



# **FLATE COMMUNICATIONS PROGRAM**

*A BEST PRACTICES GUIDE TO DESIGNING STRATEGIC COMMUNICATIONS TOOLS*

# FLATE

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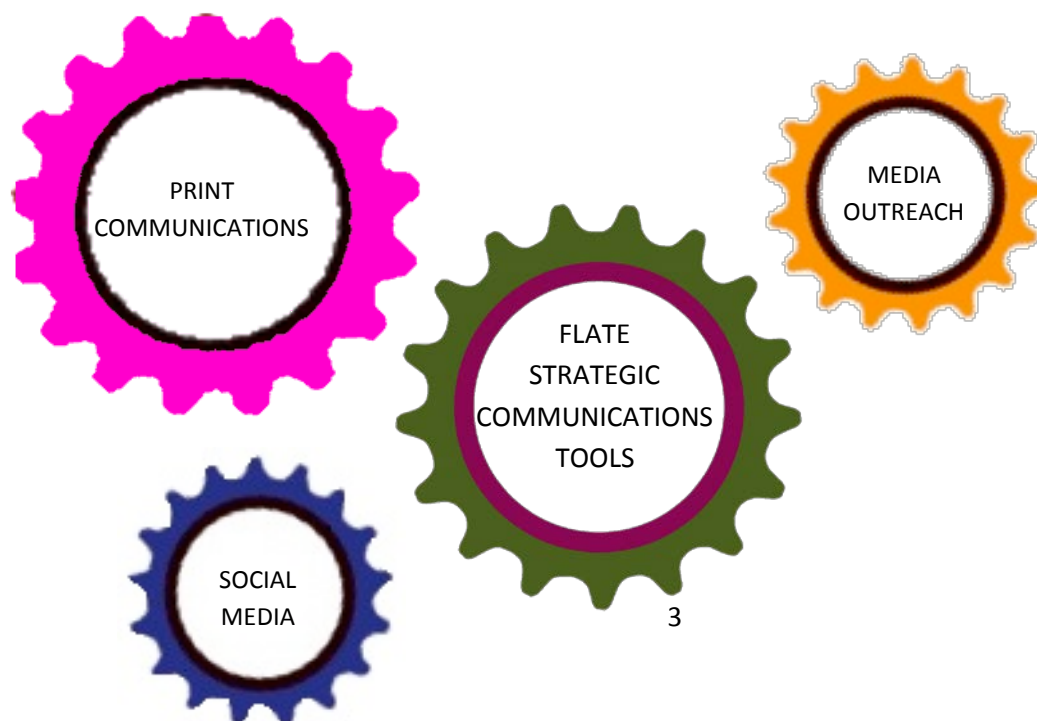


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# Table of Contents

<b>Introduction.....</b>	<b>4</b>
<b>Nuances of a Newsletter.....</b>	<b>5</b>
Newsletter Design Tips.....	6
Newsletter Analytics .....	7
<b>Other News-Making Tools .....</b>	<b>8</b>
Press Releases .....	8
News Alerts .....	9
Media Kit .....	9
<b>Social Media.....</b>	<b>10</b>
<b>Appendices.....</b>	<b>11</b>
Sample Newsletter Templates .....	11
Sample Google Analytics Report .....	12
Sample News Alert .....	13
<b>How to Print this Guide.....</b>	<b>14</b>
<b>Other FLATE Best Practice Guides.....</b>	<b>15</b>
<b>Contact Us.....</b>	<b>16</b>



# Introduction

**FLATE's Communications Program** informs key stakeholders and the media about the center's multi-faceted communications and media relations initiatives. The Center's strategic communications program is designed to reflect and match FLATE's vision "to be Florida's leading resource for education and training expertise, leadership, projects, and services to promote and support the workforce in the high performance production and manufacturing community." FLATE uses print, web, and social networking tools to disseminate information about its activities and projects to stakeholders that include students, faculty, industry professionals, and regional/statewide media.

FLATE's Communications program comprises of an extensive portfolio of tools to inform its stakeholders about FLATE-led projects and events.

**These include:** Newsletters, Press releases & News alerts, Social media, Media kit, FLATE websites and publications.



# Nuances of a Newsletter

A newsletter is an effective dissemination tool to inform stakeholders about an organization's products, services and events. Newsletters can be used to establish a company's identity, or build awareness about its resources. The making of an effective newsletter requires:

- Defining its purpose & objective
- Determining a target audience
- Designing layout, content and story ideas
- Developing an effective dissemination platform
- Developing and maintaining a distribution list

The FLATE newsletter, the **FLATE Focus** is designed with the “end user” in mind. It has a **Clear, Concise, and Coherent** messaging strategy that centers on: **Research, Action, Communication and Evaluation.**

1. Research	2. Action
<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Brainstorm &amp; finalize article ideas with management and staff</li><li>• Research article topics</li><li>• Identify and contact candidates for interviews and quotes</li></ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Set-up a timeline from conception to completion</li><li>• Conduct interviews by phone, or email</li><li>• Draft articles</li><li>• Finalize layout &amp; prepare for dissemination</li></ul>
3. Communication	4. Evaluation
<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Check distribution list</li><li>• Email newsletter to stakeholders</li></ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Connect blogger to Google analytics</li><li>• Run monthly Google analytics reports</li><li>• Tally and analyze data regularly</li></ul>

# Nuances of a Newsletter

Outlined below are additional tips on getting started on a newsletter, and pointers to help keep you focused on your readers.

## TIPS

- Make “news” a habit with your team
- Keep a story idea file
- Have a point person
- Be regular with your standard communication
- Be professional
- Share partners’ & stakeholders’ news and successes
- Share with NSF program officers
- Pick a format that meets your needs
- Pick a format that works for your stakeholders

## Once you get going

- **Dive into the data**—what are people reading?
- **Survey readers** – what do they want to read?
- **Be concise** – main ideas with following details
- **Jazz it up** – attention-grabbing titles; challenge your readers
- **Strategize graphics**– be sure they tell a story
- **Get interactive** – polls, quizzes, surveys
- **Give options** – for viewing, saving, printing, accessing

# Nuances of a Newsletter

Gauging the reach and impact of internal and external communications is an integral part of any organization's messaging practices. Evaluation affords an in-depth look into the effectiveness of existing communications tools, and provides insights for streamlining future messaging strategies. There are several evaluation mechanisms to assess the effectiveness of communications campaigns. Among these, Google Analytics is considered an excellent free resource. Google Analytics provides insights on website and blog traffic patterns, and has been a helpful tool for **FLATE** to determine the key demographics of its stakeholders and measure effectiveness of web content dissemination to stakeholders.

## Other available web analytics tools include:

Paid	Free
Mint	Google Analytics
Chartbeat	GoingUp
Kissmetrics	Clicky (21 day free trial)
UserTesting.com	Mix Panel (Free up to 25K data points)

(more web analytics sites listed on: <http://www.adpushup.com/blog/web-analytics-tools-google-analytics-alternatives>)

Given the emphasis on web analytics data, social media sites such as Twitter, Facebook and LinkedIn each provide tools to gauge the reach and impact of social posts. Among these, Hootsuite is a popular social media analytics tool used by **FLATE**, and one that offers a single dashboard to manage social media accounts to include among others, Twitter, Facebook, and LinkedIn.



## Other “News-Making” Tips

**Press Releases** are an effective mechanism to promote organizational messages and capture wider attention among stakeholders and local/regional press. Press releases have to be timely and relevant. A press release should always have:

- **A Headline:** attention-grabbing statement
- **A Dateline:** date and city of the news release
- **A Lead/Introductory paragraph:** who, what, when, where, why and how
- **A Body:** additional details supported by quotes and a call-to-action
- **A Boilerplate:** organizational information
- **Contact information:** contact information for media and stakeholders

### Distribution tools to optimize visibility of a press release:

Paid	Free
PRNewswire.com	PRLog.org ( <i>currently used by FLATE</i> )
PRWeb.com	PR.com
Businesswire.com	PR-Inside.com
Marketwired.com	Newswire.com

A **News Alert** is a communication tool that can be used as part of an email messaging system. **FLATE** uses news alerts to keep internal stakeholders engaged, informed and connected with the Center. *News Alerts* can be short news blasts that serve as factoids about an upcoming event, stakeholder recognition, or important updates. Tips for designing an effective news alert include:

- Keeping it short, concise and on point
- Attention-grabbing headline
- Attractive email template
- Easy to read & distribute (via email) format



## Other “News-Making” Tips

A “**Media Kit**” is a fast-fingered information kit that provides a quick overview of current projects to news professionals. The media kit is distributed to newspaper/magazine reporters and television anchors during press events. There is no set format for developing a media kit, it can be tweaked according to the event at hand, but a general-rule-of-thumb while compiling a media kit is to include:

- Mission/Vision Statements
- Contact information
- Product and services information
- Recent press/news coverage
- Recent magazine articles & organizational publications
- High res photos, Video clips, High res logos (in a zip drive)
- FAQ’s about the organization

**Websites** are windows to the world to showcase an organization’s expertise and services. Key elements of an effective website include:

- Compelling content
- Easy to navigate & read layout
- Professional logo & photos
- Mindful use of colors
- Social media buttons
- Call to action & contact information



The “**FLATE Websites**” [www.fl-ate.org](http://www.fl-ate.org) & [www.madeinflorida.org](http://www.madeinflorida.org) have been live since 2003 and 2005 respectively, and offer a rich storehouse of information for educators, students, and parents, connecting them to the world of manufacturing.

# Social Media

Social media is ubiquitous, and brand presence on social networking sites is no longer an option, but a necessity to increase digital exposure and enhance social presence. Today social media marketing is an important facet of integrated marketing communications and often serves as the social face of a company, or a brand. Here are a few tips on leveraging social media effectively to build your brand and/or brand presence:

- Choose networks that support your brand presence, and are also most used by your stakeholders
- Chart a consistent and active messaging strategy that will be valuable to your stakeholders
- Use integrated social communications strategy to promote content and organizational messages
- Always provide contact information for follow-ups
- Use analytics to improve your social media network

**FLATE** maintains a prominent social presence that has given the Center an opportunity to provide/share timely news with stakeholders, including local and regional media. You can find FLATE on the following social networking sites:

**Facebook:** [www.facebook.com/madeinflorida](http://www.facebook.com/madeinflorida).

**Twitter:** [@Made\\_InFlorida](http://www.twitter.com/Made_InFlorida)

**LinkedIn:** <https://www.linkedin.com/company/et-degree-alumni>

**YouTube:** <https://www.youtube.com/user/MadeInFlorida2010>

# Appendices

## Sample Newsletter Email Template & Blog Template

FEBRUARY 2016

FLATE FOCUS

Connecting Manufacturers, Educators & Students with Florida's Workforce

#CTEMonth@Made\_InFlorida

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**From the Executive Director's Desk: Taking Care of Business**

Last week, FLATE hosted its 12<sup>th</sup> annual National Visiting Committee (NVC) in Miramar, FL. Usually these meetings are held at an industry location somewhere in the state. However, this year we met at FLATE's host institution and campus, Hillsborough Community College Brandon campus. The FLATE NVC committee provides advice, advocacy, assessment and assistance not just at this one strategic meeting each year, but also more informally, during the months in between. We are proud of not only the size of our committee, but also its composition. [Full Article](#)

**FLATE-FloridaMakes Collaborate to Support Growth of Florida Manufacturing**

FLATE and FloridaMakes, two nationally recognized Florida organizations, are developing a concerted partnership to help support the current and next generation of skilled workers for the state's growing high-tech manufacturing sector. In a signed Memorandum of Understanding, FloridaMakes and FLATE outlined actions aimed at furthering the market knowledge of current and future skills needed by Florida manufacturers, and using that knowledge to enhance educational curricula, as well as further the understanding by educators, students and parents of the career opportunities provided by the manufacturing sector. [Full Article](#)

**NEWS STORIES**

**Engineering Academy at Greco Educates Next Generation of Engineers**

The Engineering STEM Academy at Greco Middle School in Tampa serves as a platform for students to engage and explore careers in Science, Technology, Engineering and Mathematics, or STEM. The Academy is a "True Academic Academy" modeled after the National Career Academy Coalition standards of practice. The Academy's predominantly engineering/career and technical education-themed curriculum promotes hands-on learning and integration of real-world experiences into the classroom. [Full Article](#)

**FCPN Symposium Opens Dialogue on Career & Technical Education in Florida**

As part of its ongoing involvement with statewide Career & Technical (CTE) programs and organizations, every year FLATE attends the Florida Career Pathways Network symposium to share ideas and best practices, and provide professional development sessions for stakeholders and conference attendees across Florida who are involved in various aspects of CTE. This year FLATE facilitated three "best practice" sessions at the FCPN Symposium held last month in Jupiter Beach, FL. Each of the Best Practice sessions were well attended, and evoked pertinent discussions about the state of career and technical education in Florida and related issues. [Full Article](#)

**Partnership with Chile Expands FLATE's International Technician Training & Education Program**

The Executive Director's article in last month's FLATE Focus alluded to starting 2016 with a focus on partnerships. We are making an early headway in that direction as FLATE struck a fresh partnership overseas with Duoc UC in Santiago, Chile, to discuss articulation processes among different educational levels, and examine pathways to develop an international internship program with FLATE/Hillsborough Community College. [Full Article](#)

**Send In Your Nominations for the 2016 FLATE Awards**

Sign up for 2016 National Robotics Week in Florida

February is #CTEMonth! What are you going to celebrate and raise awareness about CTE in Florida?

**ADDITIONAL POINTS OF INTEREST**

- Executive Director's Desk
- FLATE-FloridaMakes MOU
- Engineering Academy at Greco Middle School
- FCPN Symposium
- International Technician Training PGM in Chile
- Suncoast Tech. Students Get NIMS Certified
- Sign up for 2016 National Robotics Week
- Congratulatory Notes: D.L. Jamerson Elementary & Alejandra Rojas

**Special Announcements**

- Did you know?
- STEM Educators Corner
- Manufacturers News
- Events Calendar

**NEW! sTEmpuzzle 51**

FLATE FOCUS

Connecting Manufacturers, Educators & Students with Florida's Workforce

#CTEMonth@Made\_InFlorida

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**From the Executive Director's Desk: Taking Care of Business**

Last year, FLATE hosted its 11<sup>th</sup> annual National Visiting Committee (NVC) in Miramar, FL. Usually these meetings are held at an industry location somewhere in the state. This year, however, we met at FLATE's host institution and campus, Hillsborough Community College Brandon campus. The FLATE NVC provides advice, advocacy, assessment and assistance not just at this one strategic meeting each year, but also more informally, during the months in between. We are proud of not only the size of our committee, but also its composition of 12 dedicated individuals with interest in the state of manufacturing technician education in Florida and across the country. A typical one-and-a-half to two-day meeting agenda includes a number of standard "sessions" including:

- Reporting and updating on activities and programs during the past year
- Evaluation report from an external evaluator
- Overview of a local technician program and its students
- Visit to a local industry
- Discussions with the Center's NSF ATE program officer (typically this is done remotely)
- Closed session for the NVC to discuss concerns, recommendations and plaudits
- NVC report out to the Center Leadership and NSF program officer

This year we showcased the HCC Engineering Technology program and some of the students currently enrolled in the two year A.S. in engineering technology degree. We also visited

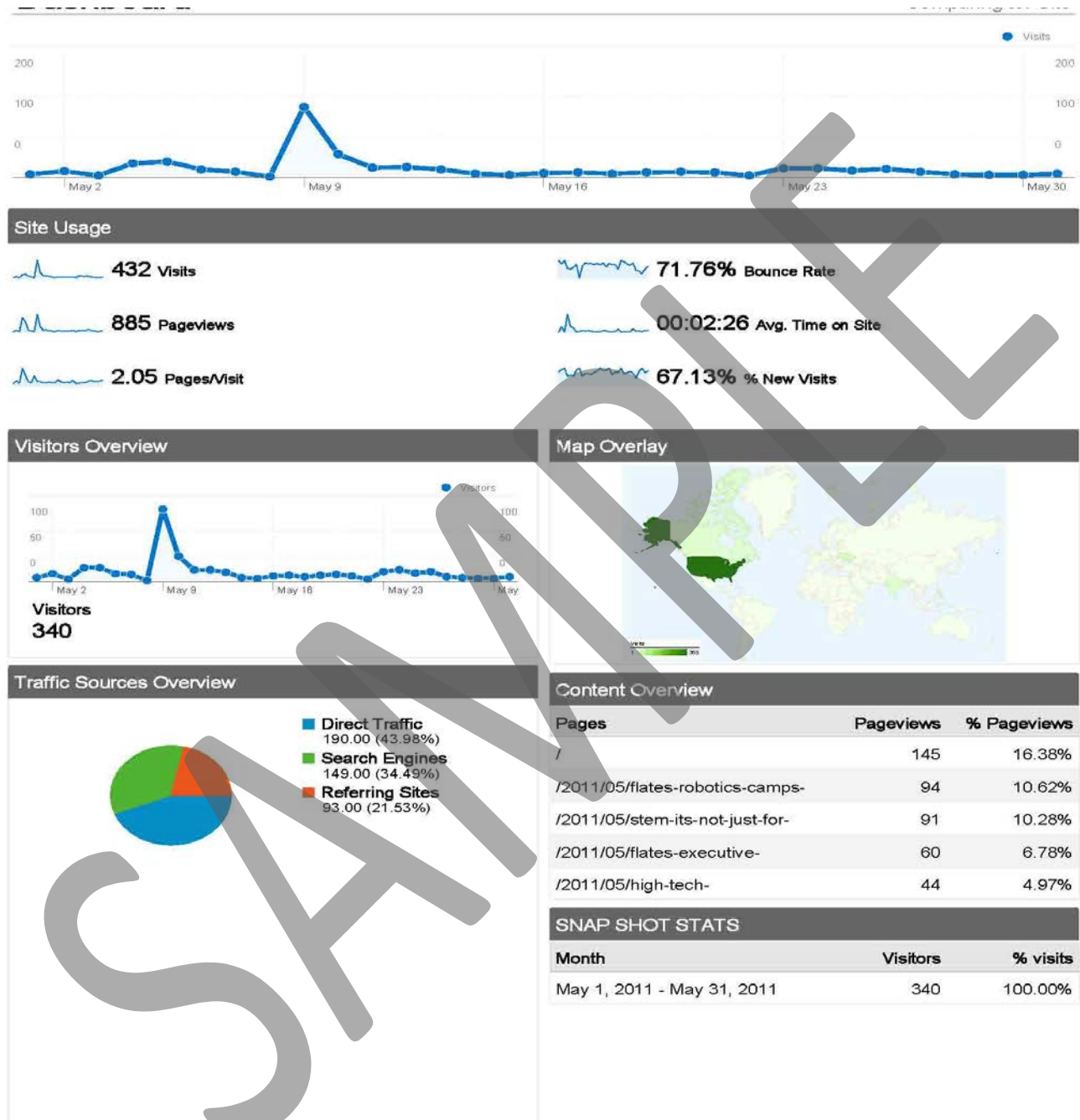
**Hashtag of the Month**

#CTEMonth@Made\_InFlorida


**IN THIS ISSUE**


- February (17)
- February (8)
- From the Executive Director's Desk: Taking Care of...
- Florida Career Pathways Symposium Opens Dialogue o...
- FLATE & FloridaMakes Collaborate to Advance Educate...
- Engineering Academy at Greco Middle School Educate...
- Partnership with Chile Seeks to Expand FLATE's Int...
- sTEmpuzzle #51: Heater Filament Requirements...
- Suncoast Technical College Surges Ahead in Getting...
- Sign up for the 2016 National Robotics Week!

## Sample Google Analytics Report



## Sample News Alert

**FLATE: Florida Advanced Technological Education**  
A National Science Foundation Center of Excellence

  
www.madeinflorida.org

www.flate.org

**NEWS from**  
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**FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE**

### Industry Day for Local Students Helps Build Interest in STEM

FLATE (Florida Advanced Technological Education Center), the National Science Foundation regional center of excellence for advanced technological education at Hillsborough Community College in Brandon, is partnering with CTEF (Career Technical Education Foundation) located in Palm Harbor, FL, to orchestrate a two-day "Industry Day" for high school students in the greater Tampa Bay area. As part of this effort, students from the engineering academies at River Ridge High School in Pasco County and students from East Lake High School in Pinellas County will tour six high-tech manufacturing facilities in Hillsborough and Pinellas counties. These fun-filled, educationally engaging tours will be conducted on May 17 and 18, and are geared to give students a first-hand view of high-tech operations, showcase the importance of industry-aligned STEM (Science, Technology, Engineering, Mathematics) education, and outline tools/pathways to secure sustainable, career goals in high-tech industries in Florida.

Industry hosts Pall Aeropower, Nielsen Media Research, Micron Pharma Works, Bauer Foundation, Southern Manufacturing Technologies and Mitre Corporation have agreed to open up their facilities and give students a detailed overview of some of their high-tech operations. Special employee presentations have been planned to give students a first-hand account of STEM-based educational pathways needed to secure high-tech careers. Paul Wahnish, president of CTEF Inc. who masterminded the initiative says "using a theoretical arsenal of basic science and math, students are driven to apply that which they have learned, making strong STEM skills relevant to them." Wahnish says this relevance "engages a student's interest and develops a strong desire to apply their knowledge toward innovation."



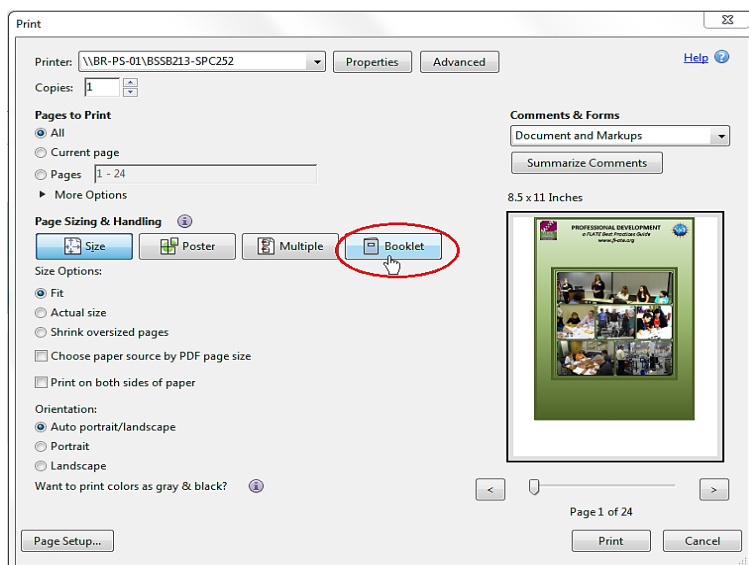
# How to Print this Guide

If you would like to print your guide in a “booklet” format (from the original PDF file), please use the following steps, you will need a printer that can print double sided documents:

**Step 1 – select Booklet** under Page Sizing and Handling (please make sure you are using a printer that prints double sided documents).

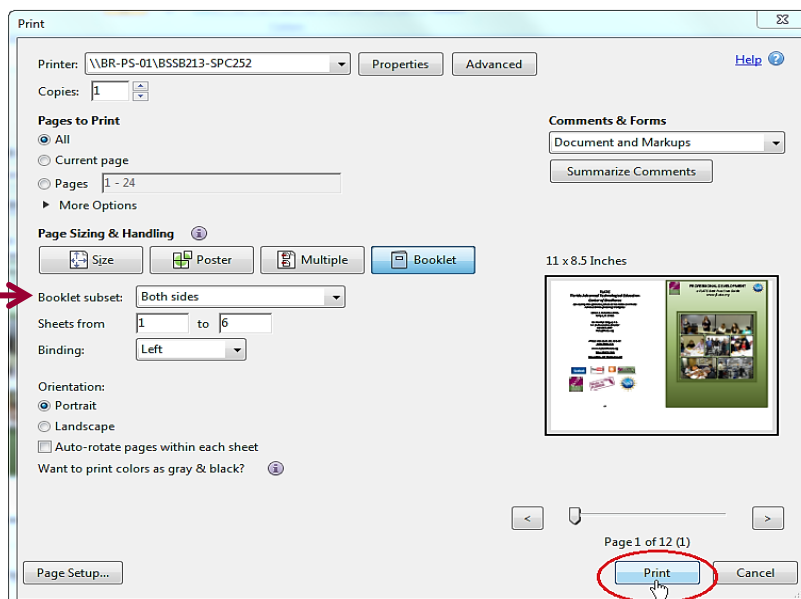
**Step 2 – make sure Booklet subset is for Both sides**

**Step 3 – select Print**



Select Booklet

Before selecting Print, make sure that the Booklet subset is for Both Sides.



# FLATE Best Practice Guides

All FLATE Best Practice Guides are available as online resources, or for download at [fl-ate.org/best-practices](http://fl-ate.org/best-practices)



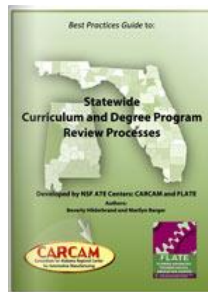
***ET High-Tech Camps for High School Students***



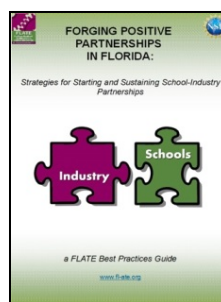
***Recruiting & Retaining Girls in STEM***



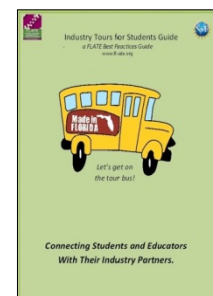
***Professional Development***



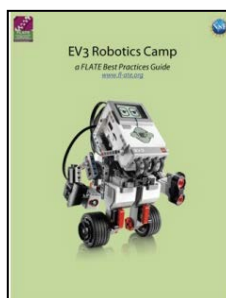
***Curriculum Review Processes***



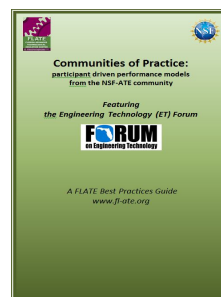
***Forging Positive Partnerships in Florida***



***Industry Tours for Students Guide***



***Robotics Camp Best Practice Guide***



***Communities of Practice Guide***



***Curriculum Alignment Credentials Guide***

# Contact Us

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