Strategic Planning Committee Meeting – LA Robotics

Mission Statement: To provide an affiliation of people and organizations who deliver fun, technology-based enrichment activities for youth and community outreach with a focus on robotics programs that are affordable and sustainable throughout the Greater Los Angeles Region.

**How do we develop a support structure for the robotics programs to ensure that growth does not topple the current abilities of LA Robotics?**

* Goals
  + To inspire and excite young people about the fun and importance of math, science, engineering, and manufacturing
  + Have a robotics team available to every student in every school
  + To raise funds that will support and sustain the mission of LA Robotics
  + To increase the *visibility* of youth robotics programs in the community
* Objectives
  + Support local robotics competitions and activities (workshops) for youth
  + Develop robust community support partners
  + Communicate and assist in cross-platform volunteer recruitment and opportunities
  + Support training of students, teachers, and professional mentors as needed
  + Act as a fiscal agent as needed for robotics programs
  + Broaden financial resources to allow LA Robotics to be fiscally independent
  + Divest Operational/Affiliate Partnerships (by July 4, 2014)
* Activities
  + Provide scholarships
  + Develop robotics camps for summer and after school sites that will allow us to bring in monies and meet our goals.
  + Allow ability for sub-committees to form as needed under LA Robotics that could create:
    - Cross-platform opportunities for professional mentor development
    - New team development skills and facilitation Hold “program neutral” workshop
    - Mini-short courses/webinars for mentors
      * System management, project management,
  + Coordinate cross-platform event calendars to minimize conflict
  + Create a fiscal agent policy to assist event partners and programs as needed
  + Outreach coordination for exhibitions, expos, conventions
  + Creating a marketing plan for LA Robotics that includes:
    - PSA about LA Robotics volunteer and mentor “happy stories” and what they get out of it – you’re like a “rock star” for the kids
    - Develop awareness of who we are, what we do, and our mission
      * Logo
      * Creating a stakeholder “pitch”
  + Find an LA Robotics Volunteer Coordinator
    - Develop distribution list and/or database for volunteers
    - Training someone capable of cross-programmatic verbiage
    - Promote volunteerism from events down to team level
  + Create an online organizational Calendar of Events with links to volunteer and event information
  + Diversify financial cash flow by adding
    - Sponsors
    - Grantors
    - Executive Board “buy-in”
    - Robotics camps/programs for a fee
    - Adding a fiscal agent services fee
  + Hire a bookkeeper or contract accountant
  + Hire an Operations Manager to oversee the “administration” side of LA Robotics, HR, and youth program management

Who are we right NOW (6/22/13)?

* We have committees set up to manage programs (Jr. FLL, FLL, FTC, SCCRF, VRC)
* We offer scholarships for 4 students at $1,000
* Official Affiliate Partner for FIRST LEGO League is LA Robotics
* Fiscal agent that collect funds, registration fees, and acts as the 501(c)(3) agent for grant monies for FLL and FTC
* Solicit Volunteers for programs mentioned above
* Tournament Planning and Management for over 40 events a year (Jr. FLL, FLL, FTC, SCCRF, VRC)
* Equipment Management for logistics of tournament execution
* Student Workshops for multiple platforms
* Teacher/Mentor Workshops for multiple platforms
* Grant writing
* Outreach coordination for exhibitions, expos, conventions

What do we want to do?

* Move the Affiliate Partner Role for all programs out of LA Robotics and find a host organization
  + However- LA Robotics would still maintain committee members on the board to assist with mission functions, scheduling, and volunteer resources
* Determine what to do with equipment purchased with program specific grant funding
* Essentially, evolve the LA Robotics Board of Directors to consist of executives from corporations, government, and community, at a high level to raise funds, create awareness, and start teams
* Executive board would consist of program chairs meeting Objectives and Activities outlined above
* We do NOT want to align with only one organizational robotics platform
* Add additional robotics platforms not currently outlined in the scope of services (look at home page [www.larobotics.org](http://www.larobotics.org) to see what we currently support)
* Create an cross-platform, program-neutral environment where volunteers and students can engage in robotics programs across the region
* Create an affiliate partner page listing all websites partners and programs with contact information. NERC, SeaPerch, Botball, BEST, KidWind, RoboGames, IaRoC, etc…
* Assist schools and districts with implantation of Engineering and Robotics as a classroom elective choice

**Program Specific – Operational/Affiliate Partner Responsibilities**

* Create a quality recruitment, training and retention program for volunteers
  + Each program needs a Volunteer Coordinator that can coordinate recruitment, training, and retention
* Should programs utilizing LAR as a fiscal agent pay a fee (amount TBD at later date)
* Need factual numbers from each program to be reported for LA Robotics to represent
  + # of kids
  + Demographic of kids
  + # of schools
  + # of volunteers
* Ultimately responsible for the execution of their programs events

Who is our constituency?

* Students
* Parents
* Teachers
* Professional Mentors
* Volunteers
* Program Partners
* Community Partners and Corporate Sponsors
* Youth Organizations (Strategic Partners)

**SWOT Analysis (Strengths, Weaknesses, Opportunities, and Threat)**

**STRENGTHS**

* High level of enthusiasm
* We have a GREAT programs
* Provides a “reason” for living for some of us – it is our PASSION

**WEAKNESSES**

* Spread too thin – key people wearing too many hats and burning out

**OPPORTUNITIES**

* Currently, robotics programs in general are not well known outside the robotics community
* Truly tell the story of the volunteers about the impact in their own lives by engaging students as a mentor and event volunteer
* Have a regional “program neutral” mentor breakfast to recognize volunteers of LA Robotics
* Making sure volunteers feel like what they are doing MATTERS

**THREATS**

* Volunteer burnout – at every level
* Restrictions of FIRST on cross-programmatic support

DEFINE WHAT A PARTNER WOULD LOOK LIKE

* What does that mean?
* What does that look like?
* Who would that be?