



HIGH TECH KIDS

BUILD. CREATE. THRIVE.™

Fundraising 101 High Tech Kids' Guide for Teams

FUNDRAISING 101

Every seasoned fundraiser relies on a variety of tactics to reach the goal for their cause. Fundraising is a process, and when followed, will allow for a successful outcome. Remember however, that hard work and creativity is necessary, relationships are KEY, some will say "No", and your audience has to believe in your message. And do not forget that "Try, then Try Again" will come in handy throughout the process! Armed with the proper tools, a coach, parent volunteer, and even the kids can get the job done.

FORMING A TEAM

Forming a team is an exciting decision but always comes with one BIG question- Just how do we manage the participation budget for the program? Every team has a story of how they managed the materials and equipment, registration and competition fees, and other costs like t-shirts, team snacks, etc. To assist new and existing teams, we have assembled an outline based on the feedback of veteran teams. We hope this information arms you with enough ideas to get you started. Remember- the sky is the limit, be creative, and when you get a NO- move on and try again!

Fees cover national and state registration and program operations. Basic expenses for a start up team are generally \$800(2011 prices). Fees may vary for returning teams depending on what new or replacement supplies are needed. Teams need access to a laptop.

PAYING EXPENSES

A number of different models are in place to fund the team expenses. Please review the following for some common examples:

Participation Fee (The Sports Model)

Many teams add up the total expense for a new or existing team, divide by the number of "players" and call that the "participation fee." Each participant owns the responsibility for covering this expense.

The PTA

The PTA at a local school may have a program fund for general students funding or very specifically for a "technology" or STEM focused program.

The District or Local School Foundation

To assist with funding extracurricular programs the districts' education budget can cover some fees. Check with your school or district to see if your school qualifies.

The Gifted and Talented Program/Enrichment

Schools and districts often set aside funds for programs deemed as enrichment for "Gifted and Talented" students. A program like FLL often qualifies for this funding.

Discretionary Funds

Principles may have discretionary funds in their budget to support activities like FLL. Set up a meeting before the season starts and determine if these are a possibility.

Other Examples

Please review the information below for additional information that can be used to fund a team.

International Open or World Festival

You formed a team, managed all participation costs, and now are participating in the World Festival or an Open. The job just got bigger. Time to focus, start networking, and make the ASK!

Start with a Travel Budget

- Registration
- Lodging
- Transportation- Car, Plane
- Meals
- Passports (If needed)
- Fundraising Costs- Printing, postage, and other materials.
- Miscellaneous

Hold a Parent Meeting

Share the costs of the travel plan and discuss expectations for covering expenses. Teams may decide that total expenses can be added up and simply divided amongst the participant families and coaches. Other teams agree to share some of the expenses amongst the families, but determine that sponsors and donors are needed to fund the remaining balance.

Execute the Fundraising Plan

Form a Committee

Invite parents and kids to help with the work. Assign a chair to manage the work. We encourage parents to manage this process so the coaches can focus on the task of preparing the team for the upcoming competition.

Marketing Materials

Develop a letter that requests support for your team. Include information about the program and the challenge, where your team is going, what they will gain from their participation, and how the individual can donate or sponsor your efforts. You may include a picture of the team and anything you feel will help the contact respond with support. We suggest inviting a team member to write a personal message to the prospect.

Upon receipt of a travel donation, the team record keeper should create a document tracking the key contact or donor name, address, email, and dollar amount of the donation. Use this information for thank you notes.

Teams should phone every donor with a brief thank you before the trip and should also send a formal thank you letter with a brief outline of the trip experience once back from the competition. Some teams have established a "blog" or sent email updates during the trip keeping donors informed on their "excellent adventure."

Identify Prospects

The District

Talk with your school, PTA, and local district. Determine what support they can offer, if any, and what types of activities you could host on campus or in the district during public events.

Local Business

Local companies interested in or in the business of STEM are good candidates. If you know someone in the company, ask for their help in telling your story and making an introduction. If you do not have a personal contact, call the company or search on the website and identify a community relations or marketing contact. Feeling really brave- send an email to the company CEO and follow up in a couple of days with a phone call. Decisions to support a request of this type take time. Be patient but persistent until you get a YES or NO. Offer to bring the team for a visit to demonstrate the robot or to share the presentation. Ask if you could do a brown bag seminar and demonstrate FLL. Search for companies that are in a business related to robotics or event the current CHALLENGE.

Sponsor Prospects

Some local companies will write a check and others may want to be "sponsors" and obtain "visibility" for their support. Teams can offer to print the company logo on their t-shirts or give company recognition as a sponsor on the team website.

STEM Associations

There are a number of STEM associations out there. Some are focused on engineering (and there are many types of engineering), others are focused

on robotics, or manufacturing, or product design, or ... Ask for their help in getting the word out about your travel and competition plans. They might have a fund set up to support this type of program.

Friends and Family

Never underestimate the giving power of family and friends! Neighbors, aunts and uncles, and grandparents alike value education and themselves remember the trips they took as kids. Encourage the kids to personally call these folks and ask for their support. To simplify the process, be sure to follow up with letter and self addresses/stamped envelope so they know where to send the donation.

Coach/Parent Workplace

The workplace of coaches and parents offer a great opportunity for funding. A "close" relationship has already been formed and with some effort, should reap rewards.

Grants

Mini- grants may be available through some local businesses. Some require a simple letter of request and others may require a longer list of information. We cannot emphasize enough the importance of the "kid" involvement in the process. The excitement our teams show and the knowledge they display are powerful marketing tools. Do whatever you can to put the kids in front of your prospects!

Other Examples

Review the team funding examples above for more information and fundraising opportunities.

Create an Event Plan

Past teams have held soup and sandwich events and asked attendees for a free will offering. Set up a display at the event and have materials on hand which educate attendees about the program, the competition, and travel plans.

Volunteer to see concessions for a professional sports team. Many teams invite groups and nonprofits to provide the staffing for games in exchange for an hourly rate paid to that organization or "cause."

Call this or another event the "meet the robot" event. Bring folks together for a mini silent auction. Ask local businesses to donate gift cards and product items. Invite families to assemble gift baskets of items- set themes for the baskets. Invite family, friends, and community members to attend the event and bid on the items.

Contact a company that helps student groups fundraise. Pizza, cookie, and magazine sales are just a few examples of the options that teams have

Hold a bake sale at your school or church. Be sure to ask for permission before executing this plan.

Plan a pancake breakfast. Invite local businesses and grocery stores to donate food items so all proceeds support the team directly.

And... Do not forget the simplicity of a car wash, leaf raking, or shoveling effort in your local neighborhood. Ask for "free will donations", but be sure they know what the money is going for- they will donate more if they understand the cause.

Good Luck in all your fundraising efforts!

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