

Structure:

1. Start off quickly summarizing our journey and what we won for and then jump into how you *don't* have to replicate the work of previous winners
 - a. Mission of RoboLancers: to inspire and prepare the next generation of STEM leaders in Philadelphia
 - b. Started a non-profit which starts and supports robotics teams around the city through funding, mentorship, coach training, summer camps, and running events
 - c. Changed strategies of Impact from 21-22 to 22-23
 - i. Used Impact Scouting to understand what makes our team unique
 - ii. Changed the wording we used around certain initiatives in order to highlight the special and strategic aspects
2. **QUESTION**: When is it OK to reference something from OUTSIDE the past 3 years?
 - a. TBH we had a lotta trouble with this, we kept on referencing the history of our team and it took up time
 - b. Balance of history vs. what you're doing now, we started shifting toward only what we're doing now this year and it really helped
 - i. One paragraph of team history to one sentence
 - ii. Gives context to what your team is doing now.
 - c. They can only judge things which happened in the past 3 years, so only add history if it helps judges understand what you're doing now
 - i. For example, "we founded the Philadelphia Robotics Coalition in 2016..." instead of "in 2016 we were distributing microgrants of \$321 to teams around our city and running workshops. Then, we started the Philadelphia Robotics Coalition....."
3. **QUESTION**: What do you need to bring to the impact presentation? For example, do you bring the outreach spreadsheet recommended by FIRST and hand it to the judges? Or is it assembled in a binder? We've never submitted for the award before. Thanks!
 - a. Binder/documentation of some sort
 - i. **EVERY** Evidence of every claim you make
 - ii. Format in an easy way for judges to understand (we formatted it in the same way our essay was formatted) because they only have 15 minutes to look through- make things easy for them to find
 - iii. Don't put things in your binder which you don't put in the rest of your submission
 1. The binder is just evidence, not a place to add to your presentation.
 - b. Yourself
 - c. Any other props you may have
 - i. Theme vs. content
 1. Do what you're comfortable with

- 2. We've had kids wear team shirts, this year we wore suits which made us more comfortable
 - 3. Don't let themes take away from content
 - ii. We brought in a tv with a presentation
 - iii. No outlets / other additional needs
 - 1. Make sure your prop is able to function by itself
 - 2. Also ensure that your prop can easily be brought in and out of the room and doesn't take up too much of your time
 - d. Mentor
 - i. HAVE A MENTOR IN THE ROOM
 - ii. Have them write down *everything* you say- all questions, all answers, etc
 - 1. Helps you in later years- you can go back and re-answer all the questions from previous years
 - 2. Many times students entirely blank out after leaving the room
 - iii. Debrief a few minutes after- have mentors talk about how it went, students talk about how it went, and then talk about how you can do better next time
 - iv. Mentor is a *silent* observer- they should not participate in *any* way
 - e. Running Log of everything
- 4. **QUESTION:** How did you seek out teams to help mentor?
 - a. We started 94 teams in the last 3 years
 - b. We looked for schools in our district who didn't have them, and reached out to teachers there to start teams. We asked teams which would pop up if they wanted our help.
 - c. We are in the unique situation of being in a super dense area.
- 5. **QUESTION:** How do you encourage people who are more focused in gaining technical robotics experience to work on the operations side?
 - a. Team culture shift on a high school robotics team can happen very quickly
 - b. Had individual outreach plans+ benefits
 - i. Each student has deeper understanding of what we do
 - ii. Each student has a personal story to speak about to judges while getting us
 - iii. Judges can tell when only a handful of students know something about outreach
 - c. Required amount of hours
 - i. Outreach is just as much a part of robotics as building a robot is
 - d. Had students log all outreach hours, allowing us to measure our work, document it, and allowing members to get their required hours
- 6. **QUESTION:** How do we make our outreach unique?
 - a. Don't just check boxes
 - i. International work example

- b. Most important part is talking to your community
 - i. From a quality of outreach perspective: you are able to understand what holes need to be filled and what issues they're still getting
 - ii. From a judging perspective, it shows that you are actually committed to effective outreach and not just ticking off check-boxes
- c. Transportation Example
- 7. **QUESTION:** We've been submitting Impact/Chairman's for the past 5-6 years since we opened our practice field to the public in southern Maine. Our question is: What is the best way to show our measurable impact that this space has on teams around New England? We donated the carpet from it in 2019 to use for an event but that is not within the past 3 years (which is what the judges care about).
 - a. Depends on each team
 - b. Show growth**
 - c. Identify your community and goals for your community- examine how your work fits into that. What issue in your community is your center addressing?
 - d. Use numbers, explain why they are important- these can be amounts of teams who have come to your field, how much time those teams spent at your field
- 8. **QUESTION:** How can a small team start the process of long term commitment to outreach, given large senior turnover year to year?
 - a. Sit down as a whole team (especially coaches and mentors included) and plan out what you want your outreach to be
 - i. We have a talk about this, and if you want to talk through starting an outreach program we can go into more depth (at another time?)
 - b. Institutional knowledge
 - i. Thorough documentation
 - ii. Consistent mentoring/coaching
 - iii. Including new members in planning + don't have outreach depend on one member because they will eventually graduate
 - c. Quality > Quantity (again!)
 - i. You can do two good events vs. seven/eight poorly planned events
- 9. **QUESTION:** How can we serve to make a meaningful impact of a scale appropriate to our team that stands out, while balancing rookie training and in-season work?
 - a. Examine your team and community and figure out what is feasible for your team and beneficial to your community
 - i. quality>quantity
 - ii. Important to understand your limitations- i.e. build season is not a great time to start planning things
 - iii. You've got the whole offseason! Use that time to plan and execute outreach!

Chat Questions:

10. **QUESTION:** Do you think you can win IMPACT for international work even though the award is for work in your community?
 - a. Your community is just whoever you are helping and serving.
 - b. You don't need to do International Work as a way to "check off" the box.
 - c. RoboLancers only serves Philadelphia because we know the issues that our city faces, and what ways we can help

11. **QUESTION:** How do I know I have "enough" things to present about? Or compared to teams with much more funding, they are able to reach more people or "do more." (from chat)
 - a. Impact Scouting (of your District, region, or Worlds!)
 - b. Find certain similarities but also specific differences to distinguish yourself from others, making your submission unique from others!
 - c. Ex. RoboLancers did not realize that Title 1 schools were that important to our Impact submission until Impact scouting.
 - d. Quality over Quantity! Quality of work matters, not how many schools you have mentored or helped out.
 - e. Isriah: You should not submit Impact just because there is a "better" team there at that competition. You should submit every year to show to judges your progress.

12. **QUESTION:** How do you **start** doing outreach in a way that isn't just "checking a box," while also being a small (members-wise) team.
 - a. Don't mentor teams because you need to mentor someone. You should mentor people who need to help. You don't impact to people, you impact with people.
 - b. Plan your outreach, a goal that drives this outreach, and analyze why this goal hasn't been reached. What can you start as outreach to achieve that?
 - c. Some outreach seems minimal, but by explaining to judges how it achieves your goal, it still is a way of outreach!
 - i. SEPTA, transportation help for students in our city.
 - d. It's fine to do a lot of things that other teams do, but you have to know your team's purpose behind why you do this outreach and what goals it achieves.
 - i. Ex. Summer Camps
 - e. Cool-sounding stuff may not bring Impact (District providing money for coaches, donating money directly to teams, etc). But genuine stories of impact can bring you Impact, even if it is the smallest things in your outreach!

13. **QUESTION:** How does mentoring and outreach work on your team? How are students motivated to mentor teams and run/do outreaches on their own?
 - a. Team requirement of 30hrs outreach for each team member.

- b. Team mentoring is just as important as building a robot.
- c. The team enjoys doing outreach, many people did 40+, most people did double the expectation, some even 100+
- d. The expectation of mentoring changes the team culture, and judges see that personal team change and the stories of impact that comes with it.
- e. Every student designing a mentoring program vs. every student joining one team mentoring program. Whole team doing the work > small team of people that do the work.
 - i. That also allows every team member to know what to answer when one is asked for outreach and mentoring. If one can't answer the judges, it is not a good look and reflection of your team's outreach and impact progress.

14. **QUESTION:** How drastic was the change between different versions of Impact from year to year? Did you just change how you wrote your questions? How'd you practiced? Did you change something else entirely? More specifically, which overhauled area had the most impact on your impact award? How important is it to use statistics in your essay?

- a. Love statistics, show different statistics from different fields of the team's work.
- b. Statistics that explain the in-depth purpose and impact of those personal stories are good things to include.
- c. Scout how other teams include their statistics to their Impact story. How does the statistics contribute to your goal, and how does it achieve the Impact?
- d. Statistics that show out progress over time. Show the connections between the statistics.
- e. Removed team demographics.
- f. Practiced presentation, memorize script(?), whatever works with your team.

15. **QUESTION:** How "perfect" does your essay has to be?

- a. What you are being judged is what you have done. Being professional is important no matter what, but it doesn't have to be perfect.
- b. Just get your point across to your judges. Numbers are a part of your stories, incorporate them into your presentation.
- c. Be purposeful in what you are saying.

16. **QUESTION:** how do you get so many funds to yourself that you're able to fund other teams?

- a. Splitting team funds away from non-profit funds
- b. Foundation of Coalition
- c. Inconsistent funding from the District for the STEM programs because of a lack of trustable and reliable vendors. District saw the impact of these programs

RoboLancers did through the Coalition, and it has gone on since then!

17. **QUESTION:** If you are a community based team, what is the best way to show impact in stats of reading literacy and math like you mentioned?
- Community is what you define, the group you define.
 - You can identify the community you are a part of or who you serve.
 - Impact is not impact on your own team, but impact on the community around you.
 - Most stats of 321 Impact are not stats of the team, but the community.
18. **QUESTION:** What do you bring into the room for an interview?
- Small TV or laptop is all fine. But it has to be self-sustaining, helps explain what you are showing to judges, and be quick in and out of the room.
 - RoboLancers did slideshow to spread out stats onto slides, so judges had time to analyze for the full story.
19. **QUESTION:** Are there any steps as a rookie team that our team should be taking now if we would want to submit for impact in the future?
- The expectation of mentoring changes the team culture, and judges see that personal team change and the stories of impact that comes with it.
 - Refer to question 15
20. **QUESTION:** For the impact documentation spreadsheet on FIRSTS website, are we supposed to bring that printed out into the room? We've never done impact before as a team.
- You can use the documentation spreadsheet or get all documentation yourself. It should always be in a binder, organized by dividers, etc.
21. **QUESTION:** How did you balance more personalized outreach (like mentoring teams) versus larger-scale outreach (like running regionals) in your essays and presentations?
- The expectation of mentoring changes the team culture, and judges see that personal team change and the stories of impact that comes with it.
 - Refer to answers in question 15
 - Starting teams, but then realizing they need events to compete at. So you have that relationship between the two. Focus on both personalized vs large-scale to show that relationship and impact between the two!
22. **QUESTION:** Do you believe a pit binder showing why you deserve every award is helping you win?
- No, pit judging is separate from Impact judging.

- b. RoboLancers has usually been relatively disappointing at pit judging, but those pit information are good for reference for your own team.
 - c. Brochures, little pamphlets are good because judges have time to look at that throughout the day instead of being at your pit.
 - d. Binders should be only for Impact
 - e. No one is good enough for every award, don't talk to judges about things you don't want to talk about. Sell something to the judges!
 - f. Practice questions! (from past years and stuff)
23. **QUESTION:** From your experience, how would you summarize this award (Impact)?
- a. Team that demonstrates the greatest measurable impact in their community
 - b. Very vague because it allows you to twist and turn the impact.
 - c. Ex. The team that focused on environment last year finished finalists at Worlds
 - d. Look at Impact definitions
 - e. Reaching vs. Impacting (Posting Instagram can reach 1000 people, but you didn't impact every single of them)
24. **QUESTION:** What do you feel people miss when submitting IMPACT?
- a. Talking about the "why," the importance of your community.
 - b. Add depth to your work by talking about those
25. **QUESTION:** Is it okay if we have more things (outreach, volunteering) for this year than the last two or three years? Also does consistency matter, future vs. progress/growth?
- a. Both are crucial, explaining current outreach that shows progress, and also ones that are in the future.
 - b. Growth doesn't necessarily mean more people at a summer camp for example. You can grow the actual program, the curriculum, because something didn't work! That progress and improvement can show impact!
 - c. Future plans aren't exactly judged, so show more on progress and the impact of those future plans.
 - i. Ex. Hack-A-Thon; shows that we are trying consistently to grow to expand to other STEM fields, different aspects of STEM. Shows that your team isn't perfect and your team's thought process of improving your community!