



## seed ambassador program presenter's guide

What's Inside:

- Career Program Background
- About the Components
- Planning Your Presentation
- Resources for Students

...and more!

# grow

## Welcome to the Seed Ambassadors Program

Dear Seed Ambassador,

Thank you for your willingness to promote your industry to the workers of tomorrow!

You know better than anyone that the seed industry offers opportunity, stability, and career growth. Combining the needs of an expanding global community with the uncertain future of many industries, a seed career is an ideal solution for many who are just entering the job market. What's more, with your industry expanding rapidly, recruiting future workers is critical.

Whether a young person's goal is to be part of a high-tech, innovative industry ... earn a handsome living ... and/or make a difference in the world, your industry offers an excellent solution. And as a seed industry "success story" – you are in the ideal position to spread the word about seed careers!

We appreciate your commitment to the future of our industry.

Good luck!

[First the Seed representative/signature]

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## Key Messages: The Seed/Agriculture Industry...

**... represents the foundation of human and animal life.**

Seeds provide the foods we eat, the fibers we wear, the fuel we consume, and most of the products we use in our daily lives.



**... is full of job opportunities.**

The agricultural industry generates nearly 22 million jobs in the United States – the majority of which are located off the farm. A 2004 USDA study estimated that there would be 52,000 job openings for new graduates through 2010, but only 49,300 qualified graduates available each year for these positions.



**... is high-tech.**

It is a science-based "business of the future" with inspiring challenges. During the past 30 years, the use of new technologies has led to a 50% increase in productivity of the major agricultural products. As the delivery mechanism for new plant technologies and varieties of plants, seed is the crux of agriculture. Quality seed is key to growing quality crops.



**... has a history of innovation and change.**

The industry is a key player in addressing the challenges of the world's increasing needs. Between 2015 and 2030, the world population is expected to grow by over 1.86 billion people – all of whom will need food, fiber, and fuel.



# Seed Industry Dollars and \$ense

As you work with young people, you'll likely find that they are all about *jobs*. They are continually asking themselves: *What will I do? Where will I locate? How much can I earn? And will my job make a difference?* As an industry, seeds can provide a short- and long-term pathway to career success, thus offering positive and flexible answers to virtually all of these questions!

Throughout this guide and presentation, you'll find lots of information that will equip you to answer these questions. To begin, the following "facts and figures" can help you position the relevance and impact of the seed industry in today's global economy.

- The U.S. Seed Industry represents about 21% of the global seed market. In 2007, it generated **\$11.2 billion in sales**.
- In 2007 alone, the industry spent nearly **\$3 billion on research and development** on such topics as drought-resistant crops, biodegradable products, and vaccines delivered via fruits.
- Currently, the agricultural industry provides **52,000 annual job openings** for new graduates!
- The **salary range** for an entry-level job for a college graduate with a Bachelor of Science degree is mid-\$30,000s to low \$40,000s. Experienced professionals could expect to receive a starting salary in the mid-\$60,000s.

## A Wide Range of Jobs

While the seed industry does offer agricultural jobs, that's only the beginning of the wide range of specialties needed in the industry. Encourage students to consider the range of options:

### Type of Organization

- Small businesses
- Major corporations
- Government agencies

### Specialty Areas

- Management/Business
- Science and Research
- Engineering
- Agriculture and Forestry Production
- Education
- Marketing and Communications
- Governmental Services

### Geographic Region

Career opportunities in the seed industry can be found across the country and throughout the world: urban, rural, and everywhere in-between.



✓ **\$11.2 billion in sales**

✓ **\$3 billion on research**

✓ **52,000 annual job openings**

✓ **starting salary as high as mid-\$60,000s**



# Background for *You* as a Gatekeeper



## Working with the *Guidance/Career Counselor*

Your most direct avenue into schools will be through the Guidance/Career Counselor. As students are considering what comes after high school, the counselor serves as the catalyst for embarking on new exploratory paths.

- One of the counselor's key roles is to support, guide, and introduce students to the new technologies and expanding opportunities of tomorrow's workplace.
- Ultimately, they strive to help all students in the areas of academic achievement, personal and social development, and career planning – preparing students to become tomorrow's workers, leaders, and global citizens.

## An Integrated Approach

Counselors typically adopt a “whole school” approach, collaborating with teachers, administrators, parents, and the community. For example: With *classroom teachers*, they implement classroom guidance lessons on post-secondary planning, study skills, and career development; and from the *community standpoint*, integration includes job shadowing, work-based learning, part-time jobs, referrals, and career education. That's where *you* come in!

- Students are evaluating their strengths, skills, and abilities – and how they might fit into the world at large. So, counselors are actively seeking ways to expand students' horizons and introduce them to *opportunities*, especially ones that may not be as familiar to them (like the seed industry).
- Guidance counselors are open – and, in fact, eager – to welcoming *outside experts* into the school for classroom presentations, career nights, and even assemblies, pending time constraints. They know that these experts – like you, as a representative of your industry – can speak from personal experience and inspire young people to think in entirely new directions.

## School Year Timing Tips:

There are many times during the school year that are suitable for a career presentation.

- **Fall:** Juniors may be embarking on their college searches; seniors are considering the schools to which they'll apply.
- **Winter:** The mid-year doldrums may be setting in. It's a great time to engage kids with a chat about the future!
- **Spring** brings with it a fresh look at “what comes next” – juniors are becoming more entrenched in college visits (which will likely continue through the summer).
- **Summertime** is a great time to visit local youth groups, summer programs, and even local summer camp settings.

### TIP

Be prepared to work around the school calendar. Teachers/administrators will be hesitant to set up appointments when state testing periods are approaching. Testing dates vary by state; you can find out more online by searching [Your State] High School Testing.

## School Counseling: A Note about “Standards”

Chances are that you've heard about the national education trend related to “standards.” For each academic area, there are guidelines, or “standards,” that must be met in the classroom.

Similarly, the American School Counselors Association (ASCA) adheres to National Standards in the areas of academic, career, and personal/social development.

- Called The ASCA National Model: A Framework for School Counseling Programs, these serve as a guide for today's school counselor, who is uniquely trained to implement this program.

In this way, guidance counselors develop and implement a comprehensive school-counseling program – a key element of which is *career counseling*.

*If you are interested in learning more about the role of the high school guidance counselor, visit:*

**[www.schoolcounselor.org](http://www.schoolcounselor.org)**.



Today's students face the pressures of academic/standardized testing, college admissions, financial uncertainty, and entrance into the job market. Their counselors welcome and appreciate any opportunity to engage them in a positive way.

## Working with *College Career Offices*

Some of your liveliest "prospects" for future seed careers may, in fact, be college students. These current students could be studying anything from science to business administration to marketing – and may be particularly receptive to learning about a career field that is ripe with opportunity.

- Contact the **Career Development Office** at your local college/university. Virtually every college, trade school, and university has one; you can find it on the institution's website.
  - At larger schools, there may be a counselor who specializes in certain career fields.
  - The career office may put you in touch with engaged **faculty advisors** in target departments.
- Offer to make your **Seed Ambassador** presentation. This could entail meeting with a small group of students at the career office; presenting at an on-campus career fair; or visiting a particular class/lab, such as for a biology or marketing course.
- Serve as a **local mentor/advisor**. Career counselors love having local experts available to answer student questions and guide them in industry-specific exploration.
- Consider a Career Corner blog or newsletter that would provide insight to local students who are embarking on their career searches. You could also offer to be profiled as an industry expert on the college's career service web pages; career offices are continually looking for new material and opportunities to feature.



## Your Presentation Tools

### Seed Ambassador PowerPoint® Presentation

This complete presentation is customizable and includes presentation notes for each slide.

### The Seed Industry = Job Opportunity! Wall Poster

This printable leave-behind poster is a call to action for students, inspiring them to consider the seed industry.

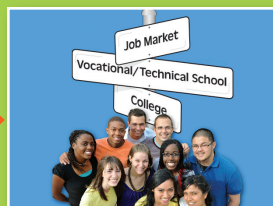
### The Seed Industry → Job Opportunity Student/Family Take-home

A handy folding flyer that highlights opportunities available in the seed industry and gives idea-starters for taking action.

### First the Seed Career Website

Everything you need to know about career opportunities in the seed industry, including a wealth of opportunities that you can share with students, can be found at **[www.firsttheseed.org](http://www.firsttheseed.org)**!

Be sure to download and print the **Career Handbook**. It's an excellent backgrounder for preparing for your presentation, and can be shared with students when you visit local schools. **[www.firsttheseedfoundation.org/docs/FTS-Handbook.pdf](http://www.firsttheseedfoundation.org/docs/FTS-Handbook.pdf)**



# Advance Planning: A Step-by-Step Guide

1

## Contact Schools and/or Community Centers

Your first task is to let potential audiences know that you are available to speak to them about careers. Counselors, teachers, and after-school program leaders are eager to help their students explore future opportunities! In some schools, principals will give initial authorization and connect you with the guidance counselor.

As you make calls to the schools, you'll want to speak to an appropriate person; this may vary by school. Your contact could be:

### At School:

- Guidance counselor/career counselor
- Science or social studies teacher
- Principal
- Administrator who handles special events
- Career club or student council advisor

### In the Community:

- Community center director
- After-school leader
- Faith-based program leader
- Local teen career service providers
- YMCA/YWCA directors

### Contact Steps:

1. Begin by **making a list** of local schools. (If you know someone working at the high school, ask for referrals/contacts.)
2. When you call, remember that school personnel are often hard to reach during the day. Consider leaving your **home/mobile number** for a call-back.
3. For **community sites**, call the main number and ask for the person who handles educational programming or career counseling for teen audiences.
4. Offer to give presentations to students in class, in the guidance office, or at career nights/career fairs. Be sure to emphasize the relevance of the topic, and the opportunities it can provide to students.

2

## Market Your Program

Because counselors and program leaders work with students on a daily basis, they are likely eager to have current, relevant information to share. So, let them know that your presentation:

- Offers opportunities for a **diverse range** of student interests, skill sets, and academic levels
- Provides resources for **self-driven career exploration** after the presentation is over
- Includes a **family worksheet and online materials** to be added to counseling office archives
- Is **flexible/customizable** – you can meet:
  - With small student groups in the career office
  - In classrooms
  - At career night or a school career assembly
  - At after-school programs

Once you've connected with your contact, chat a bit about what type of career planning and/or discussions are currently taking place. If possible, meet with the counselor or teacher prior to presentation day to check out classroom setup and confirm details.

TIP

Let your contact know that parents are welcome to attend your presentation. Parents can be instrumental in continuing to guide students in career exploration long after your presentation is over.

## Quick Tips for Working with Students

- **Dress for success.** As an industry representative, you should be approachable, yet have a professional appearance.
- **Arrive early**, to be ready before students enter the classroom/meeting area.
- **Chat with students** as they arrive, to establish early rapport.
- **Hang the poster in a prominent location**, and refer students to it after you've completed your talk.
- **Plan to stay after the presentation** to answer individual students' questions.
- **Download the Seed Ambassadors PowerPoint® Presentation** onto your laptop/CD/USB drive.
  - Be sure to print out the "Notes View" version for yourself; the notes contain talking-point reminders. You might also wish to add to/customize the notes provided in the presentation.



## 3

## Share Your Agenda in Advance

Before presentation day, share your planned agenda with your school contact. This will enable him/her to invite others in the school community who may be interested in participating – for example, the rest of the guidance team.

In addition, suggest that your contact visit the [www.firsttheseed.org](http://www.firsttheseed.org) website prior to your visit, to become familiar with the wide range of opportunities his/her students may discover in your industry. Your contact may also ask for copies of your planned handouts.

## TIP

### Preparing for Career Fairs

- In advance, request an **easel** (or space adjacent to a wall) to display the poster.
- Have extra copies of the Student/Family Take-home on hand. Point out the [www.firsttheseed.org](http://www.firsttheseed.org) web URL shown on the take-home, and encourage students to check it out.
- Print out several copies of the *Career Handbook*. Write “Display Copy” on the cover and place them on your table for review. Let attendees know that the Career Handbook is available for download at the site.

### Presentation Day Checklist Remember to bring:

- ☐ Presentation on disk or laptop
- ☐ Presentation notes
- ☐ Copies of take-home handout
- ☐ Poster
- ☐ Career Handbook printed from website
- ☐ Business cards, if you'd like to serve as an ongoing resource for the counselor

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## Prepare For Presentation Day

The **Seed Ambassadors Presentation** has been created as an easy-to-implement presentation for you. Each slide includes presentation notes to get you started and help you plan. In addition, the following tips can help guide you through the planning process.

### Confirm the time allocation.

- **In-class session:** Plan for approximately **30 to 50 minutes** (confirm with your school contact). For this event, you'll likely want to give the entire presentation. Allocate at least 10 minutes for recap Q&A.
- **Career fair:** Consider showing those slides that highlight the industry itself (e.g., slides 8, 13 and 14), and be available for one-on-one discussions at your station. A typical fair may last from **1 to 3 hours**.
- **After-school programs:** We suggest sharing the introductory slides (slides 1 through 10), with printouts of the additional resources available for students to take home. (These programs may be less likely to have internet access available to access resources on-site.) An after-school visit will likely last **30 to 60 minutes**.
- **One-on-one presentations with individual students or parent/student sessions:** Plan for **30 minutes per session** to run through the entire presentation on a desktop or laptop computer; or, *if time is limited*, skip to the section that discusses industry opportunities and resources. Anticipate 5 to 10 minutes of wrap-up discussion for each meeting.

### Request equipment in advance.

- Computer with PowerPoint® software and a DVD/USB port, and a projector. *Optionally, you could bring the presentation in on your own laptop and connect to the projector.*
- Projector screen or light-colored blank wall.

### Familiarize yourself with background materials.

- Review poster and take-home materials, and visit [www.firsttheseed.org](http://www.firsttheseed.org) to see the additional materials about seed careers. They are helpful as a backgrounder for you, and serve as a reminder of the variety of topics counselors and students can research online.
- Print/photocopy the ***The Seed Industry → Job Opportunity*** Student/Family Take-home, one for each student.
- Download/print the **First the Seed Career Handbook** to have on hand and pass around ([www.firsttheseedfoundation.org/docs/FTS-Handbook.pdf](http://www.firsttheseedfoundation.org/docs/FTS-Handbook.pdf)).
- If possible, laminate the ***The Seed Industry = Job Opportunity!*** **Wall Poster** to ensure its longevity, whether you'll reuse it or present it to the school.

## TIP

If the counselor has arranged for you to speak in a particular class, see if you can chat with the teacher in advance. In this way, he/she will be better prepared to help you engage students and keep the conversation moving. Encourage him/her to review the resource materials in order to conduct follow-up activities and discussions.





## Presentation Tips

- **Rehearse in advance.** This will help you not only gauge your timing, but will make you more comfortable with the slides.
- **Smile!** You are a proud ambassador of your industry, and want to appear as approachable and friendly as possible.
- **Make eye contact with the students.** This puts both you and them at ease, and helps them feel important *and* stay engaged.
- **Use natural, relaxed posture.** Stand with shoulders square, arms to the side (not in pockets), hands relaxed, head up, and facing the audience. Try not to play with your jewelry, fidget with your clothing, pace, or rock back and forth. Seeds are a fun and engaging topic!
- **Speak at a normal pace.** Don't race through your slides, and remember to breathe. Focus on pausing between statements, rather than using verbal fillers like "you know" and "um."
- **Be positive.** All careers have ups and downs, but be sure to emphasize the beneficial and exciting aspects of seed careers.
- **Be prepared to answer questions.** Students may ask about everything from salary to travel opportunities. Invite questions along the way to keep students engaged and learning ... and always be patient with students and respectful to the teacher/counselor.
- **Say thank you.** Let the teacher, counselor, principal, and other key parties know how much you appreciated the opportunity to visit and talk to students.
- **Consider offering extended interaction.** Your workplace could be an excellent destination for interested students to visit and/or experience a job-shadowing or internship opportunity.

# Making Your Presentation

## Customizing Your Slides

Your PowerPoint® Presentation includes an introduction, key industry facts, graphics, and more. It is ready to use ... but is customizable, too.

- Slides 3 and 21 are recommended for customization to make your presentation more personalized to you and your experiences. In addition, feel free to include your own experiences and industry anecdotes along the way. See "Making It Personal" below for idea-starters.
- We also recommend that you add to the "presentation notes" in PowerPoint® as you prepare and rehearse. This way, when you print out the Notes View prior to the presentation, your personalized talking points will be at your fingertips!



## Making It Personal: Q&A to Share Your Own Story

Use these memory-joggers to enhance the "About Me," Slide 3:

1. When you were a child, what did you want to be when you grew up?
2. Did you attend school after high school? If so:
  - a. What school(s) did you attend?
  - b. What did you study?
3. What was your first job?
4. Where do you work now?
5. Who is the craziest colleague/boss you've ever had? Include an anecdote, if possible.
6. What was your biggest career accomplishment?
7. What is the funniest thing that ever happened to you at work?
8. When did you realize you were interested in a seed career?
9. What was the first step you took in exploring this opportunity?
10. In your mind, what three words best describe the seed industry?
11. If you were going to "tweet" a summary of your career: What would you say? (in 140 characters or less!)

## TIP

### Summary of Key Online Resources

The First the Seed website ([www.firsttheseedfoundation.org](http://www.firsttheseedfoundation.org)) includes a wealth of online resources! Invite students to check out the following:

- Career Handbook with industry organizations and college-planning resources
- List of colleges that offer agricultural programs
- Industry websites that feature current job openings