

Marketing and Branding your team

Massive Mini Workshop 2012
Liberty High School

Presented by Gavin Wood

Team #1939 The Kuh-nig-its at the Barstow School

Winner 2006 Daimler/Chrysler Team Spirit Award – St. Louis
2009 Chrysler Team Spirit Award – Kansas City
2010 -11 Cowtown Throwdown Best Dressed Team
2011 Imagery Award – KC Regional
2011 Imagery Award – North Star Regional
2012 Imagery Award – Oklahoma City



What Branding and Marketing is

- The Marketing Arm
 - Often Overlooked
 - Allows the engineering team to function
 - Makes the team memorable and recognizable from year to year
 - A easy entrance into science and engineering for that kid who doesn't think they know enough to build a robot.
 - Responsible for the team "brand"

Think of spirit as marketing

- In a company, no matter how great your “product” is, if nobody has heard about it, nobody will buy it.
- Your image is how every team will think of you and recognize you year after year.
- You are trying to establish a “reputation” with a visual hook.

What's in it for my team?

- Helps your team in fundraising – sponsors want to get noticed!
- Helps your team when it comes to alliance selections
- Gives your team the polish of an “elite” team
- Makes the team more fun for the students
- Great recruiting tool – helps ease kids into engineering

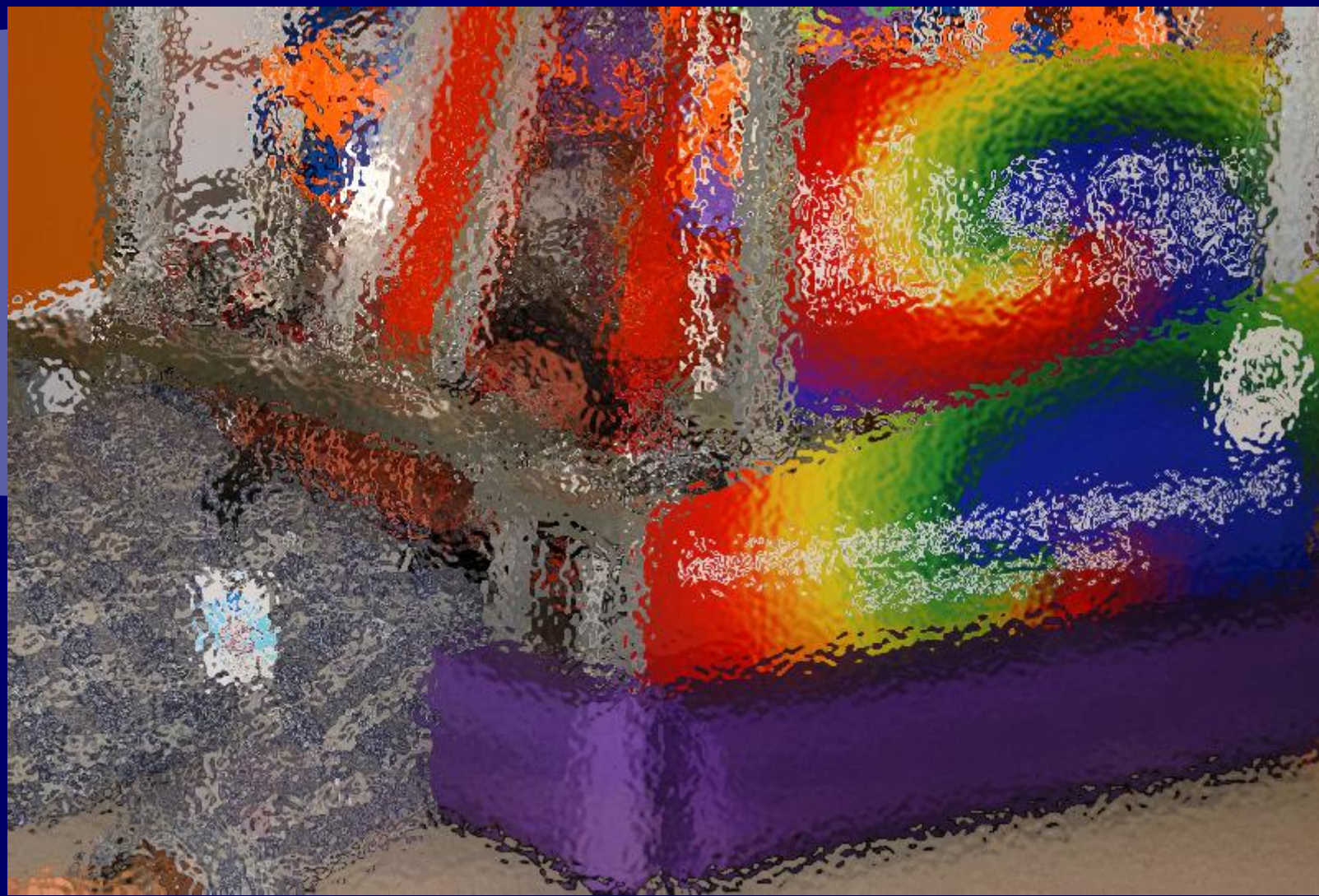
What's in it for my team (cont.)

- Makes all team members feel valued, helps ensure that everyone has a job to do
- Helps students feel a sense of team ownership – even if they are new.
- Can bend perception of your team
 - “How bout we pick team 1802 ? Who’s that? They were the ones dressed like pirates. Oh yeah I remember them, they were really good! Let’s do that”

The background of the slide is a dark blue field filled with several large, interlocking gears of varying shades of blue. On the far left, there is a vertical strip with a colorful, abstract, and textured appearance, featuring shades of orange, red, and yellow. The text "Some Recognizable teams" is centered in the upper half of the slide in a bold, yellow, sans-serif font.

Some Recognizable teams

Any guesses?



Wildstang Team 111



What is the team number?



04/29/2011

Pink – Team 233



04/29/2011

Oink, Oink, Boom!



Exploding Bacon – Team 1902



Just as Coke and Pepsi compete for your attention



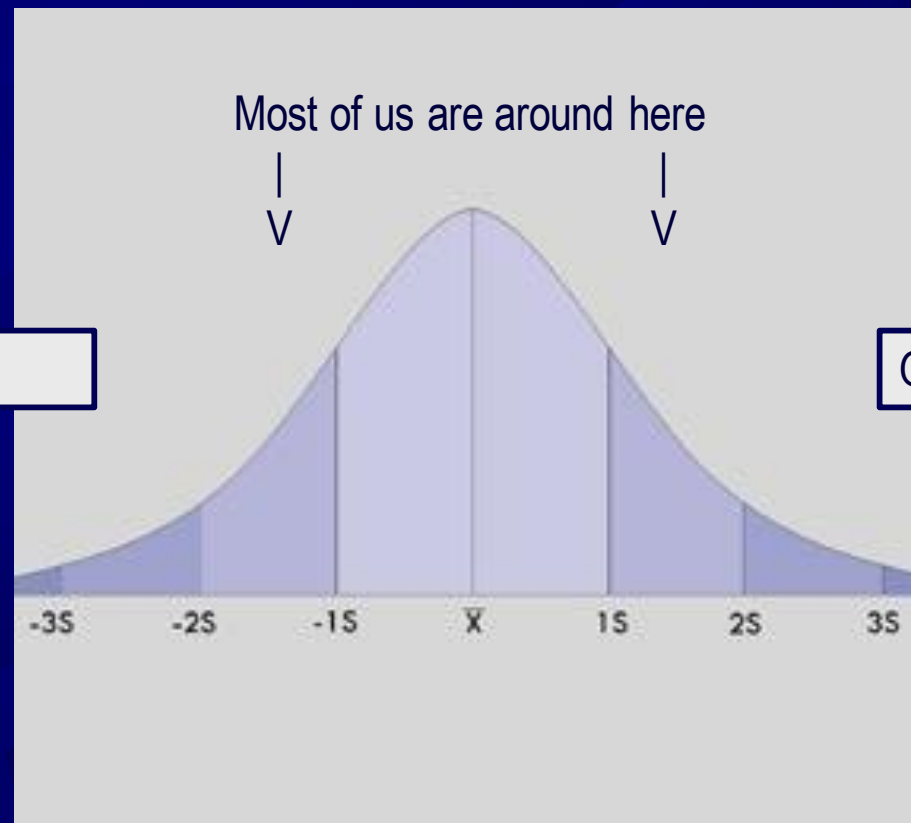
VS



**We are all trying to attract
attention for that final alliance
pick**



Most of our robots will be average- not obviously great not absolutely horrible



Lousy Robot

Great Robot

- Teams have 15 minutes to make a final alliance pick.
- Teams won't remember your school name
- Teams won't remember your team number
- They will remember Miss Daisy, the Pink team, or the Bomb Squad and figure out your number from that.



The background of the slide is a dark blue field filled with several large, semi-transparent gears of varying shades of blue. On the far left, there is a vertical strip of colorful, abstract, and textured patterns in shades of orange, red, and yellow, resembling a film strip or a collage.

- In the Beginning....

Gracious professionalism

- The one thing that sets us apart from other competitions is our ethos of Gracious Professionalism.
- That means we don't only cheer for our own team, we also cheer for the other teams as well.
- When any team does an awesome job, it means they have added to the overall level of the competition which helps all of us. So they deserve our applause and cheers.

First - pick a name/theme

- Make it unique (check it out here http://www.firstwiki.net/index.php/Index_of_Teams to make sure it hasn't been taken)
- You can play off your school's mascot
 - Knights -> Kuh-nig-its, Mustangs – Metal Mustangs
 - Titans -> Titanium
- Your Sponsors – Space Cookies, Exploding Bacon
- Your number – 1776 colonial theme.
- Or an acronym – MOE, SWAT, STAG
- Or you can just make one up and stick with it -> Team Driven

Theme Continued

- It doesn't have to be "robot" related. Don't be afraid to be silly – Pink, Landsharks, Killer bees, Miss Daisy
- Can use movies, TV Shows, etc. – but do a play on the theme, not just a total rip off or you may have to deal with copyright issues.
- Check it out with School Administration and be ready to defend with examples if they want you to be Joe Smith High School Robotics

Name Examples

- Duct Tape Bandits
- The Cat Attack
- Cobra Commanders
- Surgeons of Steel
- RoboDawgs
- SPARK - Students Pursuing Applied Robotics Knowledge
- Skunkworks Robotics

Second – pick colors

- At least 2 strong dominant visible colors that you can get fabric and T- shirts in.
- School colors may be required
- Most kids want black t-shirts, however they can make you blend in with the crowd in the arena.



Guidelines for your brand

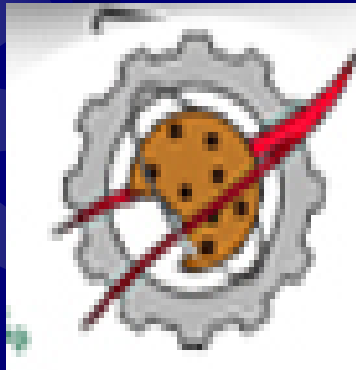
- Make it safe
- Can't be too distracting or obnoxious
- No noisemakers or food.
- No music on your cart
- Mascots must be escorted if they cannot see clearly.
- Don't make it rude, crude and socially unacceptable (not too much at least)

Third – make a logo with number

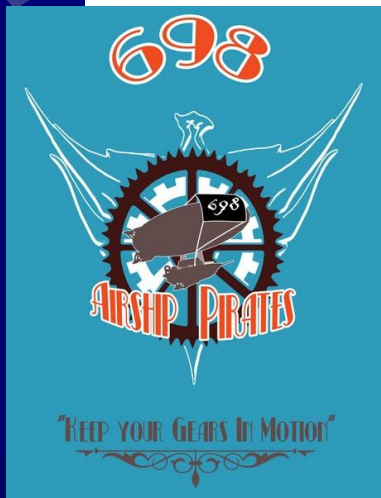
- Make them simple so that they can be easily replicated.
 - Don't use shading or gradients which are hard to stencil or paint
- Make them uncluttered so that they can be recognized from 10 feet away
- Get it in layers in Photoshop
- Don't change it much, but it can evolve over time. That is your brand
- Put it on everything



Not too busy



Get it in photo
shop, preferably
vectorized
drawing





All of these logos are simple and uncluttered. Easy to replicate and recognize.

It doesn't always work the first year



2006



2007



2008



2009 - present



Fourth - Design your Shirt (or uniform)

- Include team number, name, logo
- Use your colors
- Make it stand out from across the room. Black doesn't
- Make sure the font is large enough to be legible.
- Should cost about \$10-\$15 /shirt for 4 color
- Put *FIRST* logo on sleeve. Logo at *FIRST* website under Marketing Tools.
<http://www.usfirst.org/roboticsprograms/marketing-tools/brand>
- Include sponsors



Quilt made of t-shirts

Shirts continued

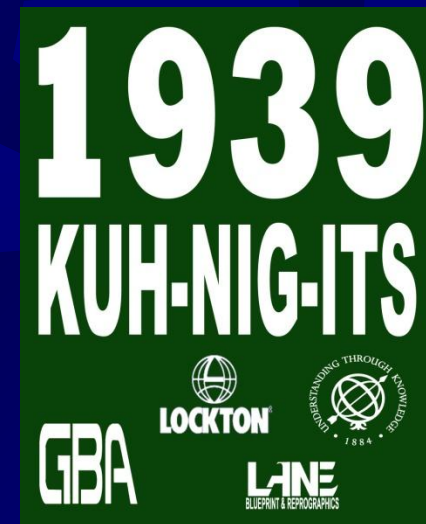
- Consider how fancy you want to get. Typically, fancy (ie. Embroidery, jump suits, etc.) is expensive. T-shirts are not.
- Make a few extras so you can sell them to incoming freshmen the next year before Cowtown.
- If you put a year or game specific theme, you'll have to make new shirts every year for sure.
- Iron-ons are easy and work well if you want to customize

Fifth – develop flair

- Keep it cheap and safe
- Make a lot of them
- Relate them to your theme
- You MUST have buttons at the very least 500 – 1000 per regional buy a button maker at Dr. Don's
<http://www.buttonsonline.com/machines.html>
- If you want to do a team giveaway, go out and get donations. Pink team gave a sand pail and shovel, sunglasses, BIG bottle of sun tan lotion and a bag of Florida sand.
- Check out US Toy or Oriental Trading Company.
- Oriental Trading Company - <http://www.orientaltrading.com>
- US Toy – in town at 435 and StateLine <http://www.ustoyco.com/>

Remember to Sell your number

- Connect your team number to your team
 - Make sure it is in large font on your shirt
 - Put it on all flair
 - Put it on your pit banners
 - Put it in your logo



Back of our Tshirt



Adding those
valuable extras

Hats

- Most kids don't like to wear hats
- Many kids are afraid to look silly. Train the team that it is alright, part of the uniform.
- You never come home with all the hats you made.
- If it is uncomfortable or hot, it isn't going to get worn.
- Don't use a lot of white, it gets dirty...unless your mascot is a white rabbit.

Develop a cheer or dance

- Here are the pom-poms if you want them.
- Invite the dance team to help.
- Teach everyone the song/dance/cheer.
- Do it together (a lot)....
- <http://moe365.org/sounds.php>
- <http://video.google.com/videoplay?docid=-1467985459933878239&hl=en#>
- <http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=dxZWjTSgugg&noredirect=1>

Robot

- .
- Try to make the robot reflect your theme.
- Bumper lettering is important!
- Screen print if possible or fabric paint. Embroidery is a luxury.
- Best is the robot itself



Landsharks shark robot

Develop a robot “trading card”

- Develop a handout that lists all the “selling” points about your robot.
 - How fast does it go, how many balls does it hold, what kind of drive does it have?
- Include a picture, team number, name and logo
- Pass it out to the scouting teams, pass it out again on Saturday morning.
- Have the kids who were less involved in the building interview the builders to figure out what makes the robot awesome.

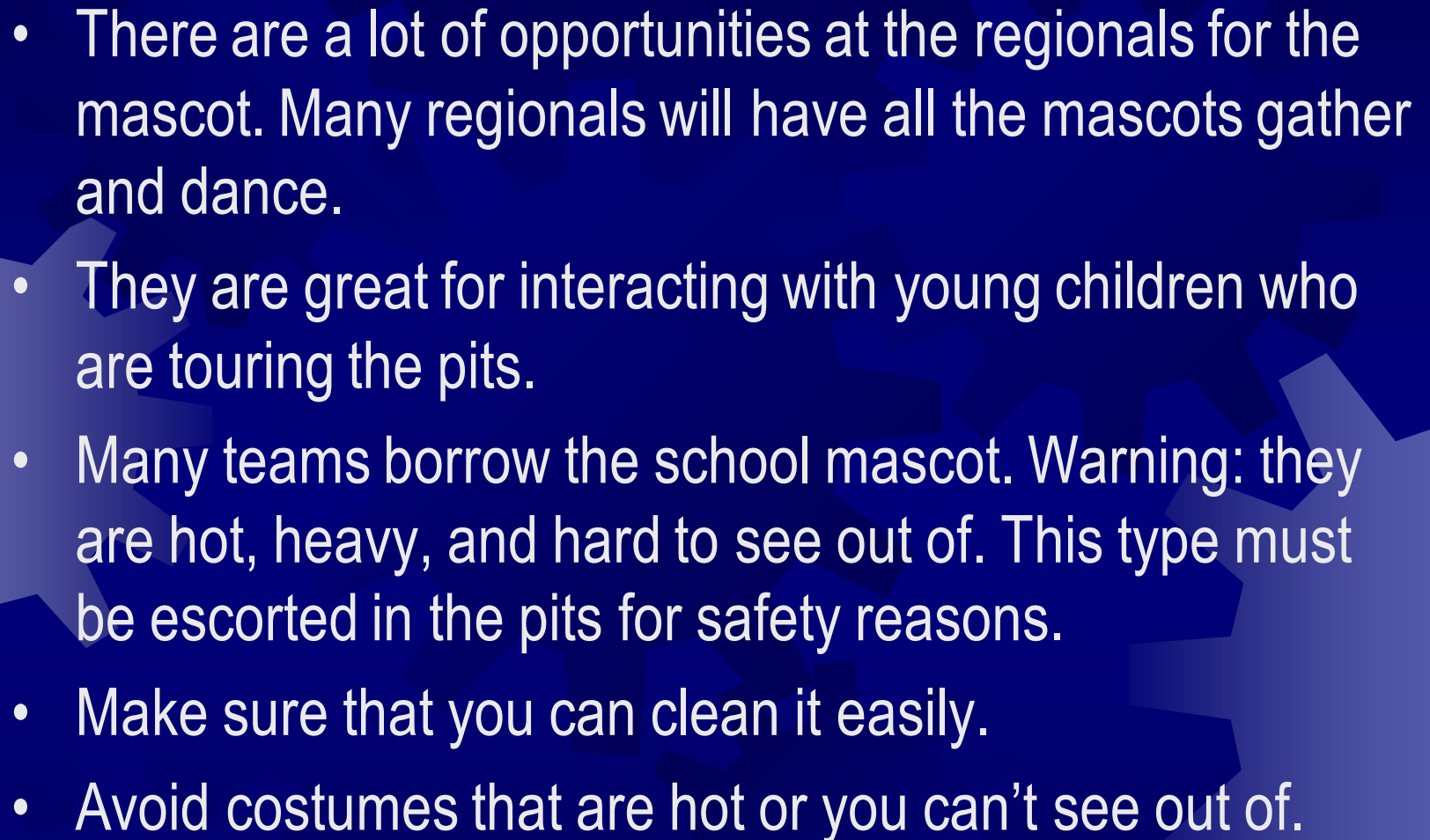
Banners



- Do not make them specific to the year or game unless you have money to burn.
- Put the sponsors on velcro so you can change them out if they don't continue sponsoring.
- Display in pit.
- It is a good idea to try to find a printing sponsor for banners, awards, and marketing pieces.

Develop a mascot



- 
- There are a lot of opportunities at the regionals for the mascot. Many regionals will have all the mascots gather and dance.
 - They are great for interacting with young children who are touring the pits.
 - Many teams borrow the school mascot. Warning: they are hot, heavy, and hard to see out of. This type must be escorted in the pits for safety reasons.
 - Make sure that you can clean it easily.
 - Avoid costumes that are hot or you can't see out of.

Add costumes



Maximum Oz





Design your pit

- Bring in your theme, color and number.



Pit

- You will have to set this up easily and transport it often.
- PVC is great, lightweight and cheap.
- You can get very fancy on this - ie. Team Driven's Pit is Awesome, Liberty has a nice pit too.
- Try to have a front and a back.
- Avoid Pop-up tents if possible. (in my opinion)

Add flags

- At the beginning of a round the announcer will display flags of the competing teams. Make something visually striking.
- Consider flag alternatives, like a bunny on a pole (just make sure it is attached well). :)



Dress up the drive team





Mentors

- Look outside of just engineers and programmers for mentorship
- Could use a graphic designer
- Publications expert
- Marketing Professional
- Someone who can sew or is otherwise a crafts expert (ie. Scrapbooker)
- Managers have good ideas about team organization as well.

Conclusions

- Marketing, spirit, and theme continuity are important!
- It brands your team and makes them memorable.
- It gives everyone a responsibility.
- Stay on message.
- Push your number and logo.
- Don't be afraid to be silly.
- Don't save it just for the competitions.
- Use engineering principles to design the flair/swag.
- It's all about fun.

Final Word

AKA: Leeland

TBA→ FRC #1126 (SparX)

Team Role: Tactician

Posts: 77



Re: Most Recognizable Teams

To me, the teams that everyone recognizes are the teams who pick a theme... and shove it down our throats until we can't possibly forget it.

Yes, PINK and MOE have that down pat. PINK, of course, has the color pink EVERYWHERE. On their shirts, their robot, their wigs. They shove pink down our throats until we can't help but associate that color with them. In the stands, the pits or the field, you see a mass of pink, you can't help but know that 233 is coming up.

It's the same principal with MOE and Wildstang, with the Neon Green and Tie-Dye. You see lime green, you're looking at either MOE or Thunderchickens. You see that mass of tie-dye, you're looking at Wildstang.

Another way to make your team recognizable is through sheer robot performance and imagery. I know, if I see a black and red robot, with red light coming out of it somewhere, I'm looking at a Robowrangler robot. Royal Blue? Cheesy Poofs. Honeycomb designs? Killer Bees.

The point is, to be recognizable, what you're looking for is a theme you can put into everything you do. The Killer Bees have been brought up. They take that "Bee" theme, and they put it in their cheers. Their robot. Their costumes. What you need to do, is be able to build an association with your gimmick so strong, you could remove all references to a team name and number from a shirt and robot, and be able to still recognize whose team it is. Memorable logos help to.

If you're looking for examples, I know I could look at the following teams without their numbers or names, and recognize their robot or shirt:

33, 111, 148, 188, 191, 217, 233, 234, 254, 330, 340, 341, 359, 469, 781, 1114, 1503, 1511, 1625...

Well, the list goes on and on. All these teams either have a color, a logo, or a specific style that I will always be able to look at from the top of the bleachers and say "Oh, that's xxxx".

Hope this helps.



• Tools

Graphics programs

- Photoshop (and someone who can use it)
- Inkscape – An Open Source vector graphics editor, with capabilities similar to Illustrator, CorelDraw, or Xara X, using the W3C standard Scalable Vector Graphics (SVG) file format. Inkscape-
<http://www.inkscape.org/>
- Printmaster
- Make sure you have a common file type or can convert.
- Archive your graphics

Vector Magic - <http://vectormagic.com/home> converts jpg to scalable vector graphic

Cricut or CNC

- Cricut and Sure Cuts A Lot or a CNC machine that you can cut paper, fabric and vinyl on. Sure Cuts A Lot allows you to download your custom graphics to the Cricut. Some scrapbooker at your school might have a Cricut.



Cricut: <http://www.cricut.com/>

Sure Cuts A lot for Cricut Machine -

<http://www.craftededge.com/purchase/purchase.html>

Image to Cricut tutorial -

<http://scrappydew.com/tutorials/files/category-video-tutorial.php>

Or a Diecut machine

- Your school might have one. Try the elementary school
- Or a scrapbooker
- Sizzix or Ellison



Yudu

- Screenprinting

Yudu – Screen print

<http://www.whatdoyudu.com/>

Screen Printing: Screen print Hobby kit-

<http://www.silkscreeningsupplies.com/store/799934/product/HOBBYKIT>



Use it to make flair, t-shirts, working shirts. Buy your competition shirts from a vendor, but you could make build season shirts or personalize shirts for build season.

Sewing Machine

- Find someone who can sew. A parent or non-builder. They can help you design costumes.
- Check out patterns from the fabric store. They have a lot of costume patterns that you could adapt. They have everything from animals to pirates and elves.



- Iron
 - \$10 -\$14 cheap is fine , teflon coated nice
 - Good for iron ons and getting the wrinkles out of your flag that some kid stuffed into the crate last year.
 - The team will destroy it. Glue gets on it, iron-ons will get burned on it .



- Glue Guns
 - Hobby Lobby has them for around \$3
 - Get about 5 low melt
 - Get one nice one like Aleene's Ultimate Glue Gun at Michaels



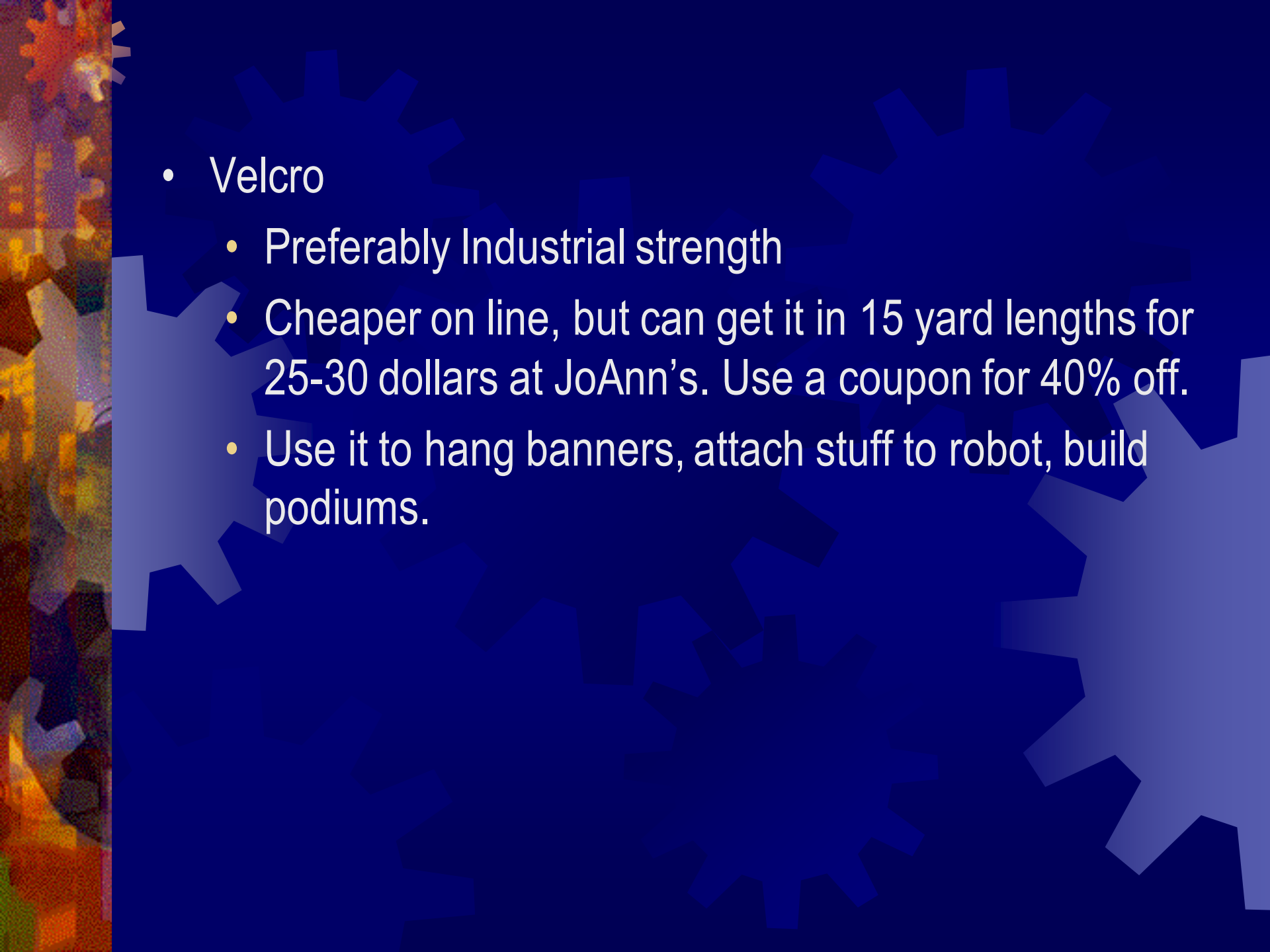
Supplies

- Inkjet T-shirt Transfer
 - \$20 / 10 sheets
 - \$1/sheet online
 - Don't wash well
 - Easy to use for 1 or 2 shirts for limited use
- We make 2 safety captain shirts that we use at one event. They don't wash well.
- Iron on our numbers onto our hats.



- Heat'N Bond – Ultra and lite iron on adhesive
 - \$10.99 for 17" X 5 yards
 - JoAnn's & Walmart
 - Also can use Wonder Under
 - Ultra can "leak" through thinner fabrics
 - Use it to applique fabrics onto flags and costumes



- 
- Velcro
 - Preferably Industrial strength
 - Cheaper on line, but can get it in 15 yard lengths for 25-30 dollars at JoAnn's. Use a coupon for 40% off.
 - Use it to hang banners, attach stuff to robot, build podiums.

- Iron on Letters and images
 - Use to personalize t-shirt with kid's names.
 - Pretty expensive
 - Sizes up to 5 inches could be used for flags.
- Felt Stick on letters



Coupons, Coupons, Coupons

- Michaels, JoAnns, Hobby Lobby get on their list for 40% off
- Sign up for tax exempt card at all stores or have a tax exempt certificate with you at all times
- Sign up for email coupons AND snail mail coupons at all stores.
- Sign all team members up for coupons and collect them. 40% for one item off adds up.
- Sign up for educational discount