

What true value do K12 high school students offer to employers? Marketing. This theory makes logical sense because these kids understand social media channels and marketing the best out of all the generations. Gen Z are near natives of social media and grew up understanding how to tweak their algorithms towards their favors. They built their 1st friends probably through following each other on social media. Its quite extraordinary to think about what high school students can actually do for employers as it relates to work-based learning, solutions for real industry problems, and so forth. I'd bet on this. Employers are still typically "drag" social media, particularly small mom & pop shops as well as medium-sized companies. What content do I post? How do I make content? Where can I get a funnel of campaigns and ideas from? Well, these are all areas that Gen Z, high school students and young professionals are near expert at, at least much more than their employer counterparts and executives thinking about how to market their products & services effectively. Or how to build a social media following. These are actually all quite urgent issues for companies and employers because its such a new generation of marketing - which is dominated by social media, and these executives are at best Millennials that they're initially employed by, mostly probably "Boomers" as Gen Z would say. What's interesting is that Gen Zers know they're advanced at social media over "Boomers" - so their confidence when working on work-based learning projects, let's say in CTE classrooms, will drive their ability to take action and learn from a position of strength and confidence. Since students will be able to see the perspective of what they can do or "build" for the employer, it will drive their motivation and excitement to complete these projects as opposed to gnarly R&D projects we give students that likely will be years or decades behind what employers are innovating on the backend with their own "intellectual property" or proprietary solutions that they can't even share much about to students, let alone the public... Thus, "Marketing" is a great avenue since a "product" or "service" has to be marketed in order for it to be successful in producing sales. This aligns well with the key startup or foundational concepts of building a company, which is getting what they call, Product-Market Fit. A product has to appeal to a market, and you appeal to a market by doing marketing. In many ways, this is probably the key to how we as educators and work-based learning experience givers should scope projects if we want to systematically engage employers with an urgent "problem" they have in their day-to-day operations as a company. While it is important, of course, to have students focus on areas outside of marketing - we have to start somewhere as it relates to "The No Problem" we have with employers in work-based learning where they simply do not prioritize donating too much of their time, or offer too many opportunities to our kids simply because K12 high school students are not actually solving their problems, such as social media following building and engagement, and marketing their products for top of funnel sales. After marketing as a focus area of student projects and problem solving for employers, could be the area of R&D, to invent new products and services that are of specific value to the employer's positioning in the market. This obviously would requires its own set of parameters such as students knowing exactly the employer's internal strategies and goals, what they know already, downloading that to students, and so forth. And perhaps what we're assembling here is a partnership workflow between students, teachers & schools (and us, PilotCity as work-based learning platforms) where the entry partnership model is have students work on marketing-related projects, then as the partnership builds with the employer (and trust, knowledge, and success is delivered over time)

- the employer upgrades the problem solving and projects towards an R&D direction. So instead of an "or" scenario, perhaps its an "and" scenario, but in sequence (ie: marketing and eventually to R&D). I would be remissed if we didn't share examples of these "marketing" projects. For example, we're working with STEM teachers at Milpitas Unified, specifically their Computer Science and Engineering courses. And we are taking the top 10 employers in Milpitas, which happens to be substantial tech & engineering companies (ie: Cisco, KLA, Flex) and we're having students create an interactive game or experience for the employer's social media following that engages the social media followers on topics relevant to the employer. Here are the examples:

- Design an interactive experience or simple, yet innovative game for KLA that increases social media engagement by 30% among tech-savvy users, showcasing the company's cutting-edge semiconductor inspection technology through engaging challenges like virtual cleanroom simulations, defect detection puzzles, or a chip design race, to inspire creative solutions and enhance brand visibility in the competitive tech market.
- Design an interactive experience or game for Flex that boosts social media engagement by 30% among tech-savvy users, showcasing innovative solutions like a virtual factory tour, a sustainability challenge, or a supply chain puzzle, to enhance brand visibility and inspire creative marketing strategies.
- Design an interactive experience or game for Lumentum that boosts social media engagement by 30% among tech-savvy users, showcasing innovative uses of photonics technology, such as a virtual reality tour of a smart city powered by Lumentum's solutions or a puzzle game that simulates optimizing fiber optic networks, to inspire creative marketing strategies and highlight the transformative impact of their products in real-world scenarios.
- Develop an interactive experience or game for FireEye that enhances social media engagement by 30% among cybersecurity professionals, targeting both novice and experienced users, to address the challenge of increasing brand awareness and user interaction; potential solutions include a cybersecurity trivia game, a virtual escape room simulating threat scenarios, or an interactive timeline of major cyber incidents.
- Develop an interactive experience or simple, yet innovative game for Infineon that boosts social media engagement by 20% among tech-savvy users, showcasing the company's cutting-edge semiconductor solutions through engaging scenarios like a virtual chip design challenge, a sustainability-focused circuit-building game, or an augmented reality tour of smart home technologies, thereby enhancing brand visibility and inspiring creative solutions in the field of information technology.
- Develop an interactive experience or game for Cisco that boosts social media engagement by 30% among tech-savvy users, inspiring innovative solutions like a virtual networking challenge, a cybersecurity escape room, or a collaborative coding quest, to enhance brand visibility and address the growing need for dynamic digital marketing strategies.
- Develop an interactive experience or simple, yet innovative game for Western Digital that boosts social media engagement by 20% among tech-savvy users, showcasing the company's cutting-edge storage solutions through engaging scenarios like a virtual data

management challenge or a digital treasure hunt, to inspire creative marketing strategies and enhance brand visibility.

- Develop an interactive experience or game for SonicWall that increases social media engagement by 30% among cybersecurity professionals, providing solutions like a virtual cybersecurity escape room, a network defense strategy simulator, or a threat detection challenge, to inspire innovative marketing strategies and enhance brand visibility in the digital security landscape.
- Design an interactive experience or game for Adaptec that boosts social media engagement by 30% among tech-savvy users, offering solutions like a virtual tech trivia challenge, a digital scavenger hunt exploring Adaptec's innovations, or a coding puzzle game that highlights their cutting-edge products, to inspire creative marketing strategies and enhance brand visibility in the competitive technology market.
- Design an interactive experience or game for Aerohive that increases social media engagement by 30% among IT professionals and educators, showcasing innovative solutions like a virtual network simulation challenge, a Wi-Fi troubleshooting quiz, or a collaborative network design tool, to enhance brand visibility and user interaction while providing participants with practical insights into real-world networking scenarios.

Another example includes a biotechnology teacher in Napa where we would have students work on a DIY biotech challenge for social media followers of employers to engage their following on the employer's products & services by educating them through fun, DIY biotech challenges.

Here are the examples:

- Create an engaging at-home DIY biotech challenge for Medtronic's social media followers by developing a 60-second video or graphic post that educates users about innovative medical technologies, aiming to increase social media engagement by 20% over three months, with example solutions like demonstrating how a simple heart monitor works using household items, illustrating the basics of insulin pump technology through creative animations, or crafting a fun infographic on the evolution of pacemakers to inspire curiosity and understanding among diverse audiences.
- Create an engaging at-home DIY biotech challenge for Viaqua's social media followers by designing a 60-second video or graphic post that educates viewers on the benefits of sustainable aquaculture, aiming to increase social media engagement by 30% over three months, with example solutions like demonstrating how to create a simple water filtration system using household items, showcasing the lifecycle of shrimp in a fun animation, or illustrating the impact of probiotics on aquatic health, thereby inspiring innovative ideas and raising awareness about Viaqua's mission to enhance aquaculture sustainability.
- Create an engaging 60-second video or graphic post for Impossible Foods' social media that educates followers about the environmental benefits of plant-based diets, aiming to increase social media engagement by 20% over three months, with example deliverables including a fun at-home DIY experiment showing how to make a simple plant-based burger, a quick infographic comparing the carbon footprint of beef versus plant-based patties, or a creative animation illustrating the journey from farm to table for Impossible Foods products.

- Create an engaging 60-second video or graphic post for Rocket Pharmaceuticals' social media channels that educates followers about their innovative gene therapy solutions, aiming to increase social media engagement by 25% over the next quarter, by showcasing fun at-home DIY biotech challenges like extracting DNA from strawberries, building a simple model of a cell using household items, or demonstrating how genes can be edited in plants, to inspire curiosity and understanding among a diverse audience of biotechnology enthusiasts and potential stakeholders.
- Create an engaging at-home DIY biotech challenge for Bolt Threads by developing a 60-second video or graphic post that educates and excites their social media followers about sustainable materials, aiming to increase engagement by 20% over the next month, with example solutions like demonstrating how to create a simple mushroom leather wallet, showcasing the strength of spider silk through a fun experiment, or illustrating the lifecycle of biodegradable textiles.
- Create an engaging at-home DIY biotech challenge for Oxitec's social media followers by developing a 60-second video or graphic post that educates viewers on the impact of genetically engineered mosquitoes in reducing disease transmission, aiming to increase social media engagement by 30% over three months, with example deliverables such as a time-lapse of mosquito lifecycle changes, a creative infographic on how Oxitec's technology works, or a simple experiment demonstrating gene editing concepts using household items.
- Create an engaging at-home DIY biotech challenge for Upside Foods by designing a 60-second video or graphic post that educates and excites their social media followers about cultivated meat, aiming to increase engagement by 20% over the next month, with example solutions like a fun experiment showing how cells grow into meat, a creative animation explaining the environmental benefits of lab-grown meat, or a simple recipe using cultivated chicken to inspire healthier eating habits.

You can see now how these example project scopes for Milpitas Unified and Napa County Office of Education relate to the intent of focusing on marketing, where students have their strength particularly in the new generation of social media. What you can expect from PilotCity is us seeing this as a strategy for how we partner with teachers & schools to scope the projects (marketing focus), utilizing it as a method to align "talent-employer fit" utilizing the powers that Gen Z students have (social media expertise over "Boomers") and aligning that to what employers, in general want as the most urgent set of problems, which is generating top-of-funnel interest in their company & brand through marketing initiatives and efforts.