

Steps to Building Local Chapter Advocacy

Build Business/Industry Relationships

- Identify your target business/industry audiences and begin to foster relationships with each of them.

Make Your Classroom an Adventure

- Create demand for your class by making it an adventure for your students. Make it known from the beginning that your class is unique and exceptional. This will present marketing opportunities to potential business partners.

Think Outside the Box

- Be strategic with the promotion of your program to business/industry. Personalize your message to the business to help ensure the greatest impact.

Students - Your No. 1 Marketing Tool

- Always promote your students and their interests, talents, and accomplishments rather than yours to gain interest of potential business partners.

Step 1: Build Business/Industry Relationships

- Participate in curriculum nights or similar events to showcase your program to incoming students.
- Create a mentor program for existing students to support incoming students.
- Host a breakfast or luncheon with some of your students attending for your school administrators and counselors at least twice a year. The more you inform them about your program, the sooner they will become allies and give you the support you need.
- Create an advisory board with local businesses. Send a personalized letter with an RSVP card asking them to participate on the board, guest speak in your classroom, volunteer as a contest judge, or to delegate one of these responsibilities to someone else in their office. Host a catered dinner for those who respond.
- Invite parents to various events and activities and promote student accomplishments through a parent newsletter or other form of effective communication.
- Invite guest speakers from the community on a regular basis. This exposes the speaker to your program and your students to the speaker.

Step 2: Make Your Classroom an Adventure

- Set up field trips to visit industry to expose students to various careers.
- Create positive energy in the classroom by combining curriculum with life skills and leadership training, including study skills, interviewing techniques, writing thank-you notes, making proper introductions and creating an agenda. Build them up!
- Promote membership by offering professional development points or extra credit through participation in various activities.
- Develop unique classroom experiences based on career field.
- Provide opportunities for travel.
- Give students a vision and keep them focused on their career path. Use competitive events, community service, and other opportunities as a way for them to build their résumés.

Step 3: Think Outside the Box

- Get to know your local media by finding out what kind of stories they like to cover and by sending photos and stories to different newspapers.
- When promoting the value of your class and organization to students, find facts relevant to the students you are trying to recruit.
- When talking to school officials, share the academic successes and statistics of your program and organization.
- Promote the diversity of your program to audiences not just related to careers, but also to the student population and anything else that sets your program apart from others within the school.
- Use language that everyone understands and never assume anything. Create messages for different audiences to reach them effectively.
- Keep in touch with alumni by sending them updates via email; many will come back to support your class and CTSO if you simply ask.

Step 4: Students: Your No. 1 Marketing Tool

- Use the school's or your organization's website to promote student successes on a regular basis.
- Set up a listserv consisting of guidance counselors from feeder schools and send them announcements of your students' successes on a regular basis.
- Encourage students to volunteer at various school and community functions. Have them be sharply dressed in their official CTSO attire when volunteering for the events.
- If you have a student who is exceptional in a specific way within your program, make that student the poster girl or boy for your program.
- Set up meetings for some of your best students with industry professionals. Have these students create questions before the meeting and write thank-you notes as soon as the meeting is over.
- Whenever there is a chance to tell the story of your CTSO or your program in front of a large group of parents, administrators, the news media or industry professionals, do not miss the opportunity to have a capable student do the presentation.