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H&R Block promotes personal finance in high schools

Kimberly Maul October 13, 2009

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KANSAS CITY, MO: H&R Block launched a cause-marketing campaign October 13 to educate high school students about personal finance. The tax preparation company is partnering with [Knowledge Matters](#), publisher of personal finance curriculum, and [DECA](#), a nationwide student business organization, on the program called "Dollars & Sense."

"H&R Block has always been a generous contributor to a lot of causes, but we decided it was time to really pool our energy and resources and make an impact with a cause that is really important to our clients and our associates," said Kathy Collins, VP of marketing for H&R Block, which did research into the public's comfort level with personal finance. "We started to see this unfilled need to educate high school students on financial health and financial fitness."

H&R has been working on developing the program with Barkley, an agency with a cause-branding focus, for more than a year.



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Dollars & Sense centers on personal finance curriculum that includes a game where students must get a job and pay bills. It includes three main elements: grants for teachers to purchase the curriculum; the partnership with DECA for a contest that awards scholarships to students who perform well on the game; and a specialized Web site, HRBlockDollarsandSense.com.

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Barkley is aiding H&R Block on traditional and social media outreach to promote the new program. Collins said the social media elements are not finalized, but she expects the company to use the major sites such as Facebook, Twitter, and YouTube.

"In terms of traditional, mainstream media, we are targeting wires and national media outlets, as well as focusing in on the business media," said Mike Swenson, CMO of Barkley. "And of course, the education media will be very interested in this."

H&R Block hopes this program will be long-running, Collins said, and while the program will be in 2,000 schools this year, she expects that to expand in future years.

"It really ties into what their business is all about," Swenson said. "We'll be talking about [this program] 10, 20, 30 years from now, because with personal finance, there is a new crop every year of 13-, 14-, and 15-year-olds who are starting to understand how to do it."