


accounting⁺

2024

ANNUAL REPORT



EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

Now in its fourth year, Accounting+ continues to engage students in unique, dynamic ways that increase awareness of and interest in accounting as an academic and professional pursuit. With the help of the Accounting+ network of partners, we continue to connect with students where they are – in classrooms and in the digital world – with data-driven social media, content marketing, and interactive learning experiences to provide resources and ongoing support that encourage interest in accounting amongst high school and early college students.

Founded on the idea that accounting offers exciting career opportunities for today's students, Accounting+ continues making an impact in these ways:

1. Taking a collective, profession-wide approach to addressing talent pipeline challenges
2. Using data and research to guide strategy, bespoke messaging, and programming
3. Long-term commitment, recognizing that culture change requires time and sustained effort to attract new student audiences into the accounting field

This year's report outlines our continued success in building awareness and engagement, highlights strategic partnerships, and provides a roadmap for future initiatives. We are grateful to our partners for their unwavering commitment to inspiring and supporting the next generation of accountants. This dynamic campaign reinvigorating students with the limitless opportunities in accounting is possible because of your support, engagement, and collaboration.

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INTRODUCTION

ADDRESSING THE TALENT PIPELINE CHALLENGE

Against the backdrop of a looming enrollment cliff across higher education, declining numbers of accounting graduates, and persistent educational disparities, the accounting profession continues to experience a pressing need for new talent. As greater numbers of seasoned professionals retire, the number of students pursuing accounting degrees has stagnated, even as demand for accountants and financial professionals continues to grow. Recognizing this critical gap, Accounting+ plays a vital role in shifting perceptions and demonstrating that a career in accounting is not only stable but also dynamic and rewarding.

By emphasizing real-world applications and diverse career pathways, Accounting+ is moving the conversation with students beyond outdated stereotypes. Our approach is working: In 2024, students engaging with Accounting+ expressed significant increases in awareness and interest in accounting as an academic and professional pursuit.

KEY 2024 CAMPAIGN METRICS

- ▶ 2.07B paid media impressions
- ▶ 26M website visits
- ▶ 48K new subscribers

KEY OVERALL CAMPAIGN METRICS

- ▶ 3.8B paid media impressions
- ▶ 40M web visits
- ▶ 136K all-time subscribers
- ▶ 187K students reached through classroom engagement programs
- ▶ 25K Accounting+ Resource Hub users

Together, through a data-driven, student-centered approach, we are strengthening the talent pipeline and driving greater engagement among future accounting professionals.

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As we mark the end of the third year of our Accounting+ initiative, I'm reflecting on where we started and the remarkable results we continue achieving together. What began as an ambitious vision to transform the accounting pipeline has blossomed into a movement that's changing students' understanding and perceptions about the limitless possibilities of a career in accounting and how this profession can help them attain their goals.

Julie Bell Lindsay,
CEO, Center for Audit Quality

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You can't be what you don't know. If you don't know the steps to get there, it just becomes incredibly hard to achieve that goal of becoming what you want to be, in this case, an accountant. And so, I think just from my own personal experience, having something like this in high school could have led me down a completely different path than what I did go down. I think just knowing it could have had that impact on me. I know it can have that impact on so many other people. That's why I think it's important for these programs to continue so young people can see themselves within the profession.

Michelle Castro, Deloitte

OUR APPROACH

A DATA-DRIVEN AND STUDENT-CENTERED INITIATIVE

Accounting+ remains committed to using research and data insights to refine and optimize our efforts. Our latest studies confirm that students are making career decisions earlier than ever before, reinforcing the need to reach them at the high school level or sooner.

STRATEGIC PARTNERSHIPS AND COLLABORATION

Working alongside industry leaders, educational institutions, and professional organizations, we have built a strong coalition dedicated to inspiring and educating future accountants. These collaborations help provide connections, scholarship opportunities open to all students interested in accounting, and classroom resources, making the limitless possibilities in accounting a known and attractive career path for today's students.

FOCUSING ON YOUNGER GENERATIONS

By aligning our outreach with the interests and career motivations of Gen Z and Gen Alpha, we ensure that Accounting+ remains relevant and engaging. Research shows the stability and long-term earning potential of accounting are two career priorities most attractive to students. Our own research indicates that students today decide their college and career trajectories earlier in their academic journey than previous generations. The sooner students are exposed to accounting careers, the greater influence our campaign has on their educational and professional decisions. To position accounting as an attractive option, our data-driven storytelling initiatives build awareness and excitement around the profession's opportunities and rewards.

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My students' eyes were opened to the fact that accounting is so much more than just 'number crunching.' They were surprised by all the possibilities!

Leesa Rankins Moore, Teacher

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The fact that there were so many different options... when I think of accounting, I think sitting behind a desk at a bank using a calculator. But the options that were listed were like sports and a bunch of different things. It made it way more interesting, and I saw it from a different perspective.

Student, 11th/12th

2024 OVERVIEW AND IMPACT

KEY ACHIEVEMENTS

➤ EXPANDED PARTNERSHIPS

Grew from 46 to 51 partner organizations.

➤ INCREASED DIGITAL ENGAGEMENT

Reached students more than 2 billion times via paid advertising, social media, and other digital platforms.

➤ NEW CLASSROOM RESOURCES

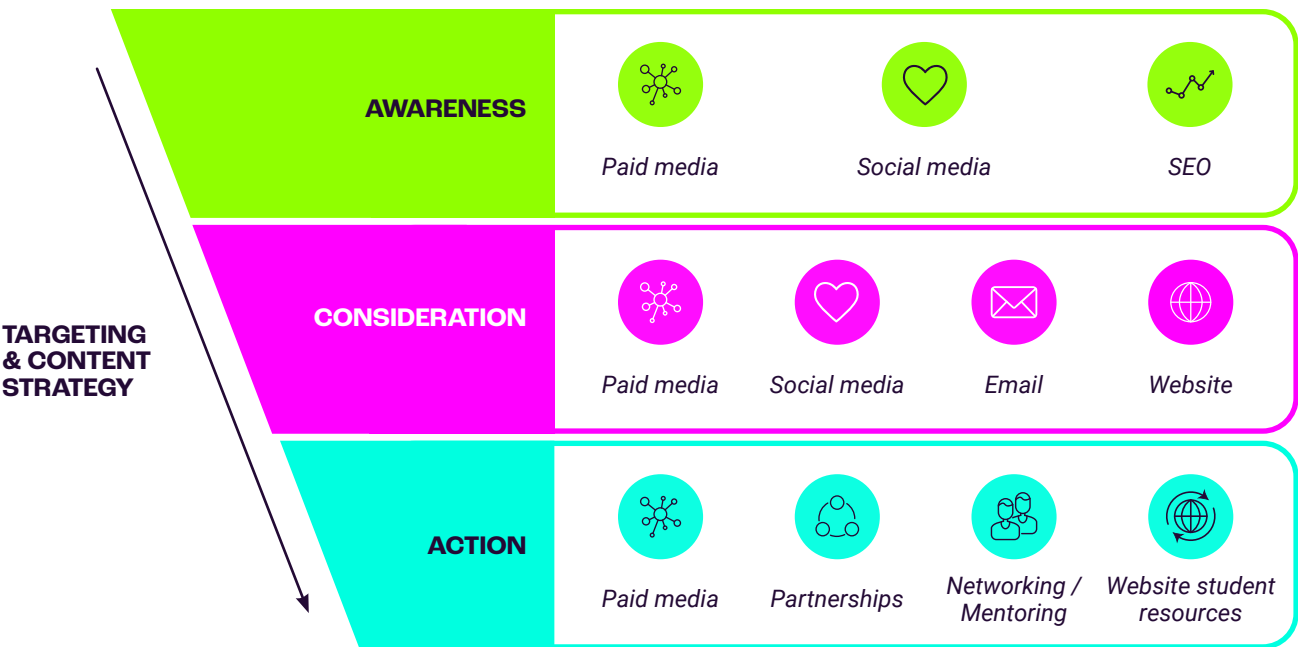
Developed and launched Event in a Box, set for full rollout in 2025.

➤ MAJOR CONFERENCES AND EVENTS

Represented Accounting+ at annual conferences run by **NABA, Inc.**, **Association of Latino Professionals for America (ALPFA)**, and **Blackbaud**, engaging with thousands of professionals and high school teachers. In combination with student engagement opportunities at EVERFI Signature Events, the Steelers Showcase series, DECA, Future Business Leaders of America, and other school visits, the Accounting+ campaign connected accounting with more than 10,000 students on the ground through over 75 partner engagement events.

MULTI-CHANNEL ENGAGEMENT

Our marketing funnel strategy—focused on **awareness**, **consideration**, and **action**—ensures that students receive continuous exposure to the possibilities in accounting. By offering tailored resources, scholarship and internship opportunities, and interactive tools, we engage students year-round, not just during the academic year. The Accounting+ website and student dashboard, social media, email outreach, paid media, and school outreach drive this continuous engagement.



NEW FEATURES AND ENHANCEMENTS

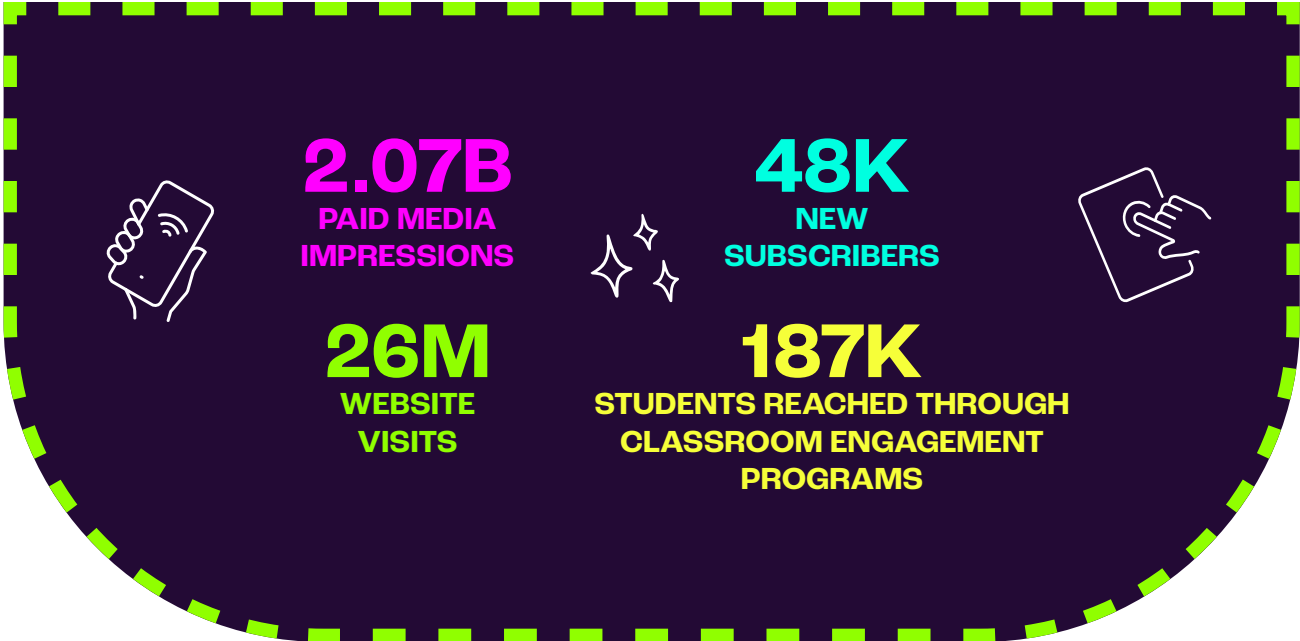
The Accounting+ website is a critical resource for students. We garnered 26 million website visits in 2024 (an 86% increase from 2023) and 8 million new users (a 100% increase from 2023). This shows that we are successful in attracting new students to the site and in providing opportunities and reasons for students to return to the site, moving down the funnel from awareness to consideration to action.

The Accounting+ website plays a critical role in audience retention and building career interest. In 2024, we launched Insider Look, a feature that allows students to get to know some of the top accounting firms in the country and fosters direct connections to employers that are driving the campaign. The personalized student dashboards promote return visits by enabling views of the newest pieces of content on the main page and the ability to “like” content users want to revisit. The website also features scholarships and internships from Accounting+ partners throughout the year. This feature drove 18,000 students to view tangible opportunities from major employers to further their pursuit of an accounting career.

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It's important for a firm like ours to explore and invest in programs like this, simply because it's part of our purpose. Our purpose is to build a better working world. And yes, we do that for our clients in the work that we do, but we also build a better working world by investing in students like this, students from all walks of life who just need an opportunity, who need exposure, who need awareness. And that's what we're about, and this is another way that we can build a better working world. And so for us, this is right in our sweet spot.

Ken Bouyer, EY



COLLABORATIONS AND STRATEGIC PARTNERSHIPS

✓ EVERFI

EVERFI®

The Accounting Careers: Limitless Opportunities course, developed in partnership with EVERFI, continues to expand its reach. For the 2023–2024 school year, the course reached more than 85,000 students across the country in 3,285 schools through partnerships with 5,300 teachers. This initiative plays a crucial role in exposing previously unreached student populations to accounting careers, with participants identifying as 37% White, 30% Black/African American, 30% Latino, 7% Asian American and Pacific Islander (AAPI), and 8% other.

The course's impact is remarkable. After completing the program, 67% of students reported an increased interest in pursuing accounting careers. Additionally, 70% recognized the value of accounting skills—an increase from 57% before taking the course. Perhaps most notably, 81% of students discovered new accounting career paths, and 89% agreed that accounting skills are essential for achieving their professional goals.

Overall, program engagement requires a multipronged approach. Accounting for Your Future signature school events allow Accounting+ partners to volunteer their time to interact directly with students in cities nationwide. In 2024, events were held in Dallas, Texas, Newark, New Jersey, and New York, New York. Classroom Connect, another volunteer-driven opportunity, matches Accounting+ partners with local participating high schools for virtual or in-person visits with accounting professionals. During the 2023–2024 school year, the Accounting Careers National Scholarship Contest awarded \$75,000 in total scholarship prizes to 15 winners. Since the program launched in 2022, \$155,000 has been awarded to 31 winners.

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I love that the Accounting EVERFI Course is short and impactful. It has changed my students' worldview about the nature of accounting careers. Most of all, they have the opportunity to apply for a \$5,000 scholarship.

Lorraine Montague, Teacher

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I love the information the course has about the vastly different types of accountants. I didn't know there were so many variations of an accountant, and this course did an amazing job on informing me.

Student, Fresno Unified School District, California

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This course genuinely taught me that accounting is beneficial for both my personal and my professional life and is a strong baseline for business careers.

Student, Jersey City School District, New Jersey

✓ STEELERS SHOWCASE

Building on the success of 2023, the partnership with the Pittsburgh Steelers continued to thrive in 2024, with multiple Steelers Showcase events that introduced students to the intersection of accounting and the sports industry. Students engaged with professionals from Accounting+ partners and heard from the Steelers accounting team, lending insight into how accounting plays a pivotal role in managing a major sports franchise. These events underscored the diverse career opportunities in accounting, particularly in industries that resonate with younger audiences.

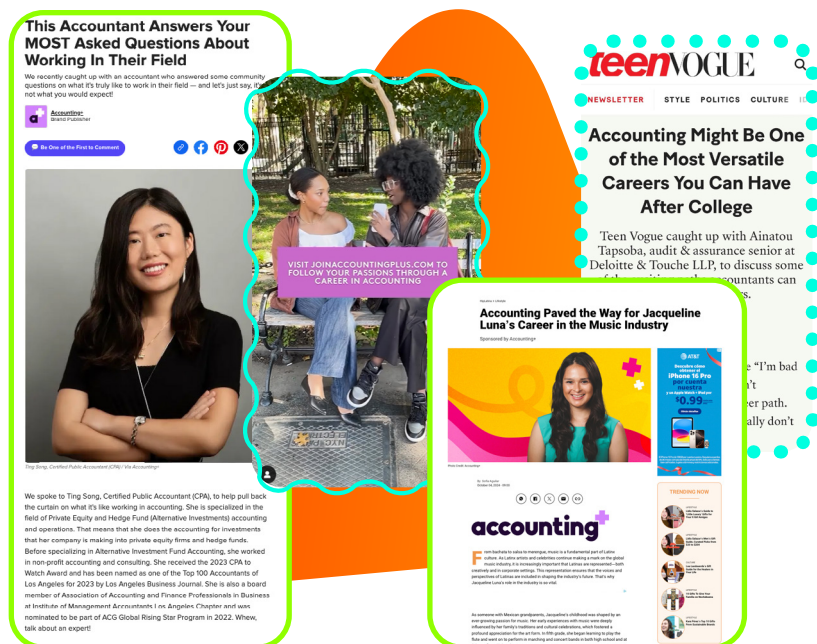


We amplified the story of Klavin Boyd, Accounting Manager at the Steelers, in a video that reinforces our message about the limitless possibilities of a career in accounting. The Steelers Showcase program continues introducing the next generation of students to accounting through impactful resources and connections.

✓ MEDIA AND PUBLISHER PARTNERSHIPS

To further expand its reach, Accounting+ collaborated with key media partners to connect with students on digital channels they interact with the most, including BuzzFeed, Teen Vogue, and Spotify. These strategic partnerships strengthen brand awareness with Gen Z and Gen Alpha students by reaching them where they are already engaged with tailored and relevant messages about rewarding careers in accounting.

These partnerships not only allow direct access to our target audience but also opportunities to create content alongside influential voices that resonate with students' goals and experiences. By leveraging popular platforms that already engage with Gen Z audiences, Accounting+ was able to drive meaningful conversations around why accounting is a dynamic and accessible career path, increasing engagement across digital channels.



✓ NABA INC., ALPFA, AND OTHER PARTNERS

The partnership with the NABA, Inc., ALPFA, and other industry organizations remained a cornerstone of efforts to promote accounting alongside groups that already have tremendous student reach. In 2024, Accounting+ participated in NABA's and ALPFA's national conferences, hosted outreach programs, and collaborated on podcast episodes highlighting professionals' experiences from underrepresented backgrounds. The content captured from these conferences significantly enriched our social media presence, serving as a key pillar in our digital engagement strategy. These initiatives not only provided valuable networking opportunities for students but also helped foster a sense of belonging and accessibility within the accounting profession.

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I feel like it's often a stereotype that accounting is about hard math. So, I feel like knowing that it isn't about hard math, it makes the job way easier and more convenient for people.

Student, 9th/10th Grader

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It is important for PwC to really be involved with programs like Accounting+ because we need more students to go into the profession, and we focus on that with programs like the CAQ and everything they do, all of our recruiting initiatives across the board, and in various states and all around the country. And we need more students to go into the profession—it's as simple as that.

Seth Drucker, PwC

LOOKING AHEAD: THE 2025 ROADMAP

As we move forward in 2025, Accounting+ is focused on the following strategic initiatives:

➤ EXPANDING PARTNERSHIPS

We aim to continue increasing collaboration with state societies, accounting firms, and mission-driven nonprofits dedicated to strengthen the talent pipeline. Given the pipeline challenges, a collaborative approach is more important than ever before. Accounting+ is focused on providing partners and collaborators with more resources, including the Event in a Box, Social Media, and Educator Toolkits.

➤ REFINING MESSAGING AND STORYTELLING

Our research shows that students are most drawn to careers with tangible personal benefits. We continually refine our messaging based on data and research, incorporating insights from yearly surveys and focus groups and ongoing data collection to ensure the success and relevance of our messages. We will focus on sharing real stories of accountants who have transformed their lives through the profession that aligns with benefits students care about most—career stability and long-term earning potential.

➤ ENGAGING YOUNGER AUDIENCES

We are committed to evolving our engagement strategies to reach students earlier, leveraging Gen Z and Gen Alpha trends and interests. Research shows that the earlier we start engaging students in their academic journey, the bigger the impact we have. We are focused on tailoring our approach toward the younger generations and will continue learning about how to reach these age groups best.



KEY CHARACTERISTICS OF GEN Z/GEN ALPHA

**GAMERS ♦ VALUE BALANCE ♦ INDEPENDENT
SOCIALY CONSCIOUS ♦ TRAVELERS ♦ FLEXIBLE
DIGITAL NATIVES ♦ AMBITIOUS ♦ STREAMERS
COMMUNITY-ORIENTED ♦ COLLABORATIVE
VISUAL LEARNERS ♦ OPEN-MINDED**

➤ ENHANCING DIGITAL RESOURCES

We are expanding our online platforms, including an AI interview tool and classroom resources, to ensure students have access to valuable tools and guidance.

➤ SUSTAINING STUDENT ENGAGEMENT

We recognize that capturing student interest is a first step; maintaining their engagement throughout their educational journey is crucial for long-term success. Research has shown that students with direct connections to accountants are far more likely to pursue the field.

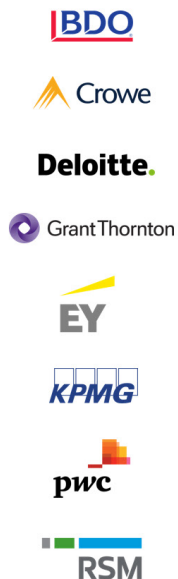
We will focus on connecting students with meaningful opportunities that reinforce their interest in accounting. By facilitating internships, direct career exposure experiences, and mentorship programs through our extensive partner network, we will create tangible pathways for students to envision their future in the profession. These real-world connections will help students bridge the gap between academic concepts and professional application, significantly increasing the likelihood they will remain committed to pursuing accounting careers.

The need for accounting professionals is more critical than ever. Accounting+ is committed to attracting talented students from all backgrounds, with a strategic emphasis on reaching previously untapped student populations who may not have considered accounting as a career path. By intentionally extending our outreach beyond traditional recruitment channels, we are working to both broaden and strengthen the talent pipeline. Our mission remains clear: to meet students early in their educational journey, showcase the compelling benefits of the profession, and provide clear pathways into accounting. Through this inclusive approach, we aim to address the growing demand for qualified professionals while helping students discover the rewarding career opportunities accounting offers.

ACKNOWLEDGMENTS AND PARTNERS

As we close out 2024, we acknowledge that our journey thus far has been shaped by the unwavering support of our 51 partners, and we remain grateful. Looking ahead to 2025, we anticipate a momentous year for the campaign, and your continued engagement and support are instrumental in realizing our ambitious goals. With your steadfast partnership, we are poised to make significant strides in increasing the number of students entering the accounting pipeline.

CAQ Governing Board Member Firms



Accounting Firm Partners



Non-profit and Public Sector Partners



State CPA Society Partners



CONTACT US

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