

Professional Corner

Ronkowski on promotion

Keith Ronkowski, advisor for the Red River H.S. Chapter in North Dakota, recognizes the importance of promoting for your chapter. The Red River chapter has more than 100 members, and it has reached a place in its development where it pays the dues for every member, a real achievement.

Keith identifies a target market for each of his courses. He targets sophomores for the Marketing/Retailing course; juniors are targeted for the Management/Entrepreneurship course and seniors take the capstone course at Red River: Model School Store. The school store course enrolls about 20 students who handle all aspects of the store: manager, assistant managers, time-keeping, finance, ordering and inventory. They have monthly store meetings. The sophomores work in the store with the seniors supervising them.

Using the Membership Campaign

As we move toward DECA Week next month (October 12 to 18), this is a good time to see how the Membership Campaign dovetails with your need to promote your chapter. Keith's chapter achieves at the Diamond Level every year.

At first, Keith took on the membership campaign for the **recognition at the International conference**. But more than that, he says that the campaign gives the chapter activities to do. "It makes us do the things we should be doing," he remarks. It will get kids speaking on the radio, and the activities will be coordinated with ads put out by the school store's staff. The chapter prefers to continue to do

About the membership campaign: "It makes us do the things we should be doing"

their DECA Week activities during the one designated week because it concentrates their efforts. (Currently those applying for recognition in the membership campaign may operate their publicity efforts from the beginning of school until Nov. 15.)

Other chapter promotions

Keith understands that the chapter has to promote itself all year long, not just during DECA Week. Since their city is fairly small, with 50,000 people, they can get their articles into the local paper whenever they want to.

The chapter members put together a DVD of 8 to 10 minutes promoting the program, and then they show it to the 9th graders. The 9th graders then fill out a survey showing interest. They follow up with a direct mailing to these individuals including a pamphlet and information on classes to take.

The chapter also puts articles into each issue of the school's **monthly parent newsletter**. They make sure to recognize students in these articles.

Travel, of course, works. The chapter went to the New York Experience this year, and they go to all of the state events. Keith also takes the 9th and 10th grade students to the DECA conference of a district in Minnesota. It presents a chance for students to participate and to see what DECA is about. He usually takes about 50 members. Add a large contingent to state competition and quite a few going on to ICDC, and the travel component of the chapter is impressive.

Retaining more academic members

"One thing that's really helped retain more academic students is that all are required to do some project that relates to DECA," says Keith. Since they know ahead of time what they are getting into, this policy attracts the kids who are more dedicated. Sophomores all do marketing research reports, and they all create an ad campaign. Juniors all construct a business plan. The Model School Store students do chapter projects that involve students from the other classes.

Thank you, Keith, for sharing your ideas. **You will find Keith's system for motivating students through a DECA lettering system in the new issue of the Roadmap planner.** It's on page 56.

News from the Roadmap Calendar

We love to hear how folks are using the calendar. As advisor **Gino Ortiz** (Central H.S., Florida) ordered extra copies for his officers, he explained to us how he used them.

First of all, working from the calendar "keeps us on the same page. It also gives us a chance to teach our leaders how to plan using the calendars." He also remarked, "We like to compare how we are doing things here with what others do. We revamped our officer elections based on ideas we found in the book."

DECA Week in the Classroom

Dave Shillinglaw (Nebraska), our source for master teachers ideas on written competitive events in this year's calendar planner, shared with us a great idea for teaching through DECA Week.

Each of his junior classes creates a promotion for DECA Week. The seniors then pick the best idea, and the winning junior class gets to implement the activity. It is a big, special contest for the chapter. They reach out in print, broadcasts, the Internet: "They do it all."

Last year's campaign was called "DECA—Is It in You?" Members all brought an empty Gatorade bottle and then stuffed these empties with goodies. Each member gave two of the bottles to prospective sophomores they thought would fit into the program.

This year, reports Dave, the campaign revolves around a game box with facts about DECA.