

PRODUCT DEVELOPMENT TEAM TIPS

1. Let everyone in your team. People will lose interest due to time commitments and other dumb stuff. The work effort involved is survival of the fittest.
2. Find a professor who really loves what you're doing. A champion. Don't constantly annoy them, but have them care enough where they will absolutely make time to read it once or twice or ten times.
3. Divide the tasks by sections. There should be a few categories for each competition. For example, Product Description, Nutrition Analysis, HACCP stuff, cost and economics, etc. Everyone should have an interest in each. Divide by interest, do not force them into a role.
4. Clarify that you know what Marketing is. You do not learn marketing in food science.
5. Do a Competitive Analysis
6. Your prototype should have 1 to 3 unique things in it. Clean Label, Allergen Free, unique packaging, glow in the dark, awesome weird shape, etc. Too many unique things make the product impossible to describe and work with.
7. Your prototype should be made in the lab but it does not have to be perfect. It has to be perfect when you present to the judges.
8. Shelf-stable products that can be made before you board a plane to Chicago is ideal. I didn't have fun making green hummus in my hotel bathroom.
9. Base your prototype off a standard like Hummus or Saltine Crackers and base your shelf-life on there at least for your prototypes.
10. Pictures and graphs > paragraphs
11. Use common sense when writing your paper
12. Show the paper to your non-food science friend and have them read over it. If they like it, it's a good product.
13. But also remember that your judges are all super technical people so you have to also sound technically smart.
14. Beg for money. Having your trip all-expense paid will load off a lot of stress. Your University should give you enough money.
15. Outsource things to other departments including: logos, packaging, poster stuff, graphic animations,
16. USDA nutrition database is your friend most of the time
17. Your presentation should have animations but not be flashy
18. Have a lot of drama. Drama makes you stronger. Drama makes your team stronger.
19. Do something different from your competitors. In Disney, we put monster hats on and made a story out of our presentation. Our competitors were really boring. Unfortunately, everyone and their mother dresses up in fancy costumes from there on out.
20. I don't know anything because if I entered a competition today, I would get smoked because the products and presentations going on right now are GETTING BETTER AND BETTER.