

## **FIRST Robotics and Public Relations**

### **Elevator Pitch**

*When you speak publicly about FIRST, provide the following info:*

Name

Grade

School

FRC Team # and team name

Your role on team and # of years you have been involved

I'm excited to talk with you today about FIRST Robotics

FIRST is a non-profit workforce development program that gives students (like me) hands-on experiences applying science, technology, engineering and math to solve a challenge. We work with mentors from leading companies to design, build, and program a robot. Then we get to compete!

Then proceed to tell your own story:

- how you have changed because of your involvement in FIRST
- your college or career aspirations

In case anyone asks what FIRST stands for you should know:  
For Inspiration and Recognition of Science and Technology.

*Provide a card with your contact info to reporters.*

*Tell stories. How you cope when things go wrong is usually good material.*

*Be sure Deb knows when you get coverage.*

*Treat your school board like the media.*

If you have a media opportunity and need coaching contact me:

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## **Keeping in Touch with Sponsors**

You are much more likely to keep your sponsors if you let them know what your team is doing and how you are promoting them.

You should be promoting them in the following simple ways:

- logos on your robot
- on pit signage during competition and other events you attend
- mention them in school bulletins and press coverage of your team
- they are on the T-shirts you wear whenever your team is out in public
- they are on your team website (with a link to their websites)

Here are some ways to let them know what you are doing:

- send them an electronic newsletter (quarterly during the off season and every two weeks during build and competition season)
- offer to show up in person with the robot at least once per year during the off-season
- invite them to your regional competition, give them an in-depth explanation of the robot, and a VIP tour of the competition by an articulate team member
- at the end of the season send a handwritten thank you note, team –t-shirt, and a framed picture of the team with robot

We suggest you treat your school board and school principal like a sponsor, whether or not they have supported the team financially. Be sure to bring the robot to a school board meeting once per year, send each member the newsletter, and invite them to the regional tournament.

## **Getting the Media to Notice/Follow your Team**

Your best chance to hook a reporter (newspaper, TV, radio, blog) is to identify the most likely people.

What makes reporters likely candidates?

- they are local
- they focus on either education, workforce development or science and technology

You may be able to find out more information about the reporter's specific passion on his/her professional Facebook or LinkedIn page. It's also smart to read/watch several of the person's previous stories.

Once you have a list of likely reporters you can reach out to them by:

- phone
- email
- following them on Twitter and tweeting in response to posts

For your initial contact it is important to hook interest with a really cool story pitch.

Some possibilities include:

- send a video snippet of your robot doing something amazing
- a teaser for a personal interest story about someone on your team
- a description of something that went drastically wrong and how it was overcome
- "Where are they now?" update about the colleges and professions of team alumni (especially if what they have accomplished is extraordinary for your neighborhood or school)

Since the reporter might not be familiar with FIRST a link to one of the national videos that show the excitement and craziness of the competition is helpful. Here's a recent example:

[http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=i1QyM9WTF18&feature=channel\\_video\\_title](http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=i1QyM9WTF18&feature=channel_video_title)

## **Promotional Events**

You want to get your team out into the community by participating in events. You should not limit yourselves to science and technology events – any community-based activity has potential to provide good exposure.

Good places to find out about events in advance are:

- Chamber of Commerce/City Hall
- postings at the library
- local paper calendar
- word of mouth from team members, parents, teachers, friends, etc.

The robot is the draw (not you). It is especially appealing if you can let event attendees have a turn driving. Bringing the robot requires advance planning to ensure that the site has adequate space/facilities.

As far in advance as possible you should contact the people in charge, give them the FIRST elevator pitch, explain what you want and your space requirements, outline the benefit to the organizers of including you.

The benefits to you of attending these events may not be obvious. Here's why you should make the effort:

- promoting awareness of FIRST and your team
- promoting your sponsors on the local community (their logos are on your robot and shirts) and it gives you something to tell them in the newsletter
- it's a good chance to find new sponsors (including in-kind) as well as recruit new team members