

# CTE MARKETING BEST PRACTICES & CAMPAIGNS

# Playbook

A variety of resource materials to help CTE directors successfully promote their programs, including general marketing best practices, Gen Z marketing strategies & five sample campaign concepts

*Developed by Washington STEM in collaboration with CTE Directors, with support from the Boeing Company*



# General Marketing Best Practices

These best practices (or simple rules of thumb) were generated after a review of state and national CTE marketing materials. Consider these a “check list” to review when designing your own marketing campaigns.

**1**

**TARGET AN AUDIENCE**

**2**

**CRAFT YOUR VALUE PROPOSITION**

**3**

**HONE THE MESSAGE**

*Identify with audience  
Choose words wisely  
Use compelling visuals*

**4**

**CHOOSE THE RIGHT CHANNEL**

**LEARN MORE**

Download background information on general marketing best practices



**LEARN MORE**

Download information on the AdvanceCTE marketing study & highlight of student voices



## Gen Z Marketing Best Practices

Gen Z (a term for the generation born after 1995) have different attitudes and beliefs than previous generations (including millennials who they’re often confused with). Good marketers must know their customer. This research serves as a short primer to Gen Z and can be used to inform the design of your marketing campaigns.

**1**

**TALK ON THEIR TERMS AND ON THEIR TURF**

*Concise and visual  
Online/offline*

**2**

**DEMONSTRATE AN UNDERSTANDING OF THEIR VALUES**

*Independent decision-making  
Job stability*

**3**

**AUTHENTICITY IS EXPECTED & EMBRACED**

*Get quantitative  
Utilize influencers to magnify the message*

**LEARN MORE**

Download background information on Gen Z marketing best practices



# CTE Marketing Campaigns: MESSAGING

Peer and teacher influence plays a big role in student decision-making. By enlisting students and peers to help informally market the value of CTE, campaigns can persuade students who might not otherwise join CTE to explore these programs through authentic, first-person communications.

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## CTE PLAYBOOK MESSAGING EXAMPLES

The primary message “CTE is a vision for the future” can be adapted to persuade key audiences:

AUDIENCE	CORE MESSAGE	SAMPLE MESSAGING
STUDENTS	<i>CTE is a clear path toward your future... get the right skills to meet your goals about their experiences</i>	<p><b>On social media, from a student ambassador:</b> “Can every day be this fun? In physics today we used lemons to create a circuit that powered a smartphone. Never thought I’d like science, but maybe I won’t rule it out for a college major now.”</p> <p><b>In the classroom, from a math teacher:</b> “In today’s class we’re going to use calculus to model the trajectory of a satellite currently orbiting Earth. The skills and concepts we’ll use are the same as those an aerospace engineer might use. If this is interesting to you, consider taking CTE classes like XX or XX next term.”</p>
PARENTS	<i>CTE prepares your student for college or career...whichever comes next</i>	<p><b>On a one-pager, pull-quote from a CTE alumni:</b> “I wasn’t sure what I wanted to do when I graduated, so I started taking CTE classes—that way I knew I’d be prepared one way or the other. Looking back that was the best decision of my high school career. When I went to apply for technical college, I could apply some of the credits I’d already earned through CTE. I was already that much closer to starting my career and earning a living.”</p>
EDUCATORS	<i>CTE is a differentiator for future success... students who have taken CTE courses stand out on both college &amp; job applications</i>	<p><b>From a CTE alumni panel discussion:</b> “When I got a call to interview at my top choice college, I was ecstatic and stunned. Later, during the interview with the college admissions officer, I found out that all the CTE courses I had already taken in my anticipated major were a big differentiator for the admissions team because they saw I would be successful based on the work I’d already done.”</p>



# CTE Marketing Campaigns: FIVE APPROACHES THAT WORK

The following five marketing campaigns were created based on marketing best practices and Gen Z research. They should serve as “plug and play” templates (that your team can customize) and as inspiration for future campaigns your team may design.

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CAMPAIGN NAME	DESCRIPTION	GEN Z MARKETING BEST PRACTICES		
		Talk on their terms, on their turf	Demonstrate an understanding of their values	Authenticity is expected and embraced
CTE STORIES	Student social media ambassadors post about their experiences	X		X
CTE BY THE NUMBERS	Case studies of CTE alums coupled with job/industry economic and growth data	X	X	X
MY CTE PATH	Infographic showing how to mix and match CTE courses with additional classes to create pathways to high-paying/high-growth career	X	X	
CTE WEEK	Promotional week highlighting CTE where students are given swag and are exposed to CTE campaigns/classes/events	X		X
WHAT'S NEXT	CTE alumni (both college and non-college track) host an info session to help current students decide what comes after high school	X	X	X



## CAMPAIGN #1

# CTE STORIES

### Campaign OVERVIEW

- Student social media ambassadors post about their CTE experiences
- Proven successful social media strategy to reach Gen Z, pioneered by education institutions like Georgetown, UC Berkeley and others

### Campaign Value Proposition

- Showcases various value propositions through trusted peer voices ("Real")
- Communicates in student-preferred channel
- There is no one type of CTE story (e.g. CTE4ALL)
- "Real HS experience with more value" (from AdvanceCTE)

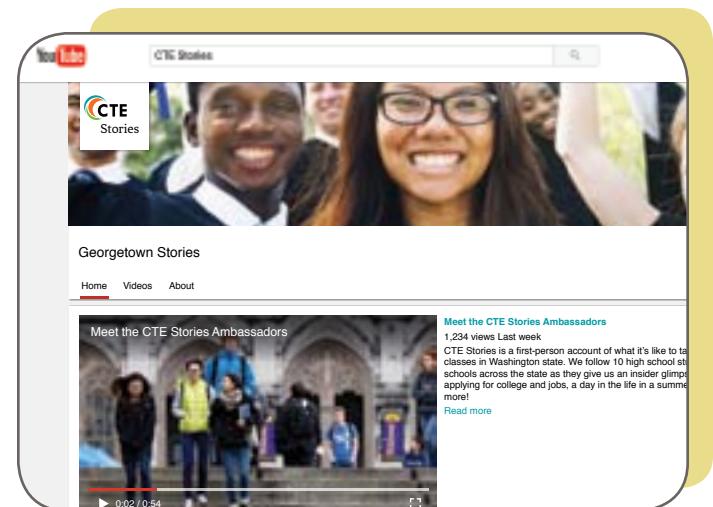
### Sample Messages / Content

- Signing up for classes
- "Drop-ins" to favorite CTE classes
- Thinking about post-high school plans (diary/confessional)
- Day in the life: summer internship
- Day in the life: CTE alum job tour/CTE Alumni interview (from alum event)

### GEN Z MARKETING CONNECTION:

Authentic influencers + Online presence/conversations

*Gen Z is more likely to listen to trusted influencers and peers than traditional marketing messages*



### Campaign RESOURCES

Implementation Plan + Resources Needed



Additional Resources  
Social Media Best Practices  
For Educators + Case Study:  
Georgetown Stories



## Implementation Plan + Resources Needed + Template

### IMPLEMENTATION PLAN

#### 1 Onboard up to ten social media ambassadors across Washington State (option to add more later)

- A. Ask each ambassador to post 1-2x per week using a CTE hashtag (ex: #STEMstories, #CTEstories, #MyCTE)
- B. A CTE admin/director hosts an editorial content meeting with ambassadors for 1 hour, 1x per week
- C. Implement usage of a content moderation platform to review content before it's published live
- D. Aggregate your favorite student-generated videos on a CTE YouTube page, similar to Georgetown's Georgetown Stories page (setup and maintenance by STEM Director or administrator)

#### 2 Begin scaling the campaign from ten ambassadors total to 2-3 per school offering CTE classes. Encourage alumni to post as well.

- A. Groups of social media administrators across school districts meet once every 3-6 months to share lessons learned and collaborate
- B. Option to encourage student ambassadors to also share lessons learned / collaborate on content they like to share

#### 3 Consider hiring a social media coordinator or intern to oversee content moderation platform for all participating schools

- A. A coordinator is less expensive than an administrator
- B. A coordinator may also plan content themes (ex: back to school, summer internship, CTE alum appreciation week, etc.) to keep content fresh

### RESOURCES NEEDED

- 10 student ambassadors - unpaid
- YouTube page setup - one administrator/consultant, 1-2 hours
- Content moderation platform (ex: Hootsuite, Mish Guru) - \$100-\$200 annually
- One STEM administrator who can dedicate 1-2 hours/week
- Optional (after program scales to 2-3+ ambassadors per school): one social media coordinator/intern who can dedicate 10-20 hours/week (instead of one administrator)
  - minimum hourly wage



## Additional Resources + Background Information

### SOCIAL MEDIA BEST PRACTICES FROM EDUCATORS

Schools like Georgetown, Berkeley and St. Lawrence University have all unleashed students on social media to showcase campus life. Here are a few tips and tricks employed by these higher-Ed institutions to streamline social media efforts while ensuring content meets program standards:

- **No brand page, no problem:** Georgetown student ambassadors regularly post content to social media sites using the branded hashtag #GeorgetownStories. Prospective students can easily browse content tagged with the hashtag and administrators avoid having to set up branded Instagram and Snapchat accounts.
  - **Authentic social media = guidelines + moderation:** Universities are entrusting social media student ambassadors to post their own content on the university's behalf using a set of content guidelines as the north star. Additional safeguards include using content moderation platforms to review student-generated content before it's posted live.
  - **1 hour 1x per week:** A St. Lawrence University administrator spends 1 hour per week on social media—that's it. The meeting with a group of 12 undergrad social media ambassadors is broken into two teams, each with an appointed leader. One team monitors and posts to Instagram, the other handles Snapchat.
- .....

### SOCIAL MEDIA CASE STUDY: GEORGETOWN STORIES

To appeal to a new class of undergrads, Georgetown turned student influencers loose on social media. 16 Georgetown students post about everyday life—being at the library at 2 am, walking around campus, and more—on Snapchat, Instagram, Facebook, YouTube, etc. Posts are tagged with a campaign hashtag.

A moderator controls which student-generated content is published, while the university comes across as “being authentic, peer-endorsed and truly crowd-sourced.” “[Students] might not trust an ad telling them something is good, but they’ll trust one of their peers endorsing that same message.”

**Results:** 7,027 students sent in early applications in 2015, a record-breaking number for Georgetown. This is up from 6,840 in 2014 and 6,624 in 2013.\*

\*This increase does not correlate entirely to the student-generated content of the campaign, but a spokeswoman says she believes much of the surge in applications can be tied to the campaign.

SOURCE: <https://www.ama.org/publications/marketingnews/pages/georgetown-social-media-gold-snapchat.aspx>



## CAMPAIGN #2

# CTE BY THE NUMBERS

### Campaign OVERVIEW

- Stories of real CTE alums with job/industry economic and growth data
- Alumni who have used CTE to transition into lucrative, high-growth careers serve as proof that CTE leads to high-growth, high-paying jobs

### Campaign Value Proposition

- CTE gives students a clear economic edge in their careers (aligned with high-paying, high-growth jobs)
- “Real Options for Rewarding Careers” (AdvanceCTE)
- “Earn a good living”, “Financial independence” (student focus groups)

### Sample Messages / Content

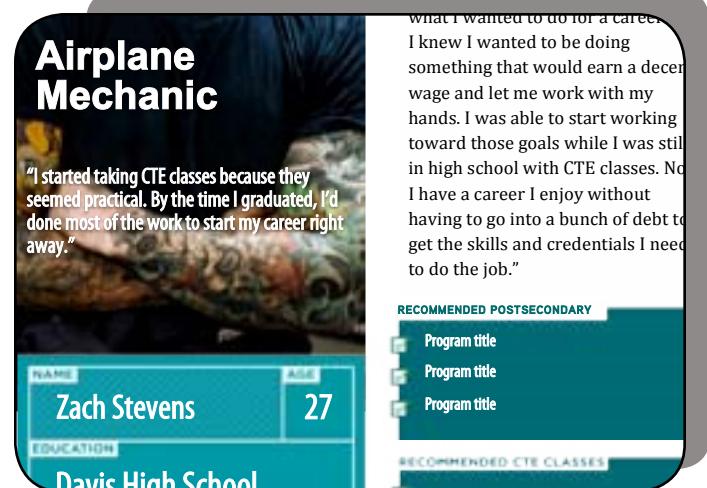
One-pagers can feature different CTE alums/industries:

- Alum’s industry (growth rate, avg. salary)
- Number of new jobs in industry in WA through 2024
- Alum’s story: Why I chose CTE, how I’ve benefitted, where I’m headed, etc.
- Recommended CTE classes aligned with job

### GEN Z MARKETING CONNECTION:

Focused, quantitative + Concise/  
Visual + Promotes stable jobs

*After watching parents and grandparents struggle through the Great Recession, Gen Z is practical and career/money-focused. Gen Z demands to see the data and/or real-life examples before they commit*



### Campaign RESOURCES

Implementation Plan + Resources Needed

DOWNLOAD TEMPLATE



# CTE BY THE NUMBERS CAMPAIGN

## Implementation Plan + Resources Needed + Templates

### IMPLEMENTATION PLAN

#### 1 Select 4-5 CTE alumni to be featured in the campaign

- A. Aim for representation of high-paying, high-growth jobs and industries

#### 2 Gather creative assets for each alum's page

- A. Have professional photos taken of each alum
- B. Have a copywriter or staff member write copy for each alum's page

#### 3 Launch campaign

- A. Use provided template to create unique pages for each featured alum
- B. Print pages as handouts or posters; share with students and parents during CTE promotional periods or use as an "evergreen" resource that can be shared anytime

### RESOURCES NEEDED

- 4-5 CTE alumni willing to participate
- Photographer: \$350-\$500 (for alumni photos)
- Copywriter: \$100-200 (to draft 4-5 alumni stories)
- 1-2 STEM administrators who can dedicate up to 10 hours total to project-manage creation of campaign one-pager and oversee rollout of poster on school websites, printed and posted in school hallways, etc.

### TEMPLATE

Use this Microsoft Word template to create a letter size (8.5 inch by 11 inch) one-pager:

[DOWNLOAD TEMPLATE](#) 



## CAMPAIGN #3

# MY CTE PATH

### Campaign OVERVIEW

- Infographic shows students how to mix and match CTE courses with additional classes to achieve college and/or career success
- Offers students who like to make their own decisions a transparent planning tool

### Campaign Value Proposition

- Real options/real flexibility (Advance CTE)
- CTE gives students the real-world skills and hands-on experience they need to succeed in college and career
- No matter which career you choose, CTE will help differentiate you

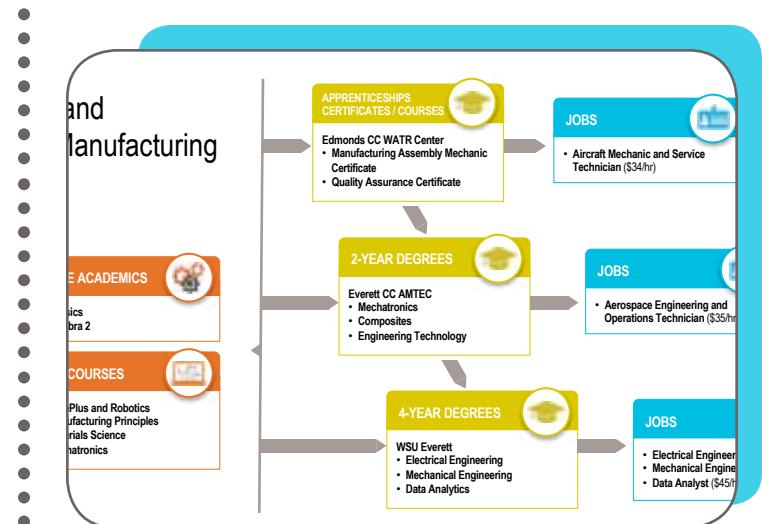
### Sample Messages / Content

Infographics can be customized to show how CTE builds practical experience and helps students land high-paying/high-growth jobs. For example:

- Which CTE courses are aligned w/ industry clusters
- Which postsecondary pathways are tied to industry clusters
- Which jobs and salaries are tied to industry clusters

### GEN Z MARKETING CONNECTION: Concise/visual + Info to make independent decisions

*Gen Z is goal-oriented and career-focused. Illustrating how CTE can be used to attain a career goal will add value to students who like to call their own shots and take aim at specific careers.*



### Campaign RESOURCES

Implementation Plan  
+ Resources Needed

DOWNLOAD TEMPLATE



## Implementation Plan + Resources Needed + Template

### IMPLEMENTATION PLAN

#### 1 Customize infographic with local courses and job data

- A. Use WA STEM labor market tool to help and potentially convene local employers and postsecondary providers
- B. Distribute infographic to participating schools

#### 2 Promote My CTE Path Campaign

- A. Host infographics on school websites or print
- B. Ask social media ambassadors to share their version of the infographic as part of the CTE Stories Campaign

### RESOURCES NEEDED

- \$100-\$200 to print infographics (if desired)
- 1 STEM administrator who can dedicate time to customizing infographic for local communities (including CTE courses, postsecondary options, and jobs)

### TEMPLATE

Use this Microsoft PowerPoint template to create your own CTE Path Infographic:

[DOWNLOAD TEMPLATE](#) 



## CAMPAIGN #4

# WHAT'S NEXT

### Campaign OVERVIEW

- CTE alumni (representing both college and non-college track) host an information session for current students to help them decide what comes after high school (can use digital and non-digital channels)
- Alumni event directly connects students with first-person CTE resources

### Campaign Value Proposition

- “Real options for college and rewarding careers” (AdvanceCTE)
- Students explore a range of options for their future through the eyes of successful CTE alums
- Prepare for the future, Flexibility (Student focus groups)
- “Own your career”; “Fast track”

### Sample Messages / Content

Event content would be alumni generated, but talking point guidelines for the alums could include:

- Best advice I would give myself if I were in your shoes as a high school student
- What I’m doing now, how CTE got me there
- Why I chose CTE (factors I was considering, etc.)

### GEN Z MARKETING CONNECTION: Authentic alumni + In-person event + Info to make independent decisions

*Gen Z is in charge of making its own decisions and values marketing framed as extra resources to aid in decision-making*



### Campaign RESOURCES

Implementation Plan  
+ Resources Needed

DOWNLOAD TEMPLATE



# WHAT'S NEXT CAMPAIGN

## Implementation Plan + Resources Needed + Templates

### IMPLEMENTATION PLAN

#### 1 Select 4-5 CTE alumni to be featured at the event

- A. These can be the same alumni as in the Money Talks Campaign

#### 2 Gather creative assets to promote the event

- A. Photos of at least one alum (can be same photo from Money Talks Campaign)

#### 3 Secure an event date and venue

- A. Venue might be a school auditorium; recommended for a time when students are getting ready to select classes

#### 4 Promote campaign

- A. Use provided template to create an event poster
- B. Hang posters at school and promote via student social media ambassadors

### RESOURCES NEEDED

- 4-5 CTE alumni willing to participate
- Photographer (for alumni photos)
- Copywriter (to draft alumni stories)
- \$100-\$200 to print event posters
- 1-2 STEM administrators who can dedicate up to 20 hours total to project-manage creation of campaign posters and oversee alumni event roll-out

### TEMPLATE

Use this Microsoft Word template to create your own tabloid size (11 inch by 17 inch) poster:

[DOWNLOAD TEMPLATE](#) 



## CAMPAIGN #5

# CTE WEEK

### Campaign OVERVIEW

- Promotional week highlighting CTE where students are given swag and are exposed to several/all CTE campaigns/events
- A condensed period of promotion and fun builds momentum toward joining CTE

### Campaign Value Proposition

- Enhanced high school experience: CTE programs are part of high school
- Students who see trusted peers excited about CTE will be more likely to consider CTE for themselves
- CTE is fun!

### Sample Messages / Content

Any high-level messages used to promote CTE Week and/or taglines for CTE Week swag might include:

- CTE Week / #CTEweek
- Discover CTE / #discoverCTE
- Dream it, then do it / #CTEgoals
- You've got the power / #CTEstrong

### GEN Z MARKETING CONNECTION:

Peer influencers + Online/offline

*Gen Z values the opinions of trusted influencers and peers*



### Campaign RESOURCES

Implementation Plan  
+ Resources Needed

Additional Resources  
Snapchat Filters & Upload Instructions



## Implementation Plan + Resources Needed + Templates

### IMPLEMENTATION PLAN

#### 1 Select a week to promote CTE

- A. Aim for a week when students are selecting classes for the upcoming term
- B. Ask CTE participating schools to simultaneously promote CTE Week
- C. Select which campaigns will be promoted during CTE Week (all or a combination of several)—note many campaigns have overlapping resources to make scaling easy
- D. Create branded swag (notebooks, power banks, glasses) and disseminate to participating schools
- E. Utilize provided Snapchat filter—upload filter online to publish and make it available for use

#### 2 Promote CTE Week

- A. Promote via social media ambassador program, school newsletters/websites, and in classrooms

#### 3 During CTE Week

- A. Host a photo booth with a photographer and props where students can try on different hats to symbolize different CTE careers
- B. Invite student social media ambassadors from CTE Stories Campaign to post about the week's events
- C. Invite CTE Alumni from the What's Next Campaign to speak and staff tables to answer students' questions

### RESOURCES NEEDED

- 4-5 CTE alumni willing to participate
- Branded swag: sunglasses: \$2-3 each; power banks: \$5-10 each; notebooks: \$2-3 each; snapchat filter: \$5-15 for 1-3 months
- Photo booth: (backdrop and camera: free-\$500; props/career hats: borrowed or <\$100 to buy)
- Collateral for each campaign selected to combine with CTE Week
- 1-2 STEM administrators who can dedicate up to 15 hours total to oversee selection of CTE Week date (poll participating schools), create swag, & decide which campaigns to simultaneously promote
- 1 administrator from each district who can dedicate up to 20 hours total to implement CTE Week in each participating school in his/her district



## Additional Resources & Background Information

### SNAPCHAT FILTER & UPLOAD INSTRUCTIONS

#### How to Publish a Snapchat Filter

- Go to [geofilters.snapchat.com](http://geofilters.snapchat.com)
- Upload the your CTE Snapchat filter artwork (sample below, created with Photoshop)
- Choose the dates/length of time you'd like your filter to be published online (you can also specify locations where you'd like the filter to work, for example you could specify only at certain high schools or off-campus buildings)

Sample Snapchat filter artwork:



[DOWNLOAD PNG FILE](#)



Thank you to Kinetic West for leading the CTE Marketing Campaign project, the Washington STEM CTE Advisory group for their valuable insights and input, to Erin Kaufman for designing the playbook, and to the Boeing Company for their support.

If you have any questions or comments about this playbook please contact Washington STEM at [info@washingtonstem.org](mailto:info@washingtonstem.org)