Standard Operating Procedure (SOP)

Staying "Afloat" with Initiatives
- Sustainability -

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Definitions & Acronyms

- CAD -- Computer-Aided Design
- RR -- Roaring Riptide
- FRC -- FIRST Robotics Competition
- AT -- Assistive Technology
- Demo -- Robot Demonstration
- SOP -- Standard Operating Procedure
- Sustainability -- The ability to maintain something over a long period of time.
- Outreach -- Activities that extend the impact of the team beyond its members.
- Partnerships -- Collaborations with other teams, organizations, or sponsors to expand an initiative.
- Mentorship -- The process of guiding new members to continue an initiative.

Purpose

This document serves as a guide to ensure the longevity, impact, and growth of team initiatives. It outlines best practices for sustaining, expanding, and sharing initiatives to increase community engagement and outreach. Establishing a strong foundation for initiatives strengthens the team's presence and impact while ensuring the team's sustainability and image.

Key Learning Objectives

After reviewing this SOP, you will be able to:

- Consider initiatives with long-term sustainability in mind.
- Consider documentation and organizational strategies.
- Understand ways of promoting and sharing your initiative.

Procedure

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1. **Establishing Team Initiatives (Foundation)**
   1.1. **Define Clear Goals**
      1.1.1. Clearly outline the initiatives mission, vision, target audience, expected impact, and "Why".
         1.1.1.1. Define the organization.
            1.1.1.1.1. A team within the FIRST Organization is supposed to support and share FIRST's mission and vision.
            1.1.1.1.2. Your FRC Team should develop their own mission and vision that goes hand in hand with that of FIRST.
         1.1.1.2. Define the purpose behind the initiative and how it aligns with the team's core values and goals.
            1.1.1.2.1. Revisit the "Why". How does your team's initiative align with your mission and vision, and that of FIRST?
         1.1.1.3. Identify the primary audience and stakeholders, including students, mentors, sponsors, and the broader community.
            1.1.1.3.1. The clear identification of an audience allows for your team to know exactly how to share the initiative, as well as to garner support upon launch and build sustainability.
         1.1.1.4. Describe the intended short-term and long-term impacts, ensuring they contribute to the team's sustainability and outreach.
            1.1.1.4.1. Consider this the IMPACT statement of your initiative.
      1.1.2. Ensure goals are SMART
         1.1.2.1. **Specific**: Clearly define the objectives and expected outcomes.
         1.1.2.2. **Measurable**: Establish metrics to track progress and success.

1.1.2.3. **Achievable**: Set realistic goals that are attainable with available resources.

1.1.2.4. **Relevant**: Align with the team's mission and overall robotics program.

1.1.2.5. **Time-bound**: Assign deadlines to maintain momentum and accountability

1.2. **Assign Responsibilities**

1.2.1. Distribute tasks among team members to balance workloads and ensure steady progress.

1.2.1.1. Break initiatives into manageable components (e.g., logistics, outreach, documentation, funding).

1.2.1.2. Assign tasks based on individual strengths, skills, and interests to maximize engagement and efficiency.

1.2.2. Clarify team roles and responsibilities for accountability and efficiency.

1.2.2.1. Define clear leadership roles, including project leads, co-leads, and support roles.

1.2.2.1.1. Create a Team Leadership Structure document.

1.2.2.1.2. Provide reminders of following this structure throughout the season.

1.2.2.2. Maintain an updated roster of responsible individuals with their assigned duties.

1.2.2.2.1. Create groups in your team's communication platform that allows for open collaboration and accountability of work.

1.2.2.3. Encourage collaboration through cross-functional teams to ensure a holistic approach to initiative execution.

1.3. **Plan for Longevity**

1.3.1. Design initiatives that can be maintained by future team members.

1.3.1.1. Establish repeatable processes that are not reliant on specific individuals.

1.3.1.1.1. Create videos, guides, and tutorials for future team members to follow and keep initiatives "afloat". You can publish

1.3.1.2.   Ensure clear documentation and procedures are in place for continuity.

1.3.1.2.1.   Establish a team shared Drive (like Google Drive) that is not stored by individuals, rather managed by the team. All team documentation should be started, maintained, and owned by the organization -- not individuals.

1.3.2.   Create a succession plan for team roles.

1.3.2.1.   Identify and train students to take on leadership positions as seniors graduate.

1.3.2.2.   Develop a mentorship system where experienced members guide newcomers.

1.3.2.2.1.   A Standard Operating Procedure can be established, such as our "How to Be A Lifeguard", to train future members.

1.3.3.   Establish leads/co-leads for continuity:

1.3.3.1.   Assign at least one primary and one secondary lead per initiative to ensure knowledge transfer.

1.3.3.1.1.   Ensure mentors can provide continued support in these areas and that continuity isn't dependent on any one adult or one student.

1.3.3.2.   Implement regular leadership check-ins to evaluate progress and address challenges.

1.3.3.2.1.   Determine the frequency of check-ins (e.g., weekly, biweekly, or monthly) based on the complexity of the initiative.

1.3.3.2.2.   Utilize digital calendar invites (Google Calendar, Microsoft Outlook) to remind participants.

1.3.3.2.3.   Have team leads share current progress, successes, and challenges.

1.3.3.2.4.   Set clear goals and next steps for the upcoming period.

1.3.4.   Develop training materials and onboarding processes for new members to continue initiative work.

1.3.4.1.   Create step-by-step guides, video tutorials, and FAQs for initiative processes.

    1.3.4.2. Ensure there are Team Historical documents, binders, books, and other team literature available both digitally and in print for team members to access.

    1.3.4.3. Schedule structured training sessions in the off-season.

2. Documenting and Organizing your Work

 2.1. Establish and utilize a centralized documentation system. Ex: Shared Google Drive or other project management software.

 2.2. Establish a standardized document to keep meeting notes and action items.

  2.2.1. Keep track of project plans, timelines, and milestones.

 2.3. Ensure proper budget tracking and financial records.

 2.4. Maintain and update any Standard Operating Procedures (SOP's) yearly.

 2.5. Track lesson learned and any valuable insights for future team members or managers.

3. Sharing and Promoting Your Initiative

 3.1. **Utilize Social Media**

  3.1.1. Regularly post updates, impact stories, and successes.

   3.1.1.1. Create weekly scheduled posts to keep your audience up-to-date on the work you've been completing.

  3.1.2. Develop a consistent brand voice and visual identity. See Riptide's Rebranding Guide on our Team Website for more information.

   3.1.2.1. Use unified language, logos, and team colors to maintain professionalism and recognition.

  3.1.3. Engage with your audience through comments and messages.

   3.1.3.1. Respond to inquiries and encourage discussions to increase visibility and interaction.

  3.1.4. Use tools like Instagram Insights or Facebook Analytics to measure engagement and refine outreach efforts.

 3.2. **Present in your Community**

  3.2.1. Present your initiative at local events, markets, malls, competitions, and conferences.

  3.2.2. Practice your presentations and adjust them to different audiences.

3.2.3. Seek opportunities to give workshops or training sessions to increase awareness and credibility

3.3. **Develop Promotional Materials**

3.3.1. Create brochures, videos, and infographics to share.

3.3.2. Develop visually engaging content to communicate the initiative's purpose and achievements effectively.

3.4. **Expanding Reach and Partnerships**

3.4.1. Work with local, state, national, or other international teams to spread your initiative. This can amplify impact and foster knowledge sharing.

3.4.2. Contact schools, clinics, hospitals, retirement homes, businesses, and nonprofits to reach different audiences.

3.4.3. Establish meaningful relationships with organizations that align with your mission to broaden your outreach.

3.5. **Seek Funding from Sponsorships, In-Kind Donors, and Grants**

3.5.1. Research and compile a list of potential funding sources. Keep this list updated yearly.

3.5.1.1. Always check the FIRST website for funding opportunities, as well as keep in touch with your regional or district director.

3.5.2. Identify funding opportunities to support and grow your initiatives that align with your mission and vision.

3.5.2.1. Read the organization's mission and vision statement. If you have initiatives that align, submit grant applications through their organization or contact leadership of the organization for opportunities.

3.5.3. Develop key funding documents such as:

3.5.3.1. Sponsorship proposals: Clearly outline what sponsors will gain from supporting your initiative.

3.5.3.2. Business plans or a 3-Year Plan: Provide structured financial and operational strategies to ensure initiative sustainability.

3.5.3.3. Team informational brochures: Offer an overview of your team's achievements, goals, and impact to attract potential partners.

3.6. **Measuring Impact**

        3.6.1.   Establish a system for collecting data on financials, outreach, and engagement.
              3.6.1.1.   Utilize spreadsheets, surveys, photos, or tracking software to maintain organized records.
        3.6.2.   Conduct surveys to gather audience feedback and measure initiative impact.
              3.6.2.1.   Regularly evaluate the effectiveness of initiatives and implement necessary adjustments.
        3.6.3.   Use collected data to refine strategies and showcase success.
              3.6.3.1.   Leverage metrics in sponsorship proposals, social media posts, and team reports to highlight growth and accomplishments.

3.7.   Building a Support System
        3.7.1.   Engage parents, mentors, teachers, and community members to support your initiative.
              3.7.1.1.   Encourage active involvement from a variety of stakeholders to increase resources and expertise.
        3.7.2.   Establish long-term relationships with your sponsors to ensure sustainability and growth.
              3.7.2.1.   Cultivate strong connections with sponsors, alumni, and volunteers to maintain ongoing support for future initiatives

Team Resources

- Website: roaringriptide.com

- Instagram: @frcriptide4118

- *#FIRST*withAT Initiative Instagram: @FIRSTwithAT

- Facebook: Roaring Riptide: FRC Team 4118

- Twitter: FRCRiptide4118

- Youtube: @FRCRiptide

- GitHub: FRC-Riptide-4118

- Example Google Drive Format: Image Link

- Example Promotional Materials: Documentation Link