

DECA:™

Repositioned and Rebranded for the

FUTURE



BY CHRISTOPHER YOUNG

While they say a diamond is forever, the meaning behind this coveted gemstone is now a little different. For the first time in nearly 20 years, DECA enhanced its mission statement, guiding principles and visual collateral to reflect the progressing educational system and changing demands of the economy. Some things, however, remain the same—the organization's affinity to its symbolic diamond and its commitment to helping teachers prepare students for college and careers.

Founded as the Distributive Education Clubs of America in 1946, the organization adopted the tagline, "an association of marketing students," and dropped its acronym in 1991 as distributive education programs began to evolve into marketing education programs. Today, DECA prepares emerging leaders and entrepreneurs

in marketing, finance, hospitality and management in high schools and colleges across the globe.

“There’s been so much change in our educational system and in the needs of our students to meet the demands of our economy, that it was important for us to develop a message that concisely communicates who we are and what we do,” said Ed Davis, executive director of DECA.

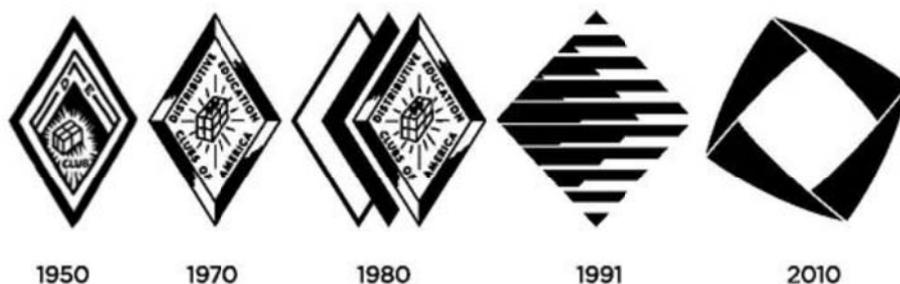
DECA’s new brand is a result of a two-year process that involved members, business partners and branding professionals in identifying the organization’s value in relation to the global economy and current education needs. Only the fifth visual update in DECA’s history, the enhanced logo embraces the organization’s affinity for the diamond while displaying a bold, modern design. While the logo is perhaps the most visual change, the goal is to leverage DECA’s new message to strengthen the career and technical student organization. That’s where the mission statement and guiding principles do the talking.

Communicating the Message

“DECA prepares emerging leaders and entrepreneurs in marketing, finance, hospitality and management in high schools and colleges across the globe.”

The new mission statement highlights DECA’s connection to four of the 16 career clusters—marketing, finance, hospitality and tourism, and business management and administration. As career clusters have become an integral part of many career and technical education (CTE) programs, as state and local education agencies reformed their programs and curriculum, and as DECA members have more career interests—the enhanced message now provides DECA advisers with opportunities to realign their programs, develop programs of study using DECA activities, and remain relevant to members’ needs.

During the past three years, DECA has concurrently aligned its competitive



▲ The evolution of the DECA logo from 1950 to now.

events program to the career clusters model, and integrated the National Curriculum Standards for marketing, finance, hospitality and tourism, and business management and administration into its classroom learning activities. These activities—college and business partnerships, competitive events, conferences, educational partners, educational publications, school-based enterprises and online challenges—together comprise DECA’s newly coined Comprehensive Learning Program, and showcase DECA’s connection to classroom instruction.

DECA’s guiding principles explain how DECA fulfills its mission in two distinct statements—the first addresses the process and the second addresses the result. DECA’s Comprehensive Learning Program integrates into classroom instruction, applies learning, connects to business and promotes competition. As a result, DECA prepares the next generation to be academically prepared, community oriented, professionally responsible, and experienced leaders.

“Since DECA’s beginning, one critical component is that it’s an integral part of classroom instruction,” Davis said. “It’s not something extra that our advisers and students do outside of class. Our new message and the enhanced development of our programs reinforce this concept and continue to communicate the value of DECA to administrators, counselors and other key decision makers.”

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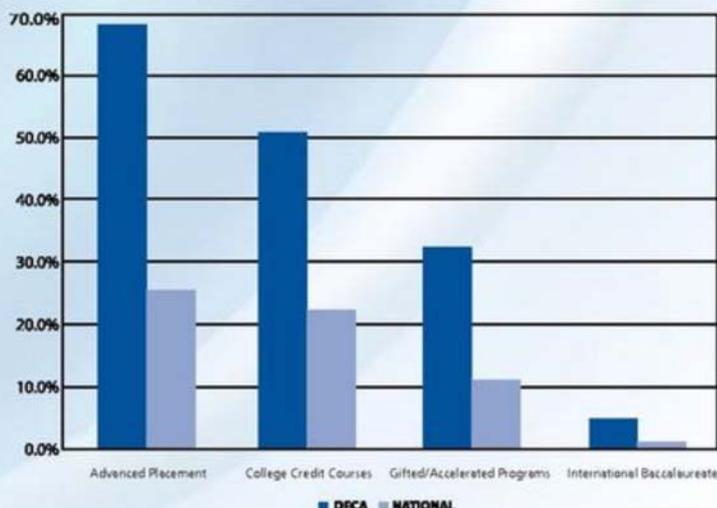
To help demonstrate the impact of participation, DECA partnered with the National Research Center for College University Admissions (NRCCUA) to mine data and build profiles of members that have been used in developing targeted messages for specific audiences. For example, DECA has generated profiles of members who work at its National Advisory Board companies to show career interests, grade point average and college plans compared to state and national averages. Likewise, that data can be used in a more global sense to show how DECA members are more career-focused, higher achieving and are more likely to attend college.

To show evidence of learning, DECA recently introduced a new transcript program that provides meaningful data comparisons of student achievement on career cluster exams; the transcripts assess knowledge and skill statements from the National Curriculum Standards and

COLLEGE READY

86% of DECA members report an A or B average.
 68% plan to attend college immediately after graduating high school.
 59% would like to attend a private college or university. That's more than twice the national average.

DECA members are academically prepared students who will enter college with credits and other forms of academic credentials.



CAREER READY

53% are obtaining experience through employment.

DECA members are career-focused in the areas of marketing, entrepreneurship, finance, hospitality and management.

Future Major/Career Path	DECA	National
Accounting/Finance	9.0%	2.6%
Advertising/Public Relations	8.6%	0.7%
Business Administration	19.8%	5.1%
Business - International	9.7%	1.5%
Business Owner/Entrepreneur	16.8%	4.2%
Fashion Merchandising	4.8%	2.4%
Hotel/Resort Management	1.9%	0.4%
Sales/Marketing	8.1%	0.8%
Travel and Tourism	1.0%	0.7%
Undecided/Other	5.1%	16.8%

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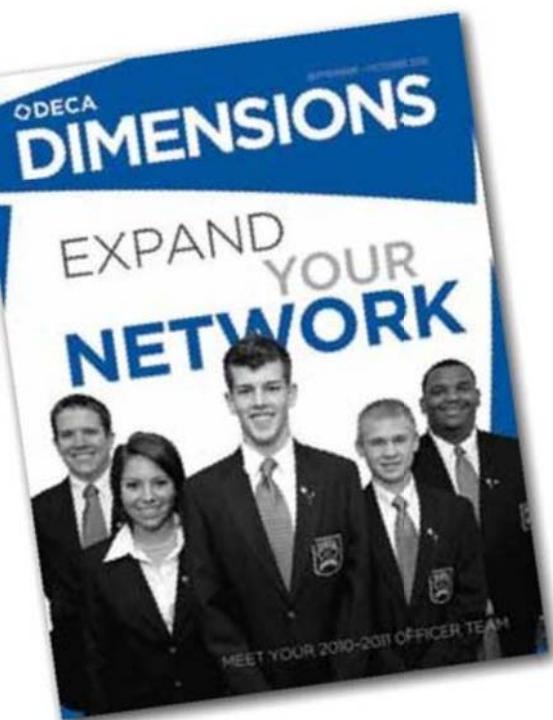
presentations judged by industry professionals. These transcripts put student performance in perspective by comparing them to members in their states as well as the entire DECA population.

“We’ve conducted an extensive evaluation of our programs and aligned them with current educational policy and interests of our students,” said Davis. “Our goal was to create a menu of choices that educators, local education agencies and state agencies can best adapt to their changing needs.”

To share these opportunities, DECA is developing a campaign that includes a video unique to each state that will explain the benefits of DECA to potential advisers, administrators and counselors, and it will include key statistics and testimonials.

Unifying the Brand

To create a stronger link between DECA's high school and college programs and to support the new national priority for preparing students for college and career success, the organization changed the name of its college division from Delta Epsilon Chi to Collegiate DECA. This connection demonstrates how DECA's programs are designed to begin in ninth grade and span through postsecondary education, a key component of the most recent renewal of the Carl D. Perkins Act.



- ▲ *Dimensions*, the student magazine, features a new look and revamped content to make it a useful classroom instructional tool.

“Colleges and universities award more degrees in business than any other area, and students are taking more courses in marketing, finance, hospitality and management every year,” said Davis. “As DECA continues to prepare students to be college and career ready, our organization now offers a variety of learning programs designed to meet the expanded interests of our students.”

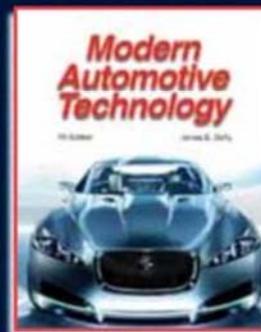
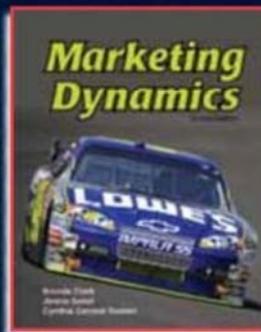
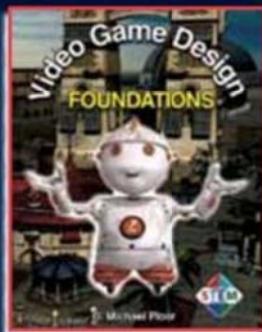
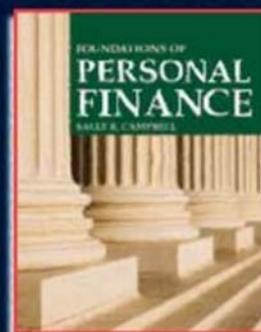
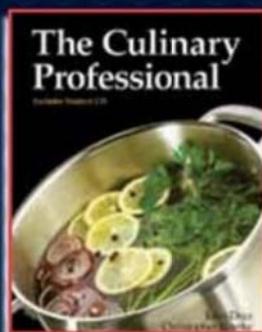
Getting the Word Out

The implementation of the new brand created an opportunity for DECA to refresh all of its Web and print communications, including its Web site, social media presence, student magazine and adviser newsletter. Each communication tool reflects the new design, features revamped content, and delivers a consistent message. For example, the student magazine, *Dimensions*, focuses on topics from one of the four career clusters in each issue, thus

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“Our DECA advisers tell us that our new brand has in a sense rejuvenated their teaching,” said Davis. “It’s caused them to reevaluate their teaching and integration of their DECA chapter in the learning process and has resulted in fresh, innovative methods and ideas.

becoming a powerful tool to support daily classroom learning. Renamed *Insight*, the adviser newsletter guides advisers on how to integrate chapter activities into the classroom each quarter.

Furthermore, DECA’s Facebook page has grown to nearly 10,000 members in just over a year, providing a place on the Web to connect directly with current members, alumni and supporters. This interactive method of promoting DECA

is also one home to DECA Direct, a new series of broadcast segments connecting DECA conferences to the classroom.

DECA provided support to its local and state/provincial associations to help maintain a consistent message by sending personalized chapter logos to each of its 5,000 chapters. Promotional cards, flyers and signage featuring the new logo, with opportunities for customization, were also made available.

“Our DECA advisers tell us that our new brand has in a sense rejuvenated their teaching,” said Davis. “It’s caused them to reevaluate their teaching and integration of their DECA chapter in the learning process and has resulted in fresh, innovative methods and ideas. Most importantly, it communicates the message that, more than ever before, we are a relevant part of classroom instruction and student achievement.” **I**

Christopher Young

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- **International Center’s Annual Model Schools Conference**—June 26–29, 2011, Nashville
- **ACTE Annual Convention and Career Tech Expo**—November 17–19, 2011, St. Louis

Institute members will also participate in at least one of the following career-themed events of their choosing. Each event will include a four-hour pre-session or post-session specifically customized for institute members

- **National Career Pathways Network Annual Conference**—October 12–14, 2011, Orlando, Florida
- **ACTE National Policy Seminar**—March 2012

COST

\$2,100 per person (includes conference registration at three Institute events)

\$1,800 per person for teams of 4 or more from the same institution

Travel costs not included.

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