

TEAM IDENTITY



SOAR blueprints

COURSE

COURSE OVERVIEW

What is team identity?

Team identity is the collective personality, values, and culture that define who your team is and how it operates. It encompasses:

- Core Values: The fundamental principles your team believes in and upholds
- Brand & Visual Identity: How your team presents itself to the world (name, logo, colors, aesthetic)
- Team Culture: The behavioral norms, traditions, and ways team members interact
- Reputation & Perception: How other teams, judges, sponsors, and your community perceive you
- Shared Purpose: The collective mission that unites your members

Why Team Identity Matters in STEM Racing

Team Cohesion & Retention

- Teams with strong identity have higher member retention and engagement
- Creates a sense of belonging that motivates participation during challenging times
- Reduces friction because members understand shared expectations
- Provides rallying point during setbacks or failures

Decision-Making Framework

- When facing difficult choices, identity guides decisions
- Prevents contradictory actions (e.g., claiming to be "inclusive" but excluding perspectives)
- Speeds up problem-solving because criteria are already defined
- Maintains consistency

Competitive Advantage

- Judges and sponsors remember teams with distinct identities
- Creates emotional connection beyond technical performance



MODULE 1: CORE VALUES & PURPOSE

Understanding Core Values

Core values are non-negotiable principles that your team uses to make decisions and evaluate actions. They answer the question: "What do we stand for?"

Common STEM Racing Team Values

Innovation

- Encourages experimentation and creative problem-solving
- Values learning from failures as much as successes
- Continuously seeks better approaches
- Not afraid to challenge conventional thinking

Teamwork & Collaboration

- Values all roles equally (design, build, drive, logistics, etc.)
- Effective communication across disciplines
- Shared credit for wins, shared responsibility for losses
- Psychological safety to voice concerns

Purpose statement

Create a 1-2 sentence statement of why your team exists. This is different from values—it's your mission.

Examples:

- "We exist to build innovative robots that inspire younger students to pursue STEM careers."
- "We race to prove that engineering is accessible to everyone, regardless of background."
- "We compete to solve real-world problems and make a positive impact in our community."

A good purpose statement:

- Is meaningful to your members
- Survives beyond a single season
- Can inspire someone to join your team

Sustainability

- Considers environmental and social impact
- Makes ethical choices even when harder
- Plans for long-term health over short-term wins
- Mentors younger teams and grows the community

Resilience

- Bounces back from setbacks and failures
- Maintains morale during difficult periods
- Learns from losses and improves
- Supports team members through personal challenges



MODULE 2: BRAND & VISUAL IDENTITY

What is Brand?

Brand is how your team presents itself to the world. It's the collection of visual, verbal, and experiential elements that make people recognize and remember you.

Key Components of Brand Identity

Team Name

- Should be memorable and ideally meaningful
- Avoid generic names (avoid: "Robotics Team A")
- Can reference your school, location, mascot, values, or an inside story
- Should be pronounceable and easy to spell
- Consider how it sounds when announced at competitions

Logo

- Should be distinctive and recognizable at small sizes
- Works in both color and black & white
- Reflects your values or team identity
- Consistent across all materials (t-shirts, banners, vehicle)
- Professional enough for sponsor materials

Tagline or Motto

- Short phrase (3-7 words) that captures your essence
- Memorable and motivational
- Used in communications and on materials
- Can change with team leadership, but consistency helps

Logo Design Considerations:

- Avoid overly complex designs—simplicity = memorability
- Avoid design trends that will look dated in 2 years
- Consider how it looks on your vehicle (curved surfaces, angles)
- Think about scalability (tiny on a website, large on a banner)
- If using a mascot, ensure it's appropriate for all contexts

Color Palette

- Choose 2-3 primary colors that represent your team
- Consider color psychology and what it communicates
- Ensure colors have good contrast for visibility
- Test how colors look together on different backgrounds
- Consistency across all materials (apparel, banners, digital)



MODULE 3: BRAND & VISUAL IDENTITY 2

Building Brand Identity Step-by-Step

Step 1: Define Your Identity in Words Before designing, describe your team:

- What's unique about us?
- What are we known for?
- What values do we want to communicate?
- Who is our audience?
- What emotion do we want people to feel?

Step 2: Create Design Options:

- Use design platforms like Canva or Adobe Express (accessible, templates available)

Step 3: Get Feedback

- Show designs to non-team members—do they understand the message?
- Test with judges and sponsors—does it communicate professionalism?
- Get buy-in from the team—do they feel represented?
- Iterate based on feedback

Step 4: Create Brand Guidelines Document for consistency:

- Logo usage (minimum size, clear space, approved variations)
- Color specifications (hex codes, RGB, Pantone)
- Typography (fonts to use for headers, body text)
- Tone of voice (formal, casual, technical, inspirational?)
- Examples of correct and incorrect usage

step 5: Implement Across All Materials

- Update team apparel
- Create banners and signage
- Apply to vehicle or robot
- Update digital presence
- Use consistently in communications



MODULE 4: COMMON MISTAKES

Mistake 1: Copying Another Team's Identity

- Your brand should be uniquely yours
- Judges and community notice copied designs
- Undermines authenticity and credibility
- You lose the opportunity to build your own legacy

Mistake 2: Changing Identity Too Frequently

- New leadership often wants to rebrand
- Constant change prevents brand recognition
- Builds on previous team's work rather than replacing it
- Refresh design occasionally, don't start from scratch

Mistake 3: Disconnection from Values

- Your brand should reflect what you actually stand for
- Example: Claiming "sustainability" while using single-use materials
- Brand should authentically represent your team
- Inconsistency creates cynicism

Mistake 4: Ignoring Professional Standards

- Logo that looks amateurish hurts credibility
- Low-quality apparel and materials reflect poorly
- Judges form impressions based on professionalism
- Invest in good design and quality execution

Mistake 5: Logo Too Complex or Trendy

- Overly detailed logos don't scale to small sizes
- Trendy designs look dated quickly
- Simple, timeless designs age well
- Test logo at multiple sizes before finalizing



CONCLUSION

Why Maintaining Identity and Branding Matters

Once you've built a strong team identity and brand, the real work begins: maintaining it over time. Many teams invest energy in creating their identity—defining values, designing a logo, establishing traditions—but then fail to protect and nurture it as the team grows and changes. This is where success becomes fragile.

The Cost of Neglect

Erosion of Culture

- Without consistent reinforcement, values drift from what's stated to what's actually practiced
- Subtle misalignments between behavior and values compound over time
- The team loses the clarity that once guided decisions

Brand Dilution

- Visual identity becomes inconsistent (old colors used on some materials, new colors on others)
- Logo appears in multiple versions without a standard
- Messaging varies widely across different team members
- Judges and sponsors no longer recognize your distinct brand
- You become forgettable instead of memorable

