



# **COMMUNITY CONNECTIONS CAMPAIGN**

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PUBLIC RELATIONS PROJECT  
Carmel DECA Chapter  
Carmel High School  
520 East Main Street  
Carmel, Indiana 46032  
.....

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## **TABLE OF CONTENTS**

<b>1</b>	<b>I. EXECUTIVE SUMMARY</b>
<b>2</b>	<b>II. CAMPAIGN THEME OR FOCUS</b>
2	A. Statement and description of the issue to be addressed
3	B. Rationale for selecting the issue
4	C. Description of the target population
5	D. Description of the chapter
<b>6</b>	<b>III. LOCAL MEDIA AND OTHER PROMOTIONAL POSSIBILITIES</b>
6	A. Local print and broadcast media available
7	B. Other possible promotional activities
8	C. Media mix and rationale for media and other promotional activities
<b>13</b>	<b>IV. CAMPAIGN ORGANIZATION AND IMPLEMENTATION</b>
13	A. Organizational chart, member involvement and job description
17	B. Description of the campaign and documentation
25	C. Estimated impact on the target population
<b>26</b>	<b>V. EVALUATIONS AND RECOMMENDATIONS</b>
26	A. Evaluation of the process
29	B. Recommendations for future campaigns
<b>30</b>	<b>VI. BIBLIOGRAPHY</b>

## I. EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

### CAMPAIGN OBJECTIVE

Connect Carmel DECA students with the community in order to foster professional relationships and to create more authentic and meaningful learning experiences for our developing professionals.

“  
The only source  
of knowledge is  
experience.”

*Albert Einstein*

### RATIONALE

By integrating DECA with the professional community, we can bridge the gap between “textbook education” and real-world experience while simultaneously promoting local business.

### TARGET POPULATION

The Community Connections Campaign targets executives at businesses located in the city of Carmel and the surrounding area that have extensive experience and expertise in their field.

### MEDIA MIX



#### PRINT

*Current in Carmel  
Informational Sheets  
Indianapolis News Beat*



#### DIGITAL MEDIA

*Social Media  
Carmeldeca.com*



#### BROADCAST

*CHTV  
Extraordinary Indiana*



#### COMMUNITY EVENTS

*Chamber of Commerce  
School Board Meeting  
Partners Banquet*

## COMMUNITY CONNECTIONS CAMPAIGN

### FORMING PARTNERSHIPS

*The Public Relations Team contacted and met with executives from local businesses to form corporate partnerships. These businesses would serve primarily as mentors, but also as financial sponsors.*

### RONALD MCDONALD

*Carmel DECA worked with our partner, the Ronald McDonald House in Indianapolis, to host events, donate, and raise money and awareness for the organization.*

### GUIDE CONFERENCES

*LEAD Conference  
October 24, 2015*

*Cupcake Cuties: Women's Empowerment Conference  
November 7, 2015*

*Representatives from corporate partners led workshops at these events.*

### SRT WORKSHOPS

*CPA Day  
GUIDE Trilogy  
Mentorships  
Guest Speakers*

*Corporate partners worked with students during our school-wide study hall time to help prepare them for competition and create authentic learning experiences.*

### PARTNERS BANQUET

*January 13, 2016*

*Carmel DECA invited all of its corporate partners to a formal dinner. Members presented on what Carmel DECA does, why it is important, and how they can get involved.*

## II. CAMPAIGN THEME OR FOCUS

### A. Statement and description of the issue to be addressed

Academic institutions around the world provide their students with opportunities to learn through textbooks and lectures; however, it has been proven that the most meaningful and authentic education comes through hands-on, real-world experience. Only so much can be taken away from the traditional method of teaching. It takes a different approach- one that integrates participation in actual business scenarios with the guidance of knowledgeable business mentors- to give students the professional background necessary for success.

**The only source of knowledge is experience.**

*Albert Einstein*

The mission of Carmel DECA is “to provide Carmel High School students with a channel to excel in the knowledge, understanding and practice of business by establishing a competitive platform that prepares students for success beyond DECA.” Operating under this mission, the Carmel DECA Public Relations Team developed its own overarching aim and supporting objectives to help fulfill the purpose of the chapter. The main goal of this public relations campaign is **to connect Carmel DECA students with the community in order to foster positive relationships and to create more authentic and meaningful learning experiences for our developing professionals.** The underlying objectives serve to define the various ways in which we will extend our opportunities for real-world education and connecting with the community.

### GOALS

*Connect Carmel DECA students with the community in order to foster positive relationships and to create more authentic and meaningful learning experiences for our developing professionals.*

*Obtain 100 official partnerships with businesses in the local community by January 13, 2015.*

*Connect DECA students with professional mentors that can share their expertise and experience.*

*Establish a strong presence in a variety of media outlets.*

*Attend and host community events to network and promote Carmel DECA.*

## B. Rationale for selecting the issue

As Daniel Smith, the dean of Indiana University's Kelley School of Business, stated, "The case for business education begins with a simple reality: Every organization, whether it's the Red Cross, a local library, a museum, a hospital, or even a church, operates like a business."<sup>1</sup> Professional skills and business knowledge are in high demand in today's working world; however, there is a general lack of quality business education at the high school level. Students develop a basic understanding of terms and concepts, but they never actually experience the world of business. To resolve this issue, Carmel DECA implemented a plan to take community outreach to the next level, thus extending our members' opportunities to learn beyond the classroom. By accompanying our members with the proper interactive learning structure, as well as partnering them with local business leaders in their field, we would be able to bridge the gap between textbook standards and real-world application. Partnerships formed by the Public Relations Team served to benefit both the students of Carmel DECA and the local businesses. We strategically chose partners that could act as a mentor for a specific DECA event, so our students had the opportunity to gain the skills and knowledge needed from a professional with experience in their event. Partners also had the opportunity to sponsor some of our DECA students to help with costs of travel and competition for ICDC so that all of the members who had worked hard to succeed would have the chance to make it to the international level.

Additionally, the campaign allowed us to support local business. Many executives saw the opportunity to be involved in DECA as a way to be involved in the community, which provides them with positive publicity. The owner of a local restaurant, Punch Burger, reached out to us saying, "Punch Burger is all about...supporting our community so we rarely invest our money in advertising. Instead we would rather partner with our local organizations to spread awareness about the great things being done in our community while introducing new people to our restaurant." Other partners

*<http://www.businessweek.com/business/schools/the-case-for-business-education/07212011.html>*