

# How to Market Career and Technical Education:

## *Student Ambassadors*

MIAMI VALLEY CAREER  
TECHNOLOGY CENTER  
USES A VERY INFLUENTIAL  
GROUP OF PEOPLE IN ITS  
MARKETING EFFORTS.

**By** Rosalie Bernard

*y*ou can't see it . . . you can't touch it . . . you can't smell, taste or hear it. It doesn't have a 100,000-mile guarantee or offer a new color, shape or fabric this year. Career and technical education can be tough to market.

But ask any teenager about the influential people in his or her decisions, and their "peers" will usually be mentioned. That's why Miami Valley Career Technology Center (MVCTC) uses its Student Ambassador Team to help market career and technical education to other students.

The MVCTC Ambassador Team is made up of 34 senior students nominated in their junior year by their career-tech and academic instructors. The students represent a cross section of career/technical programs and home schools. They are interviewed by MVCTC's enrollment coordinator, Pam Oldham, who looks for students who have outgoing personalities and who express excitement about their MVCTC programs.

The ambassadors are given leadership training and serve as

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Jasmine Black, R.J. Benham and Kristina Manuel are ready to make sophomore visits.

“We have a lot of responsibility in learning about all 50 programs at MVCTC,” states student ambassador Mandalyn Fuller. “Of course, Mrs. Oldham is there with us, but we have to have some idea of what careers can be pursued upon completion of each program.”

### Credibility and Camaraderie

Superintendent John Boggess considers the student ambassadors one of the best recruitment and marketing tools that MVCTC has and notes, “MVCTC visitors always enjoy meeting and talking with our student ambassadors. The excitement they have about MVCTC is very evident when they talk about their career technical programs, the friends they have made, and their plans for the future.”

Oldham agrees, adding, “When they speak at our home high schools, they address all of the issues that concern sophomores about attending MVCTC.”

As further explanation, Oldham relates the following story: “We were on a visit, when one of the home school students asked about what happens when you have a substitute teacher in a lab. He was concerned because, when they have a sub at their high school, the students aren’t permitted to touch any equipment. The ambassa-

dors told him that the lab goes on because of the trust, safety education and responsibility our students are given.

“I could have given the same answer, but hearing it from another student gave the answer credibility. Many of our students at MVCTC talk about the Student Ambassadors who visited their school when they were sophomores, because they made such a great impression on them.” **T**

hosts/hostesses/guides at MVCTC’s open houses, career exploration days and all advisory dinners. They greet the buses of new students on the first day of school, offering help and directions.

### Responsibility and Recruitment

In the fall of each year, the student ambassadors put on their MVCTC ambassador shirts and head out to MVCTC’s 27 associate high schools throughout the Miami Valley to market career-tech education to sophomore students. Their mode of transportation is a PT Cruiser, restored and painted in school colors by the MVCTC auto collision and automotive tech prep students.

Usually two or three ambassadors attend the recruitment visits to member schools with the enrollment coordinator. After a more formal presentation about career and technical education and its opportunities, the ambassadors talk about the decision they made to attend MVCTC and open a question-and-answer session with the students they are visiting. Questions range from college credits to cafeteria menus.



Ed Hammond helps students on the first day of school.