MARKETING With a MISSION

Building the Brand That Became Pennsylvania’s Premier Technical College
This book is dedicated to present and past employees of Pennsylvania College of Technology, Williamsport Area Community College, Williamsport Technical Institute, and Williamsport Area School District. These men and women have, for 100 years, represented the institution with excellence and integrity in order to build its reputation as a national leader in applied technology education.

**Marketing With a Mission**

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**In Appreciation**

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We value success … dream of success … put forth extraordinary effort to achieve success.

An organization that holds value in the marketplace for 100 years can be labeled a success. Its rich history may inspire future generations to reach even greater levels of achievement.

The success of Pennsylvania College of Technology began in the basement of Williamsport High School in 1914. It developed with the nation’s vocational education movement and advanced with the state’s community college system. It represented a unique merging of traditional college education with hands-on, applied technology.

Consistent over the years was a mission to provide a unique, postsecondary educational experience responsive to business and industry needs. The mission was accomplished as men and women expanded their knowledge, developed practical skills and discovered the integrity of work, cooperation, and service to the community.

Marketing this mission through recruitment, public relations, and media exposure built the foundation for an institutional brand recognized as Pennsylvania’s premier technical college.

Management consultant Peter F. Drucker declared, “The aim of marketing is to know and understand the customer so well the product or service fits him and sells itself.”

This book presents the history of a progressive institutional brand that increased its value in the marketplace over a century by fitting programs and services to the real needs of students, employers, and their communities.
Authentic marketing is not the art of selling what you make but **knowing what to make.**

*Philip Kotler, Ph.D.*
Co-author of the world’s most popular graduate-level marketing textbook, *Marketing Management*

From hand-painted signs inviting a curious community to “Learn to Earn” at the local high school to online videos featuring college students earning “degrees that work,” the institution’s marketing message remained true to a century-old mission.

In 1914, residents of Williamsport, Pa., began to enroll in evening classes at the local high school. The classes were technical in nature, designed to help adults – including returning World War I veterans – gain skills that could help them find good jobs.
Once known as the “lumber capital of the world,” Williamsport evolved from an agricultural and wood-harvesting base into a city of heavy industry. Skilled workers were needed in furniture factories, textile and steel mills, and electronics plants that dominated the region in the 20th century.

Local workforce needs inspired a young man, hired to teach at Williamsport High School in 1920, to take the school’s vocational education to a higher level. Dr. George H. Parkes saw an opportunity to expand high school training into a postsecondary program that would gain national prominence.

Parkes was the first pitchman for a program that grew to become Pennsylvania’s premier technical college. The 1931 publication of his *Training for Industry in Williamsport* handbook launched a public relations and marketing strategy that earned national media attention for a postsecondary education program that honored the working class.
Booklets printed in a school shop described training efforts that nurtured the local economy during The Great Depression.
Getting the Client Into the School

Continued from preceding page

...in an interview, employment managers will usually advise a likely looking young man to come to us for re-training if they like his looks and cannot give him a job. The employment committee of the local emergency relief office about 30 percent of the total applicants. Finally, the most satisfactory publicity results from the successful placements of students, the news of which circulates through the ranks of the unemployed very quickly.

Local employment managers also assist materially in retaining the men in classes, especially if they have been placed in the plant through the efforts of the school. If the trainee fails to live up to his agreement with the school, the employer is notified.

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Classes For Unemployed Men
VOCATIONAL DEPARTMENT, WILLIAMSPORT PUBLIC SCHOOLS

Register October 5
From 7:30 to 9:30 P.M.
at the Williamsport High School Building

You can improve your chances for steady employment by adding to your mechanical skill or knowledge. An employment consultation interview, those men who have used their leisure time to study themselves more salable to employers will be first to obtain new work. All materials and instruction will be furnished by the school district, free of charge.

Employment Blank

Two of the application blanks at the bottom of this sheet and bring it with you when you come to register. Have a local factory superintendent, employment manager, or a member of the Claim Board of Unemployment, fill in your application blank as a guarantee that you will attend regularly until all school district property will be returned.

Employment Service

An employment service will be operated in conjunction with local firms for unemployed men. No guarantee of employment can be made, but every effort will be made to place those who attend regularly and do well in the work. Attendance records and marks will be sent to interested employers at regular intervals.

Vocational Guidance

On registration night, you will have the opportunity to converse with a number of men who are experienced vocational advisors and who will advise you to plan your future as best you may. These men may be able to give you some valuable suggestions. All your rights have nothing to lose by dropping in to talk things over.

UNEMPLOYMENT REHABILITATION

IN

WILLIAMSPORT
PENNSYLVANIA

February 1932

EDUCATIONAL PREPARATION REQUIRED FOR 13,070
INDIVIDUAL JOBS IN WILLIAMSPORT, PA.

- College Graduation 15%
- High School Graduation or Other Specific Training 35%
- No High School or Other Specific Training Required 33%
- Some High School or Occupational Training 40%
America’s working-class tradition inspired Parkes to lead an attack on unemployment in Williamsport. He arranged a survey of every city business and found numerous vacant positions. Companies could not find qualified workers, despite the fact that many local residents were unemployed.

Parkes saw an opportunity for vocational education to put people into jobs. He went to “the unorthodox length of promising a job to every student who follows his directions – a thing no other vocational school has ever dared to do,” according to a 1940 Woman’s Day article titled “Wanted: A Revolution in Education.”

By the thousands, Williamsport’s high school students and adults took advantage of vocational training. The program’s impact on the local economy was cited as one of the most progressive efforts in the United States for turning back the effects of The Great Depression. The Saturday Evening Post, Woman’s Day, Reader’s Digest and Ladies’ Home Journal revealed “The Williamsport Plan” to the nation and recognized Parkes’ role in championing a revolution.

Display showcases early vocational education classes.
Adult evening classes reflected workforce needs.
Known for iconic cover artwork by Norman Rockwell, The Saturday Evening Post recognized Williamsport’s efforts to combat the Depression through education and training. “They Build Men Into Jobs,” an article published April 27, 1940, proclaimed, “What the Depression did to Williamsport was about what it did to most similarly placed industrial communities ... but what Williamsport did to the Depression is a story in the best, though of late unofficial, American tradition.”
Through the years, student artists – including this WTI sign-painting student – were inspired by cover art from *The Saturday Evening Post*.

Student newspaper cover, published in 1981, featured a Post-inspired sketch by student Thomas J. Tedesco.

Advertisements in the April 27, 1940, issue of *The Saturday Evening Post* reflected the ideals of American readers.
The national spotlight continued to shine on Williamsport’s vocational training program when it became one of the first in the nation adapted to meet defense industry needs. On June 14, 1940, Williamsport’s training of defense industry workers began operating 24 hours a day, seven days a week, in preparation for World War II.

“Anything we wanted, we got for war purposes,” Parkes said. “We went day and night.”

Quick response to the nation’s call, Parkes believed, would enhance vocational education’s reputation. Within a month, the school published *Vocational Training for Defense*, describing how it adapted a standard vocational curriculum to support advanced training in vital, metalworking industries. He said the goal was “to present our plans for emergency training to our co-workers in other communities in the hope that a free exchange of ideas will assist in the next step in our national program of vocational education.”

One of the era’s best known figures for promoting vocational and technical education was John T. Shuman. A Williamsport High School English teacher, he helped develop the local retraining school and authored popular textbooks in the 1930s and ’40s: *Spelling for Trade and Technical Students, English for Vocational and Technical Schools, Machine Shop Work*, and *How to Operate a Lathe*. The machine shop textbook was reprinted five times and used around the country for training manufacturing workers at the start of World War II.
Through The Great Depression and World War II, Williamsport earned hometown favor for its workforce-development efforts and a national reputation for training associated with the National Youth Administration, Civilian Conservation Corps, and the U.S. military.

One company that sent workers for around-the-clock vocational training was the Williamsport-based manufacturer of Lycoming Engines. Lycoming’s engines powered military trucks and ambulances during World War I. After it became part of Aviation Corporation (AVCO) in 1933, the company made aircraft engines, including those for World War II military planes.

On Dec. 2, 1948, Williamsport held a citywide program, including activities at the school, to focus attention on air power.

Local events celebrating aviation appealed to postwar, patriotic sentiments.
The competitive higher education marketplace of the 21st century demands better, bolder marketing and recruitment efforts. At the same time, colleges and universities face public scrutiny as costs threaten to limit access to many who need and want the benefit of postsecondary education.

In 2012, President Gilmour was named to the Governor’s Advisory Commission on Postsecondary Education. She was one of 31 postsecondary education and business leaders from around the state asked to develop long-range strategies for the future of higher education. In November, the commission released recommendations it said would “provide a robust road map for the next decade that puts the user in the driver seat and helps make education more affordable and accessible for all.”

A key point of the recommendations was providing for workforce needs. The Penn College president said she was proud to represent the college’s unique role as a leader in that effort for nearly a century.

Always determined to meet the most challenging circumstances with bold moves, in 2012, Penn College announced a new vision to become a national leader in applied technology education.

With a history of innovation and flexibility to meet emerging, real-world needs, Penn College is positioned to celebrate a 100th anniversary while aspiring to even greater levels of success.
While celebrating the 20th anniversary of the establishment of Penn College in 2009, President Gilmour announced the launch of a five-year “Countdown to the Centennial” to honor the full history of the institution. The countdown began with an exhibition in The Gallery at Penn College, which featured photographs and artifacts of the institution since its inception in 1914.

A book capturing the essence of that exhibition, titled *Were You There?*, was published in 2010. A second Centennial book, *Legacy of Leaders*, published in 2012, honored the institution’s founding directors, more recent presidents, and others who helped to establish the institution as a statewide and national model. This *Marketing With a Mission* book is third in the Centennial series; another book is slated for publication in 2014.

Learn more and share your memories of Williamsport Technical Institute, Williamsport Area Community College, and Pennsylvania College of Technology online:

www.pct.edu/centennial
Net proceeds from the sale of Marketing With a Mission will become permanently restricted funds that will be invested to create income used for annual scholarship awards from the Penn College Endowed Alumni Scholarship.

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