



Lifelong Financial Literacy

Secrets of a Winning Desjardins CU/Chapter Financial Education Entry

Do you wonder what the judges are looking for when they examine national entries in the Desjardins recognition program? Here's their list of characteristics of a winning credit union or chapter entry:

- **Compelling.** Tell a story. Make your case as if you were writing an article for the trade press. Keep the narrative—your description of your financial education efforts and why they're exemplary—separate from the supporting evidence.
- **Appropriate.** Read the rules, and make sure you're entering the appropriate competition. The Desjardins Youth Financial Education Award focuses on teaching members and nonmembers under the age of 18 about personal finance and providing financial literacy leadership. The Desjardins Adult Financial Education Award focuses on teaching members and nonmembers age 18 and older. The judges will give precedence to activities since June 1, 2010.
- **Relevant.** Review the entry form carefully and respond to all applicable judging criteria. There are three mandatory measures (see "How does Desjardins scoring work?" in the [CU Chapter Program Description & FAQs](#)). The scoring is based on these elements, so the more relevant information you provide, the higher your score.
- **Focused.** For each criterion, it's better to describe—and substantiate in detail—your single best program than to list many smaller activities or events. This allows you to present your best case. The Desjardins Award is not a marketing recognition program. Don't include advertising samples and promotional PowerPoint presentations. They only make it harder for the judges to find what really matters—the educational content and how you delivered it. **Follow the format requirements on the entry form.**
- **Unique.** There's nothing wrong with using commercially prepared educational materials. If you did, however, be sure to show how you adapted the materials to the needs of your particular member or nonmember audience. Show how you went beyond the prepared materials to engage your audience more deeply. In any case, explain what makes your league's efforts unique and worthy of national recognition. Emphasize the creativity and uniqueness of your program. While monetary donations are admirable, the judges will look for strong personal involvement.
- **Proven.** What were the goals of your efforts and how did people benefit? Provide concrete, relevant evidence of program effectiveness. What positive results did you measure and can you document them?
- **Organized.** Make your entry easy to read and easy to follow. Include the name of your credit union(s) on the front cover. Use a table of contents. Avoid handwritten entries and misspellings. Use standard fonts, white paper, and black type. Keep your entry to a manageable size; bigger is not better.

Of course, only a limited number of entries can win at the national level. By heeding this advice, you'll improve your credit union's or chapter's chances of receiving recognition for its good works. Direct questions about the Desjardins recognition program to [Philip Heckman](#) (800-356-9655, ext. 4088)