



Turn Up the Volume

Tired of your everyday, humdrum life? Tune in to DECA and turn up the volume of success in your life.



What's more annoying, having everyone and their brother asking you what you want to be "when you grow up," or not knowing the answer to the question?

Fear not, this is why career and technical student organizations exist. CTSOs (as we knowledgeable types refer to them) were created specifically to help you learn about different careers while you're still in high school. Because how can you decide what career you want if you've never tried anything?

As a DECA member, you learn real-world skills that will help you throughout your working life while simultaneously hanging out with your friends and doing good stuff for your community. It's like multi-tasking, with a laugh track.

Need convincing? Sit right back and let us show you how DECA can

take you out of your everyday, ordinary life and point you toward success.

Get Real

Some people graduate from high school without ever having learned how to balance a checkbook. DECA members, meanwhile, are ordering inventory for their school stores, setting up work schedules for employees, conducting market research, preparing business plans, creating advertising campaigns and giving effective presentations. We've met career-oriented adults with college degrees who are floored when they see what DECA members are capable of doing.

Not that anyone expects you to know all this stuff from Day 1. In fact, that's why DECA's here: to show you what the business world is like and to prepare you to succeed in it. Just by

taking part in chapter activities, you'll learn about management, organization, leadership, planning and teamwork.

The emphasis is on real-world skills; stuff you actually need to know to thrive in the world today. If you have a part-time job or a full-time summer job, what you learn in DECA will help you right away. Whether you're working as an assistant store manager or as a stock clerk, learning how businesses operate will make you a better employee, and better employees get promotions and raises.

See? It's not just future success we're talking about! It's right here, right now.

Learn and Earn

Right here, right now, a lot of DECA members work. For some, this means a co-op job, which translates into getting paid and getting class credit. Not all DECA members have jobs, of course, but if you can fit one into your schedule, it's a great way to see how what you're learning in class applies in the real world.

In fact, some DECA members choose to participate in DECA competitions based on what kind of job they have. If you're a salesclerk in a department store, for example, you might choose to compete in Apparel and Accessories Marketing because the role-plays for that event are the same situations you deal with at your job every day.

The Thrill of Victory

Speaking of competitive events, did you know that most DECA members participate in them? From local competitions on up to the International Career Development Conference (ICDC), more than 100,000 DECA members are

out there proving what they know about marketing and business.

Now, if you believe what you see in the media, teenagers are lazy slackers who wouldn't walk across the room to change the TV channel, much less do something useful with their lives. Yet here more than 100,000 teens are putting in extra time writing research reports, working on their presentation skills, and studying marketing after school so they can go take tests and stand up in front of judges and get grilled on what they know about business.

Y'all are a little crazy, you know?

Or . . . DECA competitors are on to something big. Because that time you spend working on your competitive events can have a **huge** effect on your life. You're not just gaining business knowledge, you're gaining confidence. Some day, maybe a few years from now, you're going to be standing in front of a client ready to present an ad campaign or you'll be sitting in a banker's office ready to explain why you're a good candidate for a business loan and you'll think, "*Been there, done that. I can handle this.*" Because while you were in high school (!), you competed in a DECA event, so you know what it's like to write a business plan or give a presentation.

DECA competitive events may be educational but they're not abstract; they're real-world-specific. When you compete in a DECA event, you learn skills that will stick with you for the rest of your life, no matter what line of work you choose.

Meanwhile, the real teenaged slackers are home, sitting on their TV remotes and not having any clue what kind of opportunities they're missing out on.

Show Me the Money

Part of what they're missing out on are cash awards and scholarships. First-place event winners at the ICDC win a minimum of \$100. Sponsored events pay more—up to a \$2,500 scholarship for the overall winner in the 7 UP Challenge, for example. Check out pages 44–46 in your advisor's copy of the *2003–04 DECA Guide* to see which events are sponsored, and how much

they award to ICDC winners.

Regular scholarships are also given to DECA members who are seniors in high school. Last year's DECA National Advisory Board members gave out some \$200,000 in awards and scholarships. You have to play to win, though—part of the selection criteria for scholarships is active DECA involvement. So get involved, and don't forget to check out the scholarship applications to see what you can apply for. DECA will mail copies of the applications to your advisor in October.

Be a Local Hero

Money aside, a big reason people get involved in DECA is to, well, get involved. DECA chapters have a long history of community service. Pretty much every chapter does at least one service activity during the year, and most do more.

These activities range from the simple (canned food drives to help the

homeless, penny wars in homeroom) to the elaborate (golf tournaments, haunted houses). Some chapters choose to work with elementary or middle school kids; others help senior citizens. The Muscular Dystrophy Association has been partners with DECA for a long time, and many chapters choose to raise money for MDA.

Whatever your chapter does, what's important is that you're donating your time, your skills and your enthusiasm to helping improve the life of someone else in your community. It's important work, and it's also a lot of fun.

Step Right Up

As you may have figured out by now, one big benefit of all the work DECA members do is leadership development. Planning activities, working with local businesspeople, running for office, learning management skills, even the role-play events—a lot of what DECA does prepares you to take

charge: of your life, your career, your employees, your business. Pay attention, and you can wind up feeling large and in charge by the time your DECA membership is over.

(Or teeny-tiny and in charge, depending on your personal physical attributes. *YASMV.)

Win Friends and Influence People

What doesn't vary is the chance to get to make new friends. Joining a DECA chapter is a great way to meet new people—and not just other folks in your school. Sure you'll be meeting plenty of other students at chapter meetings and activities, but you could meet them in other groups or clubs in school.

DECA, however, gives you the chance to spread your influence

*Your Actual Size May Vary. Although some DECA members get physically larger during the course of their DECA membership, individual results will vary, and DECA Inc. does not claim any responsibility for said physical growth.

beyond school boundaries and meet people in the local business community. Become a state, provincial or national officer, and you'll get to meet even more bigwigs. This kind of stuff can help you in building a solid business career, and it can even help you get into college.

(That's actually one of the lures of DECA's college division, Delta Epsilon Chi. It's not unheard of for members to go to the Delta ICDC and walk away with job offers.)

Pick Me, Pick Me!

While you're daydreaming about what you can accomplish in DECA, take a minute to imagine how this is going to look on your college applications. Colleges always say they want well-rounded students, right? Right here you've got community service, leadership development, work experience, a demonstrated commitment to your education and your future, and a social life. You get any more well-rounded, honey, they're going

to have to roll you into the dorm.

Give It a Week

To get a crash course in all you can do in DECA, get ready for DECA Week, October 12–18. September may be the month when all the chapters gear up for a busy year, but DECA Week in October is when they invite the rest of the world to join the fun. Use the time to generate excitement about the activities your chapter has planned for the year, and encourage new members to join. (More participation = more fun.)

Last year, the DECA Web site posted some suggestions about activities your chapter could do during DECA Week. The info is still up there; if you want to check it out, go to www.deca.org/publications/advisor/PR2.pdf. You're not limited to what other chapters have done before you, though, so get creative.

And don't be afraid to think big. It's your future we're talking about here. Make the most of it! ❖