



RAMAGEDDON 4855

Business Plan

Team 4855 - Ramageddon

Business Plan

Mission: We will impact our students and community by encouraging STEM growth in our team while collaborating in a safe and inclusive environment. We strive to be recognized and supported as an equal to established programs within South Haven Public Schools as well as being recognized as a preeminent team within the robotics community.

Team History and Growth

Founded in 2013, Team 4855 - Ramageddon, is based out of South Haven High School, located in South Haven, MI. The rookie team consisted of 14 students, two coaches, and two mentors. Since its inception, Ramageddon has experienced steady growth in students (Figure 1), mentors, sponsors, fans, and revenue. Our current team consists of two coaches, seven mentors, 32 students, and countless fans affectionately known as "Fanageddons".

With seniors graduating every year, the team places a strong emphasis on recruiting new members. We recruit students by word-of-mouth, presentations at school, an ice-cream social, and demonstrations at community events. New members are encouraged to explore the different branches of the team until they find a branch that they enjoy. Our efforts have been successful and due to this, half of our team this year is made up of underclassmen. The senior members of the team have also been hard at work training and passing on their knowledge to younger members in order to carry on the legacy.

As the team's membership has grown, so has its knowledge of technology. During the first two years of competitions, the team's robots were low-tech, built with plywood, and held together with Duct Tape and a prayer. Over the last few seasons, the team has incorporated pneumatics and a swerve drive to compliment our growing skill set in programming, coding, and CAD. Combining all of these skills has allowed the team to build robots that are able to compete at a higher level. In 2018, Ramageddon qualified for both the Michigan State and the World Championship, a first in their history.

After the excitement of our 2018 season, we had a large increase in membership therefore we implemented a formal leadership team to assist in training and overseeing the rookies. The leadership team went through intensive training, taught by industry professionals, to ensure that they have the tools they needed to lead a successful team. We also developed a designated safety team to focus on our safety initiatives. The safety team developed a safety manual, injury log, safety posters, and held safety training for team members.

Organizational Structure

Team 4855 is divided into two main teams, Build and Business, and those teams are broken down into several subteams (Figure 2). Regardless of their subteam, all members of Ramageddon are provided real-world experience with technology and team building. Our mentors are there to guide, allowing the students to do the hands-on work themselves, even if it means the students make mistakes along the way. The students are encouraged to reach past what they believe to be possible and try something new every day. Being on

the team is hard work for all involved, but thanks to effective communication such as daily huddles and an increased emphasis on inclusion, Team 4855 has become a stronger and more close-knit team.

In order to ensure a sustainable future for the team, we engage elementary and middle school students as part of our recruitment program. One way we do this is by volunteering at a local elementary program called Hour of Code. At this event, we showcase our robot as well as our augmented reality sandboxes which gets kids excited about learning the topography of the Earth. We also inspire the attendees to work together to complete various fun coding activities. By reaching out to younger students, we are furthering their interest in FIRST Robotics and Team 4855 - Ramageddon.

The manufacturing industry within South Haven may not be as large as our neighboring communities but that is where Ramageddon has been given the opportunity to be innovative in our outreach by diversifying to other industries, such as hospitality, retail, real estate, and other small businesses. We reach out to these businesses by using a four-step process: 1) the sponsorship team delivers sponsorship packets to returning and potential sponsors, 2) they follow up with phone calls if necessary, 3) if asked, the team gives a presentation to further explain our mission, and 4) we recognize sponsors publicly for their donation. This process, along with additional fundraising, has given Team 4855 the opportunity to maintain strong relations with sponsors, allowing us to grow financially.

Financials

We are grateful for the amazing support we continue to receive from our sponsors and our community. Between 2014 and 2016, we raised an average of \$8,240 each year. In 2017, the finance team revamped our sponsorship levels and applied our four-step process for recruiting sponsors which resulted in a 60% jump in revenue from the previous year, bringing us to \$15,650. During our regular fundraising season last year, we raised \$24,500 and when the community learned that there was a chance we would not be able to attend Worlds based on finances, they came together to raise \$14,000 for our team within 72 hours allowing us to compete on the biggest stage yet. The community has been extremely generous this year, donating \$36,872 in monetary and in-kinds gifts (Figure 3). Many sponsors have pledged additional support if we advance to the State or World Championship(s) again. Figure 4 gives an overview of our 2019 revenues and expenses..

Sponsorships are our greatest source of revenue but this year we have added additional fundraisers to offset our financial needs. Such fundraisers include selling fudge which raised \$560.00 and a crock-pot fundraiser at the local Elks Lodge which raised over \$600. We also sell Ramageddon fan-gear, host a pop-can drive, and ask parents to provide food for the team so that it does not come out of our budget. If our team stays in hotels overnight for competitions, parents help offset the costs of travel, hotels, and food.

We have also learned that many people prefer to donate items that can be seen and touched versus donating money, so when we decided that we wanted a new pit structure, we asked our parents to chip in for it. Thanks to three families, we were able to purchase a high-tech, collapsible truss system that we will be debuting this year.

Risk Analysis

Each year, our team members conduct a SWOT analysis (Figure 5) to understand our current strengths, weaknesses, opportunities, and threats. For the purpose of the business plan, we have identified what we believe to be the most important aspect of the SWOT.

Ramageddon's most prominent strength is our name recognition in the community thanks to our successful 2018 season. In previous years when our team visited potential sponsors, we had to explain who we were but this year people knew immediately who we were and they were excited to support us when we visited.

A weakness that our team faces is our town's economic structure. South Haven is a tourist town with few manufacturing or technological businesses. While living on the lake is beautiful, it also means that we have no businesses to the west who can sponsor us. One way in which the team reaches out to new businesses is by attending the annual Business Expo hosted by the South Haven Area Chamber of Commerce.

The greatest opportunity for our team is our alumni. Many of our previous team members are graduating from college this year and we hope to recruit them as mentors or sponsors.

One of the biggest threats that could impact our team is the rapidly growing number of teams in Michigan who are all competing for the same sponsors. While we are excited to mentor the new rookie team in Bangor, we lost a major sponsor to them this year.

Marketing

We get our name out in the community by participating in year-round events and sharing our story with students from not only South Haven, but other school systems as well. Last fall, we spoke at an assembly at Bangor High School, inspiring their students to start their own FRC team. We are proud to say that they have formed a team (7809 - Valhalla Nation) and we are their mentor team. Ramageddon members also participate in the South Haven Cardboard Sled Race held during Ice Breakers Festival, the South Haven Fourth of July Parade, and the We Care "Warm Your Heart Island Sit". Our biggest event of the year though is our annual "Ramageddon Reveal" which consists of a student-led presentation, our robot reveal, and a robot demonstration. This year, over 200 people attended Ramageddon Reveal.

Creating official brand standards was a major focus for the team this season. The business team created brand standards to ensure consistency throughout our documents, letters, presentations, t-shirts, flag, and our revamped website at www.ramageddon.com. We even ensured that our cardboard sled resembled our updated brand standards. For more information on our brand standards, please refer to our official brand standard guide.

To enhance our social media presence, we created a Social Media Lead position. This position is responsible for our posts, including sponsorship shoutouts, team member spotlights, and a behind the scenes look of our never ending journey through FIRST. The Social Media Lead and our Marketing Lead developed our robot reveal video which was featured on RoboZone's *Reveal Round-Up #1* video on March 7, 2019.

Appendix

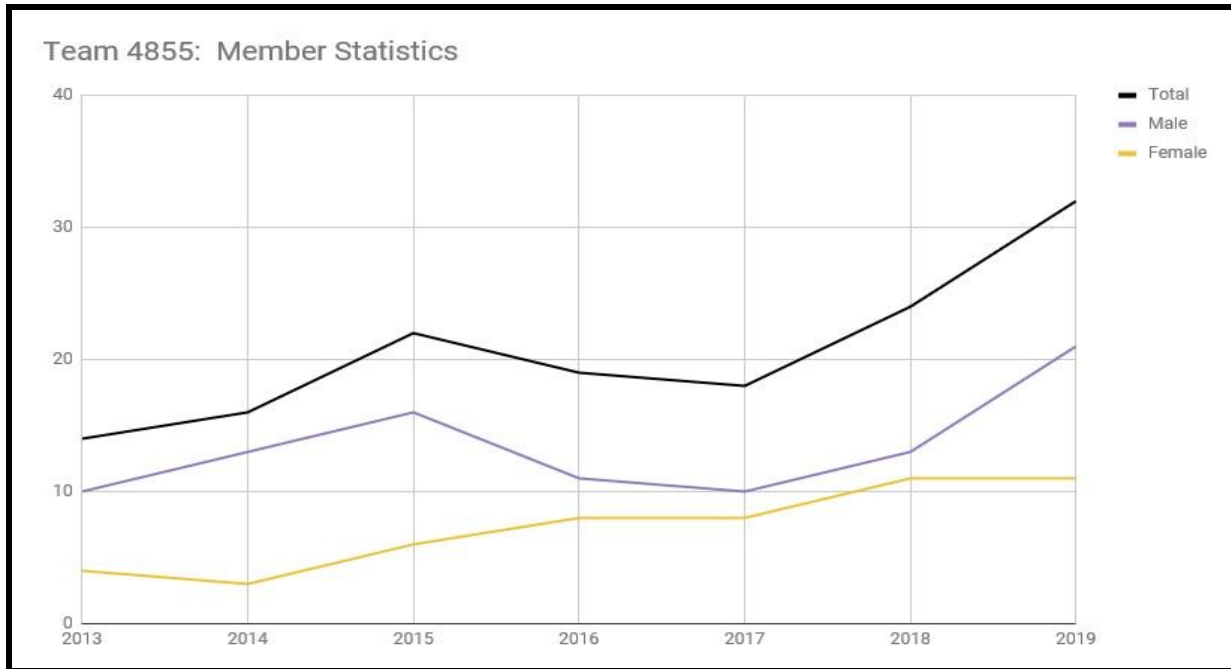


Figure 1. Team Growth: Ramageddon continues to experience team growth.

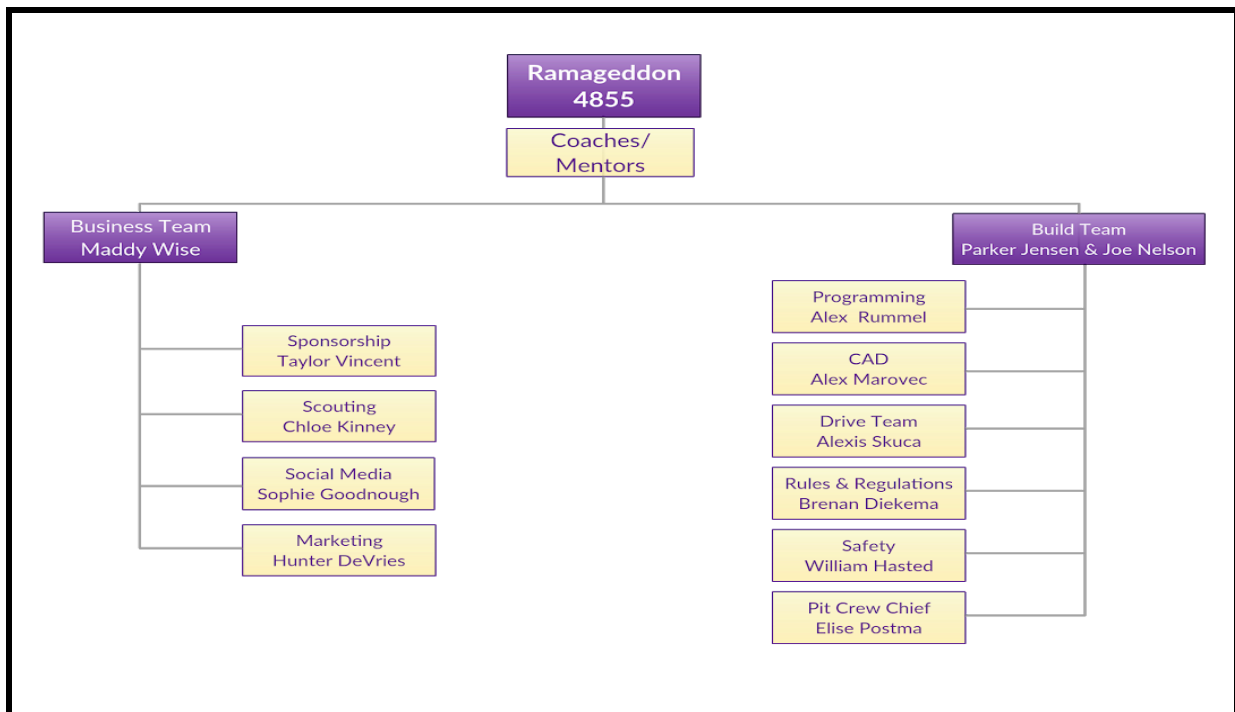


Figure 2. Organizational Structure: Students in leadership positions are responsible for mentoring and training less experienced team members.

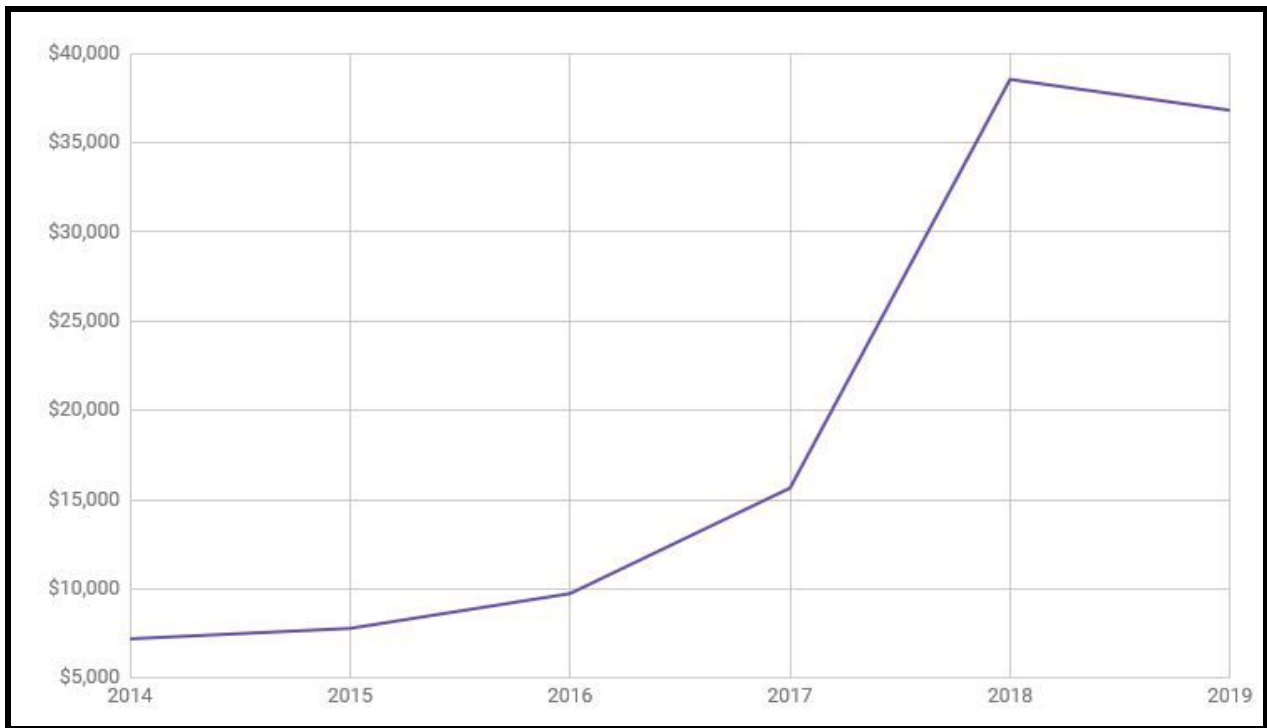


Figure 3. Funds Raised Per Year (Includes Value of In-Kind Donations): New sponsors and fundraisers allow our team to continue competing in the FRC and investing in new technology.



Summary

	Jul	Aug	Sep	Oct	Nov	Dec	Jan	Feb	Mar	Apr	May	June	Total	Average
Income	\$7	\$6	\$102	\$5,005	\$9,660	\$10	\$3,910	\$7,155	\$1,973	\$0	\$0	\$0	\$27,827	\$3,092
Expenses	\$0	\$5,400	\$0	\$0	\$4,877	\$705	\$2,136	\$4,575	\$0	\$0	\$0	\$0	\$17,693	\$3,539
Net savings	\$7	-\$5,394	\$102	\$5,005	\$4,784	-\$695	\$1,774	\$2,579	\$1,973	\$0	\$0	\$0	\$10,134	\$2,318
Ending balance	\$7,286	\$1,893	\$1,994	\$6,999	\$11,783	\$11,088	\$12,862	\$15,441	\$17,414	\$17,414	\$17,414	\$17,414		\$11,583

Figure 4. 2019 Revenues and Expenses: The team watches their spending carefully so that we can go into each new season with enough funds saved up to pay for our district competitions. This year, we held additional fundraisers in case we advance to the Michigan or World Championships.

Strengths	Weaknesses
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Name Recognition in Community ● Growth in Students and Mentors ● Mentor Guided, Student Driven ● Technical/Skills Expertise ● Fan Support (aka Sea of Purple) ● Student Leadership 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Local Economy ● Tourist Town ● Lake MI- No Businesses West of Us ● No Teachers as Coaches/Mentors ● Depth of Experience in Coding ● No Practice Facility
Opportunities	Threats
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Alumni Outreach ● FTC/FLL Teams ● Safety Team ● Mentoring Other Teams ● Training/Orientation Program ● New Superintendent ● Team Building 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● FIM Growth ● Upcoming Entergy Closure ● Turnover of Team Members and/or Coaches/Mentors ● Small Business Team in 2020 ● No Bag & Tag Day in 2020 ● Snow Days

Figure 5. SWOT Analysis: The team members and mentors conduct a SWOT analysis each year to determine their strengths, weaknesses, opportunities, and threats.

Contact Us

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