BRANDING AND PR GUIDEBOOK

ARIZONA DECA

WHAT IS PR?

Public relations (PR) is the practice of managing how an organization, group, or person communicates with the public, media, and its members in order to build a positive reputation and image. Although when many hear public relations they may think of press releases or news interviews, it is so much more than that, especially on the chapter level. Public relations, when applied to DECA, is the way your chapter communicates and builds relationships with the members and community around it. It is the way you express your chapter's identity, accomplishments, and opportunities to your members, school, community and beyond. PR encompasses a variety of activities, including promoting chapter opportunities, showcasing accomplishments, recruiting members, and building relationships with businesses and community organizations. Public relations is everything that builds up your 'brand' and can be a big factor in turning your DECA chapter into a highly recognized organization in your school and community!

WHY DOES PR MATTER?

Throughout the year, your chapter may host a variety of events, participate in conferences and competitions, complete community service projects, and offer other valuable experiences for your members, but they can only reap the benefits of these opportunities if they are aware of them!

Effective PR allows your chapter to:

Build awareness
Introduce students, families, school staff, businesses, and community members to DECA and the opportunities your chapter provides.

Engage members
Keep members informed, involved, and excited about upcoming events, conferences, competitions, and chapter activities.

Showcase impact
Highlight the accomplishments of your members and demonstrate the value DECA brings to your school and community.

Strengthen relationships
Create meaningful connections with businesses, community organizations, school leaders, alumni, and other potential partners.

Establish a strong reputation
Consistent and professional communication helps your chapter build credibility and create a positive image within your community.

While PR is most commonly practiced through social media, there are a variety of other platforms and methods to have successful public relations. Some of these ways include:

- Promoting chapter events and opportunities
- Communicating with members, families, and school staff
- Developing relationships with local businesses and community organizations
- Creating sponsorships and community partnerships
- Sharing chapter accomplishments with local media
- Recognizing and celebrating members
- Maintaining consistent branding and messaging
- Responding professionally to questions, feedback, and concerns

Overall, whether the communication happens online, in person, or through a formal partnership, the goal remains the same:

communicate intentionally and represent your chapter professionally.

Creating a Chapter Brand

While maintaining DECA's official branding is essential, chapters can also develop their own unique visual identity. A recognizable chapter brand allows members to associate your social media presence with your school while remaining connected to the larger DECA organization.

When establishing your chapter's visual identity, consider:

- Selecting a consistent color palette
- Establishing complementary fonts
- Developing a recognizable graphic style
- Creating reusable templates for recurring content
- Incorporating school identity while maintaining DECA branding

The goal is to develop a cohesive visual identity that is recognizable, professional, and distinctly your chapter's own.

Creating Content That Connects

A successful social media page is more than a collection of announcements. It should communicate your chapter's identity, highlight its experiences, and encourage members and community members to get involved

What Should Your Chapter Post?

Informational Content

- Meeting announcements
- Conference registration deadlines
- Competitive event information
- Important reminders
- Chapter calendars

Engagement Content

- Member spotlights
- Officer introductions
- Interactive polls and questions
- "Get to Know DECA" posts
- Fun facts and trivia

Event Content

- Event promotions
- Conference recaps
- Competition highlights
- Community service recaps
- Behind-the-scenes photos

Recruitment Content

- Why join DECA?
- Member testimonials
- Chapter accomplishments
- Benefits of membership
- Upcoming recruitment events

The Content Balance

A chapter's social media should not feel like a constant stream of announcements. Balance informational posts with engaging, entertaining, and relevant content that reflects your chapter's identity and DECA's professional values.



SOCIAL MEDIA BRANDING

Social media is the biggest method many chapters use to communicate important information with their chapter members. Although many chapters have a social media account already, many are not sure how to stay consistent and cohesive with branding while still following the DECA guidelines. Branding is important because it is what makes your chapter recognizable and connected to members at your school and beyond. Consistency is important because it makes your designs stand out while also allowing members to quickly associate the information with your DECA chapter. It also helps to connect chapters across Arizona and internationally; although they are individual chapters, we are all connected by the DECA brand.

Official International DECA Guidelines and Branding:
(you can find the official information at this link: https://cdn.prod.website-files.com/635c470cc81318fc3e9c1e0e/66058190bd220218746d2d8e_DECA%20Branding%20Guidelines.pdf)

Official DECA logos that can be used on posts:

DECA Branding:
Branding keeps all chapter connected; the following are some rules that chapters should follow in order to maintain consistency:

- Incorporate official International DECA and Arizona DECA branding where appropriate, following current state and international guidelines.
- Use the international DECA colors or colors from the year's international theme (this year is the 'Next Big Thing')
- Use the official DECA fonts (or fonts that do not clash with them)

Choosing colors:

Chapters are able to personalize their own brand while continuing to tie it back to Arizona DECA. When choosing colors, it is important to keep it consistent while also using colors that will allow them to stand out and represent the brand at the same time. Each post should generally contain about 2-3 MAIN colors in order to maintain cohesion and prevent overload.

Some different color schemes chapters elect to use are:

- School colors
- DECA colors (blue, white, black, gold, and silver)
- International theme colors (colors from the 'Next Big Thing') logo
- A consistent and cohesive color scheme that represents their chapter in some way





Referring to International Standards:

While chapters are encouraged to develop their own visual identity, it is important to maintain the integrity of the DECA brand. When using official logos and branding materials, always refer to International DECA's current guidelines.

DO:

- Use official, high-quality DECA logo files.
- Maintain consistent spacing around logos.
- Keep logos proportional when resizing.
- Use approved logo variations.
- Ensure logos are clearly visible against the background.
- Incorporate DECA branding into chapter materials.

DON'T:

- Stretch, distort, rotate, or redraw DECA logos.
- Change the colors of official logos.
- Place text or graphics directly over the logo.
- Use low-resolution or pixelated logos.
- Add unnecessary effects that make the logo difficult to recognize.
- Create unofficial variations of the DECA logo.

Example:

DO:



DON'T:



Choosing Fonts:

Typography plays an important role in making social media posts recognizable, professional, and easy to read.
When designing graphics:

- Limit designs to 1–2 primary fonts whenever possible. A third font may be used sparingly for decorative or accent text, as long as it does not compromise readability or consistency.
- Generally, it is best to use one font for headings and another for supporting information.
- Keep decorative fonts limited to short headings or accent text.
- Avoid using multiple fonts that compete for attention.
- Prioritize readability over appearance.
- Maintain consistent font choices across posts.

Remember: Your design should be visually appealing, but the information should always be easy to understand.

Captions:

A strong caption provides context, communicates important information, and encourages your audience to engage.

A simple caption formula:

1. Hook:
Capture your audience's attention.

2. Information:
Explain what the post is about.

3. Call to Action:
Tell your audience what to do next.

Example:

Ready to take your DECA experience to the next level?

Join us for our upcoming chapter meeting to learn more about competitive events, leadership opportunities, and everything DECA has to offer!

📅 September 12

📍 Room 204

⏰ 3:00 PM

Bring a friend and discover your Next Big Thing!



Caption Tips:

- Keep important information easy to find.
- Use emojis strategically rather than excessively or to draw attention to information in the caption.
- Avoid unnecessary capitalization.
- Proofread before publishing.
- Include a clear call to action when appropriate.
- Keep your tone consistent with your chapter's identity.

Aspect Ratios and Dimensions:

When making posts, keep in mind that these are the aspect ratios and pixel dimensions

Instagram Image Sizes (2026)

Widths/heights are recommended pixel dimensions. Decimal ratio is calculated (Width ÷ Height).

Category	Format	Width (px)	Height (px)	Aspect ratio	
Post	Feed post: portrait (standard)	1,080	1,350	4:5	
Post	Feed post: tall portrait	1,080	1,440	3:4	
Post	Feed post: square	1,080	1,080	1:1	
Post	Feed post: landscape	1,080	566	1.91:1	
Grid	Profile grid (tile preview)	1,080	1,440	3:4	
Reel cover	Reel cover (design canvas)	1,080	1,920	9:16	
Reel cover	Reel cover (Instagram Help figure)	420	654	1:1.55	
Story	Story	1,080	1,920	9:16	









Branding Across Officer Transitions:

A strong chapter brand should remain recognizable even as leadership changes. While each new officer team should have the opportunity to bring fresh ideas and creativity to its chapter, maintaining consistent branding helps establish a sense of continuity and recognition within your school and community.
When transitioning between officer teams, consider maintaining established color palettes, fonts, graphic styles, and templates while still allowing room for new designs and creative approaches. Rather than completely redesigning your chapter's social media presence each year, build upon the foundation established by previous officers.

Tips for Maintaining Branding Across Officer Transitions:

- Create a shared Canva folder containing previous graphics, templates, logos, and branding materials.
- Document your chapter's established colors, fonts, and design elements.
- Provide incoming officers with access to previous branding materials.
- Maintain recognizable visual elements while introducing new ideas.
- Communicate branding expectations during officer transitions.

Final tips & things to keep in mind:

Target Audience:	○ Your target audience is the people, group, or organization that you wish to attract or grab the attention of when you are making a post on social media. While making post and deciding which fonts, colors, and design elements to use, keep in mind who your target audience is. For example, a post targeted at younger students may include brighter colors and more fun elements while a post targeted at a group of business professionals will include simpler design elements, more neutral colors, and professional word choice.
Tone of voice:	○ Consider how the wording of your post or caption sound. Depending on who you are attempting to attract, your wording may differ.
Matching font and background color:	○ While it is good to maintain a consistent color scheme, it is also important that text does not blend in with the background color, and important information is able to be seen clearly.
Ensure posting is completed on time:	○ In order for maximum engagement, ensure that all informational posts are posted with sufficient time prior to the event or deadline. ○ Additionally, some chapters decide to use a variety of tools to track deadlines such as a Content Calendar, excel spreadsheet, or another assignment tracking app or website (ie Trello or Notion).

The Ultimate PR Checklist

Before publishing your next social media post, ask yourself:

Content

- [ ] Is the information accurate?
- [ ] Is the purpose of the post clear?
- [ ] Does the post communicate something valuable?
- [ ] Is the caption professional and engaging?
- [ ] Is there a clear call to action when appropriate?

Branding

- [ ] Does the graphic align with DECA branding guidelines?
- [ ] Are the logos used correctly?
- [ ] Are the colors and fonts consistent?
- [ ] Is the design visually cohesive?
- [ ] Is the text readable?

Professionalism

- [ ] Have I checked spelling and grammar?
- [ ] Is the content appropriate for a public audience?
- [ ] Have I obtained necessary approvals?
- [ ] Have I considered my target audience?

If you can confidently check every box, you're ready to publish!

BRANDING IN REVIEW:

Branding Element:	Standard:
Primary colors	2-3 consistent colors
Fonts	1-2 primary fonts
Logos	Official, high-resolution files
Graphic design	Consistent across platforms
Templates	Shared and accessible to officers
Social media	Cohesive visual identity