

TEAM 980  
Business plan

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## **1. Mission and Vision Statements**

“Our mission is to educate and inspire high school students to become the next generation of science and technology leaders by building a competitive robot through the guidance of professional mentors, corporate sponsors, and parents in alignment with FIRST core values.”

Our vision statement is “To create a world-class, award-winning team of confident and competent student leaders, who act as a source of inspiration in science and technology.”

In 2013, Team 980 launched our re-invention. We wanted to expand community awareness, find new sponsors and financial resources, and recruit new students. One way we did this was by implementing business tools and strategies used by successful companies. As part of this process we developed the above new mission and vision statements.

## **2. Team Origin**

Team 980 is a community team, founded in September 2001 in La Canada-Flintridge, California, with 10 students and 3 mentors. In our 15 years we have had 9 different build sites, and have grown to 18 active students and 9 active mentors.

As a community team and 501(c)(3) organization, Team 980 draws members from our entire region, rather than from any particular school. Recruiting throughout Burbank, Glendale, and Northern LA County means that we are spreading the word about FIRST through a large geographic area. In order to best capitalize on this reach, and to keep Team 980 moving towards its “Reinvention” goals, we transformed our seasonal Chairman’s team into a year-round Business Team.

Coming from such a widespread area, transportation is a major factor for participation in our very broad community team. We owe a great deal to the parents and mentors for accruing the mileage and spending the time to get us to meetings and events.

### **3. Organizational Structure**

Our team has three organizational charts for the three periods of the year: Build Season, Competition Season and Off-Season. Our “Off-Season” organization chart is attached as an image as it represents three-quarters of the year. We do our team development during the off-season.

Highlighted elements in the organizational chart show how the structure supports fundraising, purchasing, recruitment of students and mentors, cultivating relationships with sponsors and community, and developing our team members to be stewards of FIRST core values.

In addition to our organizational structure, we expanded our fundraising and recruiting processes beginning in the 2015/2016 season.

#### **4. Relationships**

We hold “inspire and educate HS students” as a central part of our mission. Our team recruits through outreach efforts like our Community and Recruitment Open Houses, and participation in community activities such as the Rose Bowl District Boy Scout Expo, John Burroughs HS Club Rush, and Burbank on Parade. At Scout Expo we exposed 1000 youth to FIRST and Robotics. This year we began a tradition of aiding the Burbank Fire Department in collecting toys for the ABC7 “Spark of Love” Toy Drive.

During our off season we offer a series of developmental activities for our new and veteran members, as well as guests from neighboring FRC teams. Last off season we had a series of seminar speakers, and workshop-style courses on C++ and SolidWorks.

Team 980 was featured in articles in the Glendale News Press and Burbank Leader, and the News-Press picked up the feature story and printed an editorial promoting FIRST as a path for students working in STEM.

Team 980 has close relationships with its two main sponsors: NASA/JPL and Walt Disney Imagineering. Our lead sponsor is from NASA/JPL, and hosts us and our guests for a behind the scenes tour at the annual Open House. Being based on the WDI Campus, we participate FIRST-themed WDI events, and invite members of the WDI community to our build site to see our robots, share our achievements, and receive annual end of season awards.

## **5. Deployment of Resources**

Team 980 annual operating budget is between \$16,000 and \$24,000 (depending upon whether we go to FIRST Championship).

For community outreach, Team 980 spends approximately 5% financially and 10% time-wise on community events, such as Burbank on Parade and Scout Expo. We spent a relatively small amount of money on our new marketing materials, exploiting team participation to maximize the efficiency of these activities by competently spreading the values of FIRST to a variety of people.

To ensure students receive the greatest benefit from their participation in FIRST, we spend 75% of both our expended money and time on team activities. Financially this included our robot parts, participation fees, and travel fees. In addition, we hold technical training sessions, using our time to educate our less experienced team members.

## 6. Future Plans

We capture our team goals using Balanced Score Card as a management tool. Our core objectives are organized in five areas shown in our strategic map (see attached image):

- \* Mission: Our mission expressed in specific objectives
- \* Customer: Objectives based on what our customers (students, FIRST, sponsors, mentors, community) need to see in us
- \* Processes: The operational processes needed to achieve the customer objectives
- \* Organizational Growth: The organizational processes needed to support and expand our team
- \* Financial: The financial processes that will allow us to ensure correct funds

Having defined the processes, we are building indicators to measure each goal and define targets for the next 3 years. For example, for our objective “offer constant education” we measure our performance by tracking the number of training hours given. In 2015, we had a goal of 20 hours of formal training, with a projection of 25 hours in subsequent years. In actuality we delivered 28 hours of training. A second example is our objective “Be active in community activities.” We measure this by tracking the number of events done and the number of people impacted by our events. For 2015 we had a goal of four community activities, and we actually did six!

Team 980’s mission statement is fully aligned with FIRST principles and our team structure is designed to support it. Our 2015 strategic plan outlines our mission as the ultimate goal of the organization and is deployed in a cause/effect relationship to all the other objectives of the organization.



## **7. Financial Statement**

Team 980's financial statements for the 2015 season (actual) and 2016 season (projected) are attached as an image.

Our sponsor income includes grants to FIRST provided by NASA/JPL, Walt Disney Imagineering and Boeing. Team 980 uses the Piggybackr for crowdsource fundraising by students. Each student creates their own web page describing their motivation for participating in FIRST, then invites family and friends via email to visit their page and help them reach their fundraising goals. We have enrolled in several community rewards programs, including Ralphs/Food4Less, eScrip, Benefit-Mobile and AmazonSmile. We are also applying for grants and in-kind donations, such as food for regionals and our Saturday work sessions.

Team 980's expenses are relatively consistent. We traditionally register for two regional competitions and a few off-season events (scrimmages/workshops). Other expenses are also understood, including those for robot construction. Our basis-of-estimate for parts, materials and supplies are based on 12+ years of robot building experience. Our mechanical/fabrication mentors do "make-buy" decisions based on their own experience (40+ years for each mentor).

Team 980 has a contingency plan for raising funds to attend Championship. We have a reserve and special sponsors who will commit the registration fee. Our students will need to raise their own travel/lodging funds to participate in Championship.

## **8. Risk Analysis**

There are a wide variety of threats and risks to any FRC team. Our team, too, faces quite a few threats. One threat is the possibility of not obtaining enough money to continue operating. Another risk is not having enough students to work on the projects. As the robot is student-built, a shortage of students makes building a competitive robot very difficult. And finally, our team being evicted from our workspace, which has happened frequently, takes a large toll on our team.

We employ various methods to help prevent these from occurring. Team 980 conducts regular fundraising campaigns on the crowd funding website Piggybackr, which also raises visibility for our team and the FIRST program. We have also enrolled in a number of donation rebate programs, like Amazon Smile, to provide an additional income stream.

Beyond the technical training we provide to our students, we conduct activities which aid in personal development, like career workshops and motivational speakers. We encourage our students to explore technical career options by offering tours of places like JPL, Walt Disney Imagineering animatronics laboratory and Fox post-production studios, exclusive screenings of STEM related movies and documentaries, and other opportunities available exclusively to team members.

Our current build site is at Walt Disney Imagineering, the second one that they have provided for us. While WDI could decide to use our site for other purposes, they value what we do in terms of public relations, and in exchange we participate in as many FIRST activities on the WDI campus as we can.

Our SWOT is attached.