

B4: Supermileage Communications Plan (2012/13)

UBC Supermileage Team
Communications Plan 2012-2013

1. Introduction

The UBC Supermileage Team (UBCST) is an established student team operating out of the University of British Columbia (UBC) in Vancouver, BC. The team has been in existence since 2001 when it first competed in the SAE Supermileage competition. Since then the team has won numerous awards and has been internationally recognized by organizations such as Time magazine. The team has approximately 50 members from many disciplines of engineering.

2. Purpose

The UBC Supermileage Team relies on brand recognition to secure sponsorships, find new recruits, further its message, as well as advance nearly every aspect of its operations. Improved communications will create greater recognition primarily in Vancouver, with the rest of Canada and the United States being a secondary goal. This can be leveraged with industry to provide supplies, expertise, and financial aid. A higher profile will help attract skilled students interested in furthering their practical engineering abilities. Lastly, knowledge of energy efficiency initiatives such as UBC Supermileage will inspire people elsewhere to consciously think about energy consumption.

3. Target Audience

UBCST has identified the following groups as the target audience for its communications strategy in order of precedence:

1. University of British Columbia Faculty of Engineering staff and students
2. Local industry operating in fields related to the project (automotive, composites, green energy etc.)
3. Non-local (outside of Vancouver) industry operating in fields related to the project (automotive, composites, green energy etc.)
4. University of British Columbia students outside of the Faculty of Engineering
5. Local and non-local industry operating in fields unrelated to the project

4. Current Relationships

The Team has established relationships with the Target Audience to varying degrees.

1. UBCST enjoys strong support from UBC already, especially from the Department of Mechanical Engineering. The department is highly aware of the team and its activities, and lends support through use of facilities, administrative duties, faculty sponsorship, and financially. It is important, however, to maintain these relationships as it can be considered the backbone of the Team's support. Faculty of Engineering students are satisfactorily informed of the Team and its activities. The majority of incoming members every year are from the Faculty of

Engineering, and UBCST attends many events, open houses, and information sessions put on by the faculty that students may attend.

2. UBCST currently enjoys sponsorship agreements with the following companies with offices in the Lower Mainland that operate in a related field to the project:
 - a. _____
 - b. _____
 - c. _____
 - d. _____

UBCST must work harder to generate a larger presence and awareness with companies in this category. These relationships can be useful to the team in the form of in-kind sponsorships and engineering experience in areas the Team is not so familiar with.

3. UBCST currently enjoys sponsorship agreements with the following companies with offices outside of the Lower Mainland that operate in a related field to the project:
 - a. _____
 - b. _____
 - c. _____

UBCST must work harder to generate a larger presence and awareness with companies in this category. These relationships can be useful to the team in the form of in-kind sponsorships and engineering experience in areas the Team is not so familiar with. This category of company is typically more difficult to establish relationships with due to the inability to have face-to-face meetings or appeal to the "local" connection.

4. UBCST is less known but not unheard of by students outside of its home faculty. The Team currently attends events held by the University that expose it to students outside of the Faculty of Engineering such as Imagine Day and the UBC Alumni Fair. In addition, it attends more engineering-centric events such as E-Fest and UBC Welcomes You! that other students are also welcome to enjoy. Improved communications with this audience would greatly broaden the appeal of the Team and forge connections to new ideas, members, and industry support that would otherwise not be available.
5. UBCST currently enjoys sponsorship agreements with the following companies that operate in an unrelated field to the project:
 - a. _____
 - b. _____

- c. _____
- d. _____

The Team has done well to establish these relationships and must now work to maintain them in coming years. It is expected that outreach efforts will include companies in this category in the future; however, they are not a priority.

5. Goals

- a. Further expand recognition within the Faculty of Engineering among students and faculty members.
- b. Establish greater presence and recognition among the student population outside of the Faculty of Engineering
- c. Establish relationships with local parts suppliers and manufacturers
- d. Reach out to local industry for financial support

6. Intended Schedule

As in the past, the UBC Supermileage Team will constantly search for new ways and avenues to communicate with its target audiences. Conferences and events are held year round that UBCST strives to attend, examples of which can be found under the “Events” tab at Supermileage.ca. Recruitment attempts will begin with the UBC school year in September when it is easiest to approach students eager to expand their university experience. New sponsorship applications will begin in the summer following the 2013 Shell Eco-Marathon Americas and the start of UBCST’s fiscal year. These will continue throughout the year; however, the largest concentrated push will occur approximately from May to October.

7. Method of Communication

Different methods of approach will be required for different groups of the target audience. With faculty and students centered around UBC, experience has shown that in-person presence is most effective for communicating our message and establishing new relationships. First point of contact may be team members running a booth or stand, a team member in class approaching a professor, or a specifically targeted e-mail or phone call to a member of staff. The targeted party can then be referred to the info@supermileage.ca e-mail which is the Team’s general-purpose e-mail for outside correspondence. This account is typically monitored by the team captain, currently _____.

First point of contact with outside companies will be established first and foremost by team members with existing contacts or relationships with the company, be they a former employer, frequent customer, or other. This team member will continue to be the liaison with the company for as long as the established relationship allows. Should the team member no longer be a part of the team, they will pass relations over to info@supermileage.ca and the person responsible for monitoring this address.

In the past each year UBCST has hosted some form of large event showcasing the team’s accomplishments and is typically more high-profile than other events at which the

team is merely an attendee. Past events have included the 10th anniversary of UBCST, and media events in which local TV and print media are invited out to a demonstration of the vehicle. For the 2012-2013 year a learning event has been planned for February 28, 2013. This event will center around the Team's message of energy efficiency and energy savings. It will demonstrate the science behind achieving extreme fuel efficiency, as well as showcase the vehicles and the team that creates them. It will also include a description and explanation of the Shell Eco-Marathon and the experience members have taken away from past years.

8. Evaluation

Achievements in communication are typically very difficult to quantify. To this end, pass/fail criteria have been defined for each of the UBC Supermileage Team's Target Audiences to determine if the communication goals have been met.

1. UBCST must maintain 100% of the sponsorship, facility, and administrative assistance currently given by the Faculty of Engineering. It must also maintain a team size of at least 50 members, with at least 10 new members from the Faculty of Engineering being brought in at the start of the next recruitment phase (September 2013).
2. UBC Supermileage must retain at least 80% of the companies as team sponsors year over year. It must also bring in at least 1 new sponsor that fits into this category each year.
3. The Team will must retain all of its current sponsors that fall into this category.
4. UBCST must continue its outreach efforts to non-engineering students of UBC. The Team must attract and retain at least 1 student from outside the Faculty each year.
5. The Team must retain at least 60% of the current sponsors in this category year over year. It must also bring in at least 1 new sponsor that fits into this category each year.