How to Basic Marketing & Branding
The Importance

FIRST is not just about building a successful robot, but building the foundation of a successful team.

To be in the elite FRC teams, you need to master marketing and better your branding.
Hello!

Kami Ziebarth -
FRC 4607 Team Captain
Marketing Lead

Emma Schreifels -
FRC 4607 Alumna
BR Newsletter Editor
Niche of a Name

Find your source of branding and marketing.
Team Name

- Represent your team
- Choose whether to associate with your school
- Consider Length eg: Coalition of Independent Students into C.I.S.
- One that easily associates with a theme
  - Chairman’s
  - Competition Aids
  - Other Branding
Loving your Logo

Let’s start with generally the first identifier of your team.
Logo Tips

- Simplicity is important
- You **CAN** change it
- Make multiple renditions
- Small group decision
- Get feedback *(mentors, teachers, sponsors)*
- Avoid generic - *Make it your own!*
- Be careful with colors
- Use logo on more than apparel *(stationery, stamp, car window stickers, etc)*
CIS Logo Progressions
Our Favorite Logos
Making Business Goals

Having technical goals is trivial in FIRST, but we need to be sure to include branding and marketing goals as well since those are usually forgotten.
Business Goals of FRC 4607 CIS

Uno
Integrate FIRST into school and community

Dos
Always work to improve strategic partnerships

Tres
Have a coherent Business Plan

OUTREACH EVENTS

SPONSORS

MAKE ONE
Outreach Events

● **Parades** – *Decorate a float that you can put your robots on, throw candy/shirts, show off offseason projects*

● **Camps for Kids** – *Get young kids excited about STEM concepts/robotics/the business opportunities that FIRST offers*

● **Annual Expos** – *Great way to interact with the community/potential sponsors/influential political figures (eg: Becker Business Expo)*
Continued...

- **Open House** – *Invite the community, sponsors, school faculty, talk about your team, and do demonstrations!* Have a presence at your school’s start-of-the-year Open house!

- **Senior Citizens** – *They make up a majority of the voter population on levies etc. Visit a Senior Center or present at events where they are present*

- **Kickoff** – *Invite community members (and other teams) to watch the reveal video with your team*
Annnnd More...

- **Presentations to other schools** – *In your district and to schools interested in FIRST or simply STEM!*

- **Volunteering Events** –
  
  - *Tutor at your school (Don’t have this? Start it!)*
  - *Salvation Army, soup kitchen, food shelf drive*
  - *Start a Relay for Life team*
  - *Trunk-or-Treating and other seasonal events*
Key Tips

- Use your resources!!!!
  Collaborate with sponsors and mentors that share the same goals as your team
- Eg: Green Girls for CIS Robotics

- To get more ideas:
  Have marketing scouts at competitions! Ask other robotics teams about what they do for outreach events! Maybe you can collaborate on it or reproduce it
Strategic Partnerships

Be creative in brainstorming, and identify your needs!

- Find graphic companies to sponsor you
- Stay in contact with the local newspaper
- Work with school classes and extracurriculars
  - For events and achieving goals

Main Focus: Your sponsors…
Sponsors

- **INCLUDE THEM**: Invite them to your outreach events, Kickoff, End-of-the-Year Banquet, etc.

- **Be Gracious**: Send thank-yous (and holiday gifts), put them on shirts and in pit/on robot, have sponsor awards (eg: Sponsor of the Year)

- **Keep Them Updated**: Have a concrete PR team, send periodic email updates, have a weekly newsletter
Tips:

A complex idea can be conveyed with just a single still image, making it possible to absorb large amounts of data quickly.

Newsletter Tips:

- Remain consistent: color scheme, fonts, layout, tone
- Check your grammar
- Include the following:
  - Some kind of calendar
  - General updates
  - Specific subgroup updates
  - LGM agenda
  - Something unique

Quote of the Week:

“Jellyfish are 97% water or something, so how much are they doing? Just give them another 3% and make water: it’s more useful.” — Karl Pilkington
2 Sponsor Presentations

- Do these REGULARLY
- Have STUDENTS present to sponsors about the team
- Google Slides works well for collaborating with multiple people
- Who to bring
- What to bring
- What to include in the presentation
- What to wear
Business Plan

- To get started: use business teachers, mentors, or Google
- How/When to use it: competitions, outreach events, potential sponsors
- Why it is important:
  - Helps keep track of goals and values
  - Gives a professional air
- Tailor general BP templates to robotics
• Executive Summary  
  ○ Mission Statement, founding, location
• Team Summary  
  ○ History, yearly breakdown, demographics, structure, what you do as a team
• Program Summary  
  ○ FIRST mission, values, levels, etc.
• Goals  
  ○ Overall, business, technical
• Challenges & Plans
Sections to Include

- Competitive Analysis
  - Other teams, extracurriculars, local organizations
- Human Resources
  - Recruiting, retaining, training, safety, travel, communication, expectations
- Mentors
- Partnerships & Outreach
  - Sponsors, outreach event breakdown
- Financial Plan
- Appendix
Competition Edition

Outfitting, Pit, Outreach
Outfitting

- **Play around** with colors and styles of competition apparel
- **Have a signature item** (eg. mustaches or backstage passes)
- **Have your drive team coordinate looks**
- **Cheer props** (lightsabers)
- **Brand Robot:** sponsors, team logo/name, LEDs
- **Have a mascot...** or two
Competition Pit

- Hand out promo items:
  - Trading cards, buttons, crayons, tattoos, stickers
- Handouts at the ready:
  - For judges, scouting, parents, other teams
- Be efficient with your space: set up prior
- Know your stuff:
  - Train your pit crew (and your entire team!) on team need-to-knows
- Make yours stand out. This is vital.
  - CIS photo banner: why it works
- Make a dream team: 1 mech, 1 elec/pro, team captain, scout/safety captain
  - Double up roles
  - Limit adult presences in pit
Outreach

● Plan a safety event:
  ○ Hand out safety kits, post PSAs, etc

● The Stands:
  ○ Have a cheerleader, make rules for people representing your team, signage

● Collaborate with teams on outreach events
● Help with breakout sessions!
Outreach

● Give out awards to teams
  ○ *Best Mascot, Most Innovative Robot, Best Pit,* etc.

● Hold mini competitions – *eg. Video competition*

● Promote your team AND something else – *CFF*
  ○ *Use your marketing for a good cause*
Gracias!

If you have any questions or comments, please contact us at 17kamzie@isd726.org and emma.schreifels@ndsu.edu