

EARNING TO LIVE



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“Changing the World One Member at a Time”
Delaware FFA Retention and Membership
Committee

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DELAWARE FFA ASSOCIATION
AGRICULTURAL COMMUNICATIONS

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LIVING TO SERVE

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INTRODUCTION AND OVERVIEW

Chartered in 1930, the Delaware FFA Association has seen FFA membership rise and fall. The three-county state is proud of its 43 FFA chapters, 19 of which are affiliated, in addition to their 3,585 FFA members, per the annual membership report. After reviewing the latest membership statistics, the Delaware FFA Association saw the need to develop the Delaware FFA Recruitment and Retention Committee; a subcommittee made up of four local FFA members, in response to falling membership numbers. Recently, the recruitment and retention committee was tasked with choosing a local FFA member whose story would inspire others to join the FFA. Once the member is chosen, the committee will use that FFA members story and promote them to various media outlets. The chosen FFA Members story should promote the benefits of FFA membership and agriculture.

Problem Statement-

The greatest problem the Delaware FFA Association is facing is a decline in FFA membership. The need for the Recruitment and Retention Committee was in response to reviewing state FFA membership numbers. Between the 2013 school year and the 2016 school year, membership has fallen by 642 FFA members. When digging deeper into the statistics, you find that membership has fallen within the middle school FFA membership, between the 2015-2016 school year and the 2016-2017 school year. In addition to these statistics, female FFA members have a higher membership overall in the state of Delaware. When you look specifically at grades nine through twelve, female membership begins to fall. The goal of this media plan is to help the Delaware FFA Association increase membership through advocating agriculture and through telling Abby's FFA success story.

Overview-

This media plan contains a proposed plan of action for the Delaware FFA Association. The media plan focuses on promoting a Delaware FFA Member to various media outlets; promoting the benefits of FFA Membership. After careful consideration, the Delaware FFA Recruitment and Retention committee selected Lake Forest FFA member, Abby Edwards. Abby is currently a junior in high school and was an active middle school FFA member. Abby does not live on a farm or come from a farm family. Her SAE (Supervised Agriculture Experience) project is racing and working on her go-karts. Abby, like many of our students, came into middle school shy and taciturn. Like many of our students in Delaware, Abby did not have a connection to agriculture prior to joining the FFA, but has still been able to find her place in this organization.

The Delaware FFA Recruitment and Retention committee has developed a number of marketing tactics to reach the over 93,530 public school students in grades four through 12 and the estimated 952,065 citizens living in Delaware. The tactics include banners, bookmarks, sticker's promotional videos, newspaper ads, social media, cardboard cutouts, and radio and newspaper interviews. Our effective media plan will span from August 2017 to June 2018. During this time banners, stickers, and bookmarks will be distributed. Promotional videos and posts will be shared on social media such as Instagram and Facebook. In addition, we will share Abby's story and advocate agriculture. By using a variety of tactics, the Delaware FFA Association will be able to increase membership overall, in our middle schools, in addition to our female membership in high school. "Changing the world one member at a time" (Abby Edwards).

TARGET AUDIENCES

Primary Audience- Students

Our primary audience is the 93,530 public school students in Delaware; specifically students in the grades of four through 12. The Delaware FFA Recruitment and Retention committee is targeting these students because these students will have the opportunity to join the FFA currently or in the near future, or in their current grade of schooling.

Delaware Public School Student Demographics:

-White: 45% -African American: 30.4% -Hispanic/Latino: 16.8% -Other: 7.8%

Secondary Audience- Community Members

The community members and citizens within the state of Delaware are our secondary audience. While many know the benefits of FFA, not all do. It is important for the group to know the FFA so they can encourage their student to join and financially support local FFA chapters.

Delaware Citizens and Community Members Demographics:

-White: 68% -African American: 21% -Hispanic/Latino: 8% - Other: 3%

Tertiary Audience- Government Officials

The Government Officials of Delaware are our tertiary audience. These individuals are in charge of the 509 and Perkins Law. These two pieces of legislation provide much of the funding to run CTE (Career and Technical Education) programs. Without Government Officials, agriculture programs may not have the funding to continue operating.

Delaware Government Officials Demographics:

-White: 86% -African American: 5% - Hispanic/Latino: 9%

STRATEGIC PLAN

Goal: Promote the benefits of FFA membership and agriculture advocacy to increase middle school and female high school FFA membership.

Key Messages #1: It's not about who you are or where you come from, FFA is for everyone.

Due to the previous name of the National FFA Organization being, Future Farmers of America, many believe that FFA is only for farmers or those who have an agricultural background. In reality, FFA is for anyone who has the desire to become a premier leader and experience personal growth.

Key Messages #2: Support local FFA chapters and encourage membership among youth.

Parents and guardians are a huge help to chapters in encouraging their student to join and be involved in the FFA. Many small businesses help support FFA chapters by financially supporting their travel, banquets, jackets, and daily operation costs. Reaching out to more of the community will increase the support for FFA, which in turn will allow more overall opportunities and members.

Key Messages #3: Agricultural Education is worth your investment.

Without the government's financial investment, most schools would not be able to have an agriculture education program and in turn an FFA chapter in their school. Agriculture education and the FFA educates and helps build the next leaders and agriculturalists of tomorrow.

Objective #1: Increase overall membership in the state by 10% by August 31, 2018.

There are currently 3,585 members in the FFA statewide. With the goal set at a 10% growth accumulation, the number of members in the state should increase by 359. We will consecutively advocate membership through our many media strategies to reach this goal.

Objective #2: Increase female membership in the state by 10% by August 31, 2018.

Looking at statistics, males dominate the membership in grades nine through twelve. By increasing female membership by 10%, the number should rise by 183 members. Once again, when you do the math, having 43 FFA chapters in the state of Delaware would require each chapter to gain five female members out of the nine total new members.

Objective #3: Increase state middle school membership by 25% by August 31, 2018.

The Delaware FFA currently has 414 middle school members and 13 middle school programs. A 25% increase in membership would be an additional 104 members, which is eight new middle school FFA members per chapter.

Strategic Plan- Media Justification:

A variety of media tactics will be used by the Retention and Membership Committee to communicate the benefits of FFA membership and agriculture advocacy to students, community members, and government officials.

1.) Promotional Materials

Banner (Appendix A)

Banners are a great way to catch student's attentions as they walk into school or an event, sparking their interest in the FFA. The Retention and Membership committee will purchase six banners. These banners will be distributed to two schools within each of our three counties in Delaware, one middle school and one high school. The chosen schools will be the schools with the lowest FFA membership.

Stickers (Appendix B)

Middle school students are at a transformational age. The age where they think they are adults yet still enjoy childish things such as stickers. Our committee will purchase 4,800 stickers featuring the FFA motto and the Delaware FFA website. These stickers will be distributed to each middle school in the state in the month of August. Middle schools will then have these stickers to use at open houses and other promotional events.

Bookmarks (Appendix C)

Public libraries are a staple in every county in Delaware. The primary audience of public libraries are small children, their parents, and older citizens. We will purchase 5,000 bookmarks to be distributed to one public library in each county, giving each library 1,666 bookmarks. These bookmarks will be placed in the children's section as well as the checkout counter for all to take. These bookmarks share the benefits of FFA membership and provide directions on how to become a member.

Posters (Appendix D)

National FFA week is a great week to share a fellow FFA member's story. The Retention and Membership committee we will email the PDF of the poster to all FFA advisors in the state of Delaware by February 5, 2018. Each poster will include a picture of Abby, the benefits of being a FFA member, and her famous quote of her own "Changing the world one member at a time." These posters will promote the value of FFA membership for all to see.

Radio Ad

Abby will meet with the radio station 97.7 during FFA week, February 18 to the 25th. During this interview, Abby will share her story and the benefits of FFA membership. This will be a great way to share the FFA with community members and even government officials.

Cardboard Cutouts

Face Hole Cut Out stand up FFA member displays will be a great way for all to have their picture taken with, to see how they would look as an FFA member in official dress. The committee will purchase six cardboard cutouts, three male face hole cut outs, and three female face hold cutouts. Delaware FFA chapters will have the ability to borrow and use these at special events. This technique will help encourage younger students to wear the blue jacket.

Delaware State News Article and Ad

While social media and technology are best form of communication, newspapers are still read. The committee will purchase an ad in the Delaware State Newspaper to promote FFA membership. The ad will feature pictures of Abby and other FFA members working on their nontraditional agriculture Supervised Agriculture Experience (SAE) projects. In addition to the ad, Abby will also be interviewed and a news article will be written sharing her story, her success in the FFA, and the benefits of being an FFA member. This media tactic will reach community members throughout the entire state as well as government officials.

2.) Social Media

Short Promotional Videos

When scrolling through Facebook and Instagram the videos and pictures are always what makes you stop to see. The Retention and Membership committee will create a short 30-minute video featuring Abby and her FFA success story.

Facebook and Instagram Posts (Appendix E)

Abby's story will be published on both Facebook and Instagram in addition to a picture of her. This will be another way to share with individuals that FFA members are not just farmers.

TIMELINE

August 2017-November 2017

- Create video including Abby Edwards.- August
- Produce and design banners- August
- Distribute banners to two schools in each county with lowest FFA membership.- August
- Produce and design stickers.- August
- Produce and design bookmarks.- September
- Distribute stickers to Middle Schools.- September
- Promotional video of Abby is shared on Facebook and Instagram. – September
- Produce face hole cardboard cutout FFA members.- September
- Distribute bookmarks to libraries.- October

December 2017-February 2018

- Abby interviews with Delaware State Newspaper and ad is released.- December
- Produce promotional FFA membership poster.- January
- Email the PDF of posters to all FFA advisors during National FFA week.- February

March 2018-April 2018

- Abby interviews with radio station 97.7.- March
- Facebook and Instagram posts sharing Abby's story are posted.- March

May 2018 to August 2018

- Review FFA chapters membership numbers for the 2017- 2018 school year.- June

EVALUATION

The Delaware FFA Retention and Membership Committee is designed to promote FFA membership across the state of Delaware, as well as across the country. In August of 2018 a comparison between the membership of last August and the current membership across Delaware, will be completed. This will determine if the stated objectives were met.

Objective 1: To increase overall membership statewide by 10%. We hope to create eye catching and convincing media outlets that will encourage students to think more about joining the FFA. We strategically placed banners, stickers, bookmarks, posters, cardboard cutouts at schools spanning across the entire state. The schools focused on, are those with the lowest membership to not only build up state the state membership but also the chapters. Specifically focusing on middle schools and high school and aged female students.

Objective 2: To increase female membership by 10% state wide. We plan to use promotional videos, cardboard cutouts, Instagram posts, Facebook, and the newspaper article to promote female membership. By sharing Abby's story, the hope is that other females and nontraditional agriculture students will feel inspired to join the FFA.

Objective 3: To increase state middle school membership by 25%. We will use stickers, stand up cardboard cutouts, bookmarks, a promotional video, Instagram posts, banners, and posters. Increasing middle school membership would help because it will increase the future number of members in the high school as well as the overall state membership.

BUDGET

Promotional Budget for *Delaware FFA Retention and Membership Committee*

Media Tactic	Cost	Quantity	Total Cost
Banner	\$42.00	6	\$252.00
Bookmarks	\$0.36	5,000	\$1,800.00
Cardboard Cut-out	\$95.00	6	\$570.00
Posters	\$0.00	1	\$0.00
Radio Announcement	\$600.00	1	\$500.00
Newspaper	\$200.00	1	\$200.00
Stickers	\$0.13	4,800	\$600.00
Promotional Video	\$0.00	1	\$0.00
Facebook Posts	\$0.00	3	\$0.00
Instagram	\$0.00	3	\$0.00

Total Media Plan Cost- \$ 3,922.00

CONCLUSION

Students that are not part of their FFA chapter in school believe that one must live on a farm and have an agricultural background to be a member. However, if one is an FFA member, they know that is not true. FFA is not about who you are or where you come from.

After much thought and effort, the Delaware FFA Retention and Membership Committee has created a media plan that will alter the way people perceive and view the FFA. This media plan demonstrates the most adequate way to promote and encourage membership of the FFA organization and success advocating for agriculture. Gaining full support, and buy in, from students, community members, and government officials.

The purpose of the Delaware FFA Retention and Membership Committee is to advocate for agriculture and the FFA by creating awareness and general knowledge of agriculture in this organization. In addition to retaining and gaining additional membership in the FFA.

After reviewing the membership challenge within the Delaware FFA Association, we are confident that our media plan proposal will increase middle school membership and female high school membership through our strategies and Abby's story. It is for that reason that we ask the Delaware FFA Association to consider our plan with great thought. We are eager and excited to "change the world one member at a time" through the Delaware FFA.

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APPENDIX A: Banner



APPENDIX B: Stickers



APPENDIX C: Bookmarks



Front of Bookmark



Back of Bookmark

APPENDIX D: Posters



APPENDIX E: Facebook Post

**Delaware FFA Association**

9/1/17

Abby Edwards is the Junior Advisor of the Lake Forest FFA chapter in Felton, DE. Abby joined FFA in 6th grade at W.T. Chipman Middle School. She grew up involved in 4-H and without a strong agricultural background, so she appreciated being in an organization revolved around leadership and agriculture. She was a very active middle school member, competing in many career development events including poultry, agronomy, landscaping, creed speaking, and prepared public speaking. She became the Secretary her 7th grade year and stayed in that position again her 8th grade year. She continued to be an active member in her high school years and became an officer yet again her 10th grade year as the Reporter. She started her many SAE projects including go-kart racing, working at an English garden, and agricultural education. FFA turned Abby from the she kid at the back of the room into a well-rounded, confident individual.

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