

Our Coach's Personal Tips...

STEP #1) Surround yourself with amazing people who are as invested as you are.

STEP #2) Locate the students in your group, club, team who are the catalysts for success.

STEP #3) Then go find their mom and dad to see if they can be enlisted in your noble cause. I learned about 18 years ago as a teacher starting out, "the apple does not fall far from the tree."

STEP #4) Volunteers fall into a pattern. Fire Department, Recreation Athletics Coaches, Boy Scouts, Girl Scouts, 4-H, Robotics team. If you can identify these types of parents to help you, then you're half way there. They "get it" and don't need too much help or conditioning.

STEP #5) When you attend that first school board meeting, don't say a word, let the kids who want to do this make the presentation. It is very difficult for any adult or board member to look a student in the eye, a student who they serve, and say no.

STEP #6) Don't ever ask for money. This one is tricky as every team needs it just to build a robot. Ask instead for their support, let them know how expensive this endeavor is, let them know the honor your team brings to the school, how your team elevates its members and unites with its community. Then ask them to partner with you.

Finally, ask if there is any way that they can help you. Lead them to the answer you want. Be prepared for the administration to take baby steps and always be grateful and positive. You will get it back over a period of time in many other ways besides just money. For example, we get a bus and driver now when we need it, fuel for the bus, a warm place to hold meetings, insurance, and a classroom in which to operate, help from custodians, and the maintenance crew. When difficulties arise, the administration eases our path. As of June of 2012, at the end of our third year as a robotics team, our administration made the coach a stipend position.

STEP #7) Find those administrators who are forward thinking and enlist them in your cause. Having someone on the inside fighting on your behalf cannot be underestimated in its value.

STEP #8) When good things happen, have the team members sign a thank you letter. Everyone wants recognition for their efforts, even the administration. Have team members stop by to keep your administration updated on your teams efforts and include them as adjunct members of the team.

STEP #9) The Talon peacekeeping, lifesaving, robot image that we use with permission from its designers, is a universal nod to our military and those engineers who save lives daily around the globe 24/7/365. Our team was, and continues to be, fostered by our local high tech partners, one of which is our local Army research facility, Picatinny Arsenal. This is where all branches of the military have their safety equipment and weaponry designed and tested.

We think we are getting closer to convincing those at **FIRST** to embrace our image for a generic example of a high school varsity jacket emblem. We hope you will find the robotic image that our team created suitable for your team as well. It is our pleasure to share our contacts and company designs to ease the cost and shorten your time frame for you.

We are hoping to release a guide and expand this letter and images to make it simpler for any team to get to this place of honor, distinction, effort, commitment. We hope that what we have sent you in this communication will tip the balance in your favor. We wish you luck in the days ahead and know that it can be done. Commitment is what is required, stay the course, remain consistent, stay focused, enjoy the off seasons when they come around.

The magic that happens for the kids during and over their time on your team and when involved in the *FIRST* Robotics season is the building blocks for our own foundation of the USA's engineering future. As a coach I am a conduit. The job is intense but extremely rewarding. The kids, parents, engineers, and community pass through me. Slowly, steadily, we are building a successful program that will be recognized as the premier program in our school and community. I hope the same for you and wish you many successes in your progress.

Best wishes,
Mr. Hofmann

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Teamwork is the fuel that allows common people to attain uncommon results.

"Andrew Carnegie"