



STRATEGIC PLAN 2012-2015

First the Seed Foundation (FTSF) is undertaking a new multi-year education outreach initiative. The following is an overview of the Strategic Plan for the outreach effort, including program objectives, target audiences, key messages, education approach, and program reach.

PROGRAM OBJECTIVES

The objective of the First the Seed Foundation's strategic plan is to create a multi-year, multi-layered, and sustainable education campaign that will:

- Excite and instill a passion in youth for seed science and technology by engaging them in the marvel of seeds
- Inspire youth about future career opportunities/potential within the seed industry
- Raise awareness about the value of and impact of the seed industry in the global marketplace

TARGET AUDIENCES

- Primary Audiences (in school)
 - Middle and High School Students (Grades 6-12, ages 12-18) in science classes (biology, earth science, environmental science, general science, life science, etc.)

Middle school students are an appropriate age group with which to begin. Their science curriculum is becoming more in-depth and experiential. Curious and full of energy, this age group gets excited about hands-on learning and experiments that are connected to real-world experience. They are just beginning to be inspired by topics that will soon help to carve their future plans.

High school students are an important target group through which to expand the science-based programming. They are studying more specialized science curriculum (chemistry, physics, biology), their coursework is preparing them for college, and they are beginning to determine a career path.
 - Middle and High School Science Teachers

Educators of these two distinct age ranges are continually seeking curriculum materials that will help them engage their students and make science relevant. Programming that aligns with education standards makes their jobs easier and helps them meet their classroom requirements.
 - Parents of Middle and High School Students

Parents are interested in their children's career paths and want to be assured that the path they choose has future job potential.
- Secondary Audiences (after school/summertime)
 - Relevant "out-of-school" groups, e.g., 4-H groups, science and agriculture clubs, local museum programs, etc.

KEY MESSAGES

A *Core Curriculum* for middle school science classes will incorporate the Foundation's key messages and latest seed science concepts and research, utilizing FTSF members' science/research to help students discover the revolutionary ways that seed science/agriculture is creating solutions for our future, such as:

- Water conservation
- Non-food bioenergies
- Healthier foods
- Computers and satellites
- Biodegradable petroleum replacements

EDUCATION APPROACH

A "Dynamic Growth" strategy of developing a seed science/careers campaign will become deeply rooted in schools across the U.S. This strategy places FTFSF messages exactly where true change happens . . . in schools, families, and communities and it cuts through the clutter and connects because it comes from a place of trust. It reaches thousands of educators who teach millions of young people.

Using the most current active learning approaches, students will get a comprehensive understanding of seed science, the industry, and its careers. And, they will have an opportunity to explore seed science/careers in the ways they love - via hands-on experiences, interactive activities, and peer-to-peer connections.

This strategy starts with a Core Curriculum that is nurtured over time to grow and expand into *the* state-of-the-art seed science/career resource for educators, youth, and parents.

The elements of the recommended strategy include the following key components:

1. Curriculum Development and Testing
2. Program Identity (Look and Feel)
3. Marketing and Distribution
4. Evaluation

Together, these elements provide a comprehensive education continuum for a living, sustainable seed science education outreach campaign.

PROGRAM REACH

While solid program development is key to creating a comprehensive education campaign, program distribution is the key to outreach success. Our 360-degree strategy is holistic . . . addressing not only program development, but a strong distribution system that will get the program **requested, placed, and used** by educators across the U.S.

The outreach strategy for FTFSF's education programs is through relevant gatekeepers—people who have access to and who are key influencers of the target youth audience (teachers, school counselors, youth group leaders, after school leaders, etc.). Delivering programs through respected influencers elevates the importance of the programs for students and parents and streamlines the marketing/solicitation process for the Foundation. This gatekeeper outreach methodology is both cost effective *and* efficient.

The four outreach strategies include:

1. Targeted Opt-in Solicitation

This proven delivery system includes on-line, drive-to-site marketing that reaches teachers by name, alerts them to the program availability, and makes it seamless for them to immediately download and/or order program materials.

2. Online Presence: Website

One of the key vehicles to reach gatekeepers and support FTFSF's educational efforts will be the FTFSF website. Today's teachers are actively engaged online, and Internet/social media channels are where they get much of their information. These channels allow them to incorporate current events and trends, achieve professional growth/development for classroom success, discover and implement curriculum that is relevant to their students' lives.

The educator section of the FTFSF website will be the "go-to" place for information on seed science classroom materials, resources, and careers. Having all education campaign materials online also gives FTFSF the flexibility to keep the content current and easily updated in a cost-effective way, making campaign materials available to teachers everywhere.

3. Online Presence: Social Media

A robust social media plan will be developed utilizing YouTube, Facebook, Twitter, and blogs. Through social media channels, FTSF will:

- Build program awareness and visibility
- Further distribute campaign programs and materials
- Conduct an ongoing engaged dialogue with educators, youth, and parents
- Share the industry's knowledge, news, and current research
- Drive educators and youth to www.firtsttheseedfoundation.org

4. Relationship Marketing

In addition to marketing to teachers, the Foundation will identify youth and out-of-school groups and organizations that have an interest in seed science, agriculture, and environmental issues. A relationship can be developed with those organizations to understand their needs and ultimately develop customized education materials for them. Through these partner organizations, the custom-developed materials will reach large numbers of youth who belong or attend the organizations' meetings, events, camps, etc.

The ultimate goal of First the Seed Foundation's education outreach is to reach millions of youth and their families!

