



# What to Do and Not to Do When Submitting for the Chairman's Award

Team 2506's Guide  
By Josh Hansen

Overview:

Team 2506 has not won a Chairman's award yet but due to our experience, we will offer our assistance to help teams avoid our mistakes.

1. If you are going to submit for this prestigious award, do not start writing the essay one week before the due date.
  - a. This happened to us during our second year and one of our advisors thought it would be a great idea to submit for the award. He and another student rushed to get the essay submitted and it was not seen by the people involved with the interview. During the interview itself, we received a question concerning specific data included in the essay. Needless to say, we were stumped when asked and they even commented on our feedback form.
    - i. I also suggest that whoever writes the majority of the essay to also be in the interview.
    - ii. Another suggestion is to have one mechanical member present in the interview just in case a question concerning the engineering process is brought up.
2. For the DVD involved in the submission, either get music rights or do not use music licensed through Creative Commons.
  - a. Again in our second year, we made this DVD the night before our interview (Do you see a problem with this process) and the idea was we had ZERO audio and we figured that having some music would make the video better. This again was brought to our attention by the Chairman Judges. This again was a reason why we did not win this year.
    - i. Advice: watch videos of National Winning teams and try to emulate wherever possible.
    - ii. Also make sure that the label on the DVD and case is compliant with FIRST guidelines.
    - iii. Remember that the video is not used in the judging rubric but it can make or break a submission.
3. If you are confused about a certain criteria of the judging rubric, ask FIRST.
  - a. During this years' submission, we were confused about the section of Strength of Partnership. And this was the one area that was stated as needs improvement. I personally emailed FIRST and got a quick response.
    - i. We recommend that you ask our team or FIRST or anyone else that you think would make things more clear.
4. As a side note, do not spill a judge's soda when attempting to shake their hand.
  - a. Even if it is an accident, this is frowned upon
    - i. The story should be self-explanatory so I will not elaborate.



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Now we are going to focus on areas that we have done right on our Chairman's submission

1. We started to write our essay in November 2009 for the 2010 season.
  - a. We took our previous essay and made drastic improvements making it clearer and containing more information.
2. Use the feedback form as a guide for the next submission.
  - a. From 2009-2010, we went from having 2 strong areas to 5 strong areas.
    - i. The comments we have received have contained areas such as, having a correct video, including more documentation, and knowing the submission.
3. A strong interview can enable a team to win the award.
  - a. Make sure that people in the interview; know what is on the essay.
    - i. As stated before, this can be devastating if information is not consistent.
    - ii. If people do not know some areas, teach them or find someone else that is more knowledgeable.
    - iii. Also, if some vital piece of information was not in the submission, let the judges know.
  - b. Designate people to field specific questions as best as you can prepare.
    - i. We wrote down questions after each interview to ask ourselves again for future years.
4. Have a handout or a binder for the Chairman Judges
  - a. We make packets of information about our team and everything we do.
  - b. We then make a Chairman's binder using this information and include documentation
    - i. Also if using a similar process, use numbered pages and utilize a table of contents.
    - ii. This organizes the entire document and encourages the reader to read what they want to know.
5. When writing the essay, use the scoring the rubric that is available to everyone.
  - a. Knowing what the judge's will be looking for and judging on will be beneficial because Knowledge is Power!
  - b. This also can provide with a way for other's to review your work and provide constructive criticism.