes school alumni, local companies, and graduate and professional student funding at your school.

### *What should we do to thank sponsors and speakers?*

Thanking sponsors and speakers is a simple way to help show your appreciation for all they do locally and nationally for the VBMA. It is important to give the appropriate recognition by using the sponsor's logo on any promotional material and at the beginning and closing of the event. Verbal recognition is also a powerful way to help elevate the students' recognition of the sponsor. After the event, a simple hand-written note from your local officer board and a thank you card signed by the program participants are both good ways to thank sponsors. A formal thank you note printed from the computer with pictures from the event is also a great way to show your appreciation.

A key part of putting on a great event is having a wonderful speaker(s). Just like sponsors, it is important to thank your speakers. A thank you note with a gift is a great way to show your appreciation. Gift suggestions include: a donation to the charity of their choice, clothing with the VBMA logo, school-specific apparel, or a gift basket.

At the end of the event, it is important to get feedback on the event for the speaker and for future chapter officers' reference. You can compile and send this information to the speaker if they would like it. Additionally, the chapter operations manual provides a section to compile reviews of past events for future officers. A simple questionnaire does a great job at collecting important information.