



STUKENT SOCIAL MEDIA MARKETING CHALLENGE

Stukent Social Media Marketing Challenge
Sponsored by Stukent CTE



The **Stukent Social Media Marketing Challenge** gives students the chance to compete in the Stukent Social Media Simternship — a tool trusted by top institutions around the globe. Participants will apply their skills by managing a weekly budget in simulated ad dollars for a simulated e-commerce retailer. Their strategies will include marketing across Facebook, Instagram, X (formerly Twitter), TikTok, YouTube, and Pinterest.

CHALLENGE OVERVIEW

- Advisors must register their students using the [Advisor Registration Form](#).
- The Stukent Social Media Marketing Challenge will begin Wednesday, October 14, 2026 and end Monday, December 1, 2025. Participants may register anytime during these dates but must finish their simulation rounds no later than **December 1, 2026 at 12:00 AM Mountain Time**.
- Since every student has the opportunity to participate in the challenge with free access to the Social Media Simternship, all challenge participants are required to submit their own simulations. Students are not permitted to compete in group settings or use more than one account.
- Participants will compete in one (1) organic posting round, one (1) paid posting round, and two (2) combined organic and paid rounds within the simulation, after which the top participants will be vetted and their posts reviewed by a panel of judges.
- Only one winner per school will be eligible for the prize. Top Finalists from the top three schools will be determined based on the authenticity, ROI, and overall quality of their posts.
- Teachers who want to review student performance can ask students to take a screenshot of their results page.
- For any questions or concerns regarding the challenge, please contact Abe Larsen at abe.larsen@stukent.com.

PARTICIPANTS WILL:

- Experiment with promotional strategies to create compelling ads across major social platforms
- Gain experience writing copy that drives engagement and conversions
- Analyze which types of content perform best across demographics
- Understand earned, owned, and paid social media promotion
- Evaluate media formats and campaign strategies to maximize reach
- Monitor and improve marketing efforts using key performance indicators
- Manage a weekly ad budget and place competitive bids to drive engagement
- Schedule content to post at optimal times for visibility

KNOWLEDGE AND SKILLS DEVELOPED

Participants will demonstrate knowledge and skills needed to address the components of the project as described in the content outline and evaluation forms.

Participants will also develop Career Competencies, in the following categories, desired by today's employers:

- **Critical Thinking** - Thinks critically to understand and solve problems.
- **Communication** - Communicates clearly, effectively, and with reason.
- **Decision Making** - Considers the impacts of decisions.
- **Collaboration** - Participates and advocates in groups of all sizes to achieve common goals.
- **Innovation** - Demonstrates a creative and innovative mindset.
- **Technology** - Ethically leverages technologies to enhance efficiencies, complete tasks, and accomplish goals.

CHALLENGE GUIDELINES

- Each participant must be a registered DECA member of a high school chapter at the time of registration.
- Participants cannot register themselves; if a student wishes to participate, his or her DECA advisor must register on behalf of the student.
 - Both advisors and participants must register.
 - After DECA advisors complete their registration, they will be directed to a web page with instructions on how participants can register.
 - Participants must register with their school email address.
 - After participants complete their registration, they will be directed to a web page with instructions on how to join the challenge.
- Participants must complete all rounds of the simulation to remain eligible.
- Any form of cheating (or suspicion thereof) will not be tolerated. Forms of cheating include, but are not limited to:
 - Using more than one account
 - Submitting plagiarized work
 - Collaborating with others (including group work under one account)
 - Posting identical or near-identical content repeatedly
- Participants may not redo rounds. Rounds may only be reset if the student can demonstrate that a technical issue occurred during the round.

PRESENTATION JUDGING

Judges will select the top three overall teams. From the final three teams, the overall winning team will be selected.

AWARDS

In partnership with Stukent CTE the following awards will be provided:

- 1st Place Team - \$1,500
- 2nd Place Team - \$1,000
- 3rd Place Team - \$500

The top three teams will be recognized on stage during DECA's International Career Development Conference in Anaheim, California. Eligibility to attend DECA ICDC is determined by the chartered association advisor based on their policies. Finalists should consult with their chartered association advisor for eligibility guidelines and gain approval from their school advisor to attend the conference.

TIMELINE

Challenge begins	October 14, 2026
Challenge Ends	December 1, 2026 at 12:00 AM MT
Top 3 teams announced	January 13, 2027
Top 3 teams recognized at ICDC (Anaheim, CA)	April 17-20, 2027



1 PARTICIPANT



SIMULATION