

# SIFE SURVIVAL GUIDE

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## For Rookie Teams

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Compliments of El mira College  
Students In Free Enterprise

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## The First Year

**Your rookie year is one that is full of both excitement and confusion. The El mira college SIFE team was created in the 1996-97 Year. We have compiled these helpful tips and suggestions to assist you in having a successful first year. We hope that our experiences help you learn, grow, and find future success throughout your SIFE experience. Best Wishes, EC SIFE.**

El mira College SIFE team Awards:

1996-97: Regional Champions

Regional Rookie of the Year

International Rookie of the Year

1997-98: Regional Champions

Regional Success 2000 Award

International 2nd Runner-Up

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# Organization

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Proper organization will help your team find balance during the beginning stages of your development and will provide the framework for efficient communications in the future. Here are some suggestions for organization.

- ◆ Design an org chart for delegation and communication. Include a President and Vice-Presidents, specializing in areas of necessity. Some suggested titles would be VP of Finance, VP of Marketing, VP of Communications, VP of Technology, and VP of International Focus. This will create a point person for every area of projects and required tasks.
- ◆ With each job title, design a job description that outlines the duties and responsibilities that go along with the title. Include day-to-day responsibilities, planning requirements, and special project assignments. This will provide members with a full understanding of what is expected of them and others. For example: *VP of Communications*: Will oversee and participate with the media/project managers to ensure proper documentation of projects. Will gather letters, testimonials, video, and pictures for use in our presentation and annual report. Will be responsible for press releases, posters, and announcements. Will keep tally of our reach and gross impression for documentation purposes. Will be working with the media team to develop the special project for “The Best Use of the Mass Media.”
- ◆ Have a regularly scheduled meeting time and place. This will prevent any miscommunication regarding when and where to meet. Designate a secretary to take meeting notes and attendance. This will help everyone stay informed.

# Documentation

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Proper documentation will ensure that all necessary information has been collected and provide proper record keeping for registration and presentation purposes. This paper trail will also ensure that your future SIFE teams will have access to all project information and action plans to provide them guidance in the future. Here are some suggestions for documentation.

- ◆ Make a timesheet to keep track of SIFE hours for each member. Document hours per project and also include planning and research hours. Spreadsheet programs work very efficiently for this kind of documentation.
- ◆ Design a project planning sheet that outlines all aspects of a project from planning to implementation. Include specific objectives, contact information, detailed synopsis, and a SIFE criteria checklist. EC SIFE requires that this form is completed for each potential project. The project plan is then reviewed for quality and effectiveness. If for some reason the project cannot be completed at the time, the plan can be kept for future implementation.
- ◆ Along with the project planning sheet, a project needs sheet and update sheets are also helpful. The project needs sheet is used to outline the logistics of getting a project off and running. Phone calls, research and lesson plans are listed with each task being assigned to a fellow SIFE member. Project update forms are handed in on a regular basis to keep abreast of the project progress and any alterations in the plan as it evolves. These help keep everyone informed and provide a diary of project evolution for future use.

- ◆ After each project is completed, a project follow-up sheet is helpful in compiling useful information in a timely manner. Some pertinent information includes total reach and gross impressions, media used, pre- and post-test results, what went well, and what did not. The data is used to prepare for competition in an orderly manner, and the critique is used to help perfect future project planning.

*EC SIFE has enclosed sample forms as a supplement to this guide. You are welcome to use our version or create your own.*

## Outreach

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Most projects involve the cooperation of community organizations and citizens. The best way to ensure continued support and success is to make sure that everyone knows what SIFE is and what our mission is. By getting to know your team and its objectives, outside associates will become more eager to be involved and lend their support. Here are some suggestions on how to get others involved.

- ◆ Work with your Advisory Board members to get involved with local business people. Perhaps they know of a business that could use a marketing plan or a workshop for their employees.
- ◆ Contact local civic organizations to participate in an on-going local project to help get exposure. This avenue provides a lot of networking opportunities, and these organizations provide information about potential projects for the needs of the community.
- ◆ Get involved on campus. Your peers will support any efforts that your team gives towards working on campus with a variety of campus organizations.
- ◆ Sponsor a local event for community members. This could include a contest at a school or public workshops.

# General Projects

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SIFE projects require proper focus and planning. As in business, without the right product for the right person, success will be difficult. Here are some tips to help you succeed.

- ◆ **Quality:** Do not focus on the quantity of your projects, but rather the quality. Mass outreach does not count if you cannot make a difference. Spend ample time with the planning and selection of your projects for the ultimate amount of efficiency and effectiveness. Keep a checklist of the SIFE criteria in focus at ALL times.
- ◆ **Start small and slow:** Take it one project at a time. Make it a point to keep it manageable. During your first year, you are learning so much about SIFE and yourselves. Through quality planning and selection, your projects should be easily implemented, and you can quickly move on to the next. As you develop your team skills and community relationships, multiple projects will be much easier to accommodate.
- ◆ **Provide a solution:** The most rewarding projects are usually those that are mutually beneficial for everyone involved. Go into your communities and find out what it is that they need. If your SIFE team can provide a solution, you will benefit from successful projects, cooperative relationships, and a sense of pride. Check with local agencies and organizations to find your niche in the community.
- ◆ **Develop collateral:** Collateral can be both physical and emotional. By staying focused on community needs, the relationships will prove to be highly beneficial in

implementing future projects. Take time to invest in yourselves by reviewing what you have learned as a team and as individuals. By becoming your own system of support, you will find that the return on your investment will be priceless.

- ◆ **Target your audience:** To ensure that you have reached a variety of sectors in your programs, specify certain areas of interest and target specific projects to suit their needs. Some examples would be elementary students, high school students, business owners, the disadvantaged, women, minorities, young entrepreneurs, and senior citizens. Remember that not every project is for everyone.
- ◆ **Pitch the right way:** Be creative and organized. Focus your image-building on the fact that SIFE is a resource to community and college citizens. Through genuine hard work and commitment, you will be recognized as a valuable component of the community and not just some team trying to win a competition.
- ◆ **Prove your capabilities:** Capitalize on your ability to deliver a service in a unique fashion. Each project will be a reflection of your team, your school, and of SIFE. Through dedication and consistency, your team's good reputation will allow you to reach more people with greater effectiveness. You must not only talk the talk; you must walk the walk.
- ◆ **Handle negotiations like a professional:** Forget that you are college students and strive to be who it is that you aspire to be. Through proper organization, time management, honesty, and courage, you will find that you will become what you desire and what the professional arena expects. SIFE is a great exercise in

personal and professional growth. Being professional individuals will strengthen your image as skilled experts. If you have a business meeting, don't go in jeans; wear business attire. If you have an appointment, keep it and be on time. Utilizing SIFE as a professional test drive will make your actual journey for success a much smoother trip.

- ◆ **If at first you don't succeed, try, try again:** Everything in life can be described as a learning experience. When things go wrong, use the opportunity to assess not only what went wrong, but also what can be done in the future to avoid a similar outcome. Getting discouraged and frustrated is a waste of energy. By using the experience constructively, the team as a collective unit and each individual member will find peace of mind. Don't forget to ask for help if you are not sure what went wrong. Utilize the experience of your Sam Walton Fellow and Advisory Board members to assist in the evaluation of the situation.

## Special Competitions

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Special competitions are a great way to enhance your chances of SIFE success. They give a team the opportunity to earn prize money outside of regular competition and contribute to its overall effectiveness. It would be in your team's best interest to enter as many special competitions as you can.

Assign members to individual workgroups to focus on planning special projects. Success is best achieved by designing projects with specific objectives that meet special competition requirements rather than trying to

# Core Values

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Your team's core values are the driving force that contributes to the overall approach to work and play. Developing core values for your team provides you with the inspiration, creativity, and spirit that is necessary for your members to come together and work towards your goals. Each team is comprised of diverse individuals, and the core values help bond members through a sense of union and purpose. Here are some core values to consider.

- ◆ *Strive to be different and unique.* Your team is made up of different talents and perspectives. View this as a strength, not a detriment.
- ◆ *Keep motivated.* All individuals must do their part in maintaining the team's energy and spirit. Become your own support system and discourage negativity.
- ◆ *Communicate, communicate, communicate.* Don't limit your interactions to meetings only. Be highly visible and available to each other. It will help keep everyone up-to-date and cultivate new friendships and a sense of belonging.
- ◆ *Maintain respect and dignity.* Learning how to treat other people is an essential life skill. Practice it regularly to help maintain your SIFE spirit.
- ◆ *Do things that will add value to your life as well as others'.* Don't forget that it's not just about winning a competition. It's about giving yourself and others the tools to succeed through free enterprise education.
- ◆ *Enjoy yourselves.* There is a lot of work that goes into SIFE projects, but don't forget to have some fun!

- ◆ *Develop your people.* Offer the SIFE experience as a learning experience. Offer incentives for individual achievements and growth. You need to remember that you cannot go out and teach people about something that you don't know about. Encourage members to develop themselves, not just others. You will become more experienced and effective.
- ◆ *Be proactive.* Seek out potential projects; don't wait for them to come to you. Contact the local Chamber of Commerce, school districts, Junior Achievement, or any other public-oriented organization. Find out what is needed in the community and then offer to help. Word will travel fast, and you will be surrounded by possibilities.
- ◆ *Failures vs. Opportunities.* Don't believe that everything needs to be classified as either a success or a failure. Failures are merely opportunities that you didn't recognize previously. Turn them into a chance to learn, enhance, or resolve an issue.
- ◆ *Work smarter, not harder.* Working hard is certainly a valuable characteristic, but without proper focus it can be a waste of time and energy. By working smarter, you can better your chances of success through the process of critical and analytical preparation.
- ◆ *Participate!* SIFE is made up of SIFE teams. (It is not made up of SIFE clubs.) Members need to assert themselves through commitment and teamwork. They have to be team players by doing what would most benefit the team, not themselves individually. Go to all your meetings and get involved as much as you can. With SIFE, the more you invest, the more you profit. Only through SIFE can you have a guaranteed return.

# Preparing for competition

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Don't forget to save enough time to prepare for competition properly. With organized documentation and teamwork, it doesn't have to be difficult. Your presentation will have to be written, your annual report submitted, and proper registration deadlines must be met. Here are some useful tips to help you prepare.

- ◆ **Don't procrastinate.** Start early to allow ample time for last minute changes and corrections. You will need to read and re-reread your presentation and annual report to ensure its professional and energetic appeal.
- ◆ **Delegate.** Assign teams to complete the required preparations. For example, assign a team to prepare the annual report and another team to work on the oral presentation. Don't forget to assign a team to assume the responsibilities of the audiovisual presentation and another team to go over the rules of competition.
- ◆ **Have a back-up plan.** What will you do if your computer fails? What if your lead presenter gets laryngitis the night before competition? Strategic planning is necessary to ensure that you can continue even with unexpected circumstances. Have understudies for the presenters and if possible a back-up computer system.
- ◆ **Practice, practice, practice.** You will be filled with both excitement and fear at competition. By practicing your presentation to a level of excellence, you have one

## ELMIRA COLLEGE SIFE TEAM



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As of January 15, 1999,  
this catalog and other useful SIFE resources  
can be found at our webpage link from  
[www.elmira.edu](http://www.elmira.edu)

For general SIFE information visit  
[www.sife.org](http://www.sife.org)

