

DIDI500



Original Creators:

ENACTUS club, St. Bonaventure University, as well as Mike Pingelski, Jamie Zoerb, Rachel Camilo, Andrew Pohlman, Elspeth McGarry, Vinny Russo, Kathleen Martel and Dr. Todd Palmer



Target Audience:

High School Students



Type of Activity:

Competition



Dream It. Do It. Location:

Western New York



Budget Range:

\$1,500 - \$3,500



Difficulty:

Moderate



Synopsis/Outcomes:

Competing in teams of 4, students from area high schools design, build, test, race, and market a rubber band powered car.

Students test and tweak their cars before the final race in an effort to create a polished, marketable final product. Following the car race, students are given time to create a marketing pitch to be presented to a panel of judges.

The winners are chosen based on creativity, teamwork, design, presentation and car performance. DIDI500 connects college and high school students, area manufacturers and professors by facilitating a fun-filled, rewarding experience for all involved.

DIDI500 STORY

In its third year, the DIDI500 generated so much popularity it nearly tripled in size to over 130 students. The DIDI500 is an annual race put on by the ENACTUS Club from St. Bonaventure University, along with local high schools and local manufacturing companies. ENACTUS is an international nonprofit organization dedicated to inspiring students to improve the world through entrepreneurial action. High school students are put into groups of four to work with engineers and college students who assist them in creating a rubber band powered car with recycled materials and a fixed budget. The goal: Get your car the farthest distance on the straightest path, carrying as much weight as possible. After the race, the high school students are given 30 minutes to prepare a 2 to 3 minute marketing pitch. The students have to come up with a way to sell their car to a panel of St. Bonaventure business professors as if it is a real car. The students are given a score for the race and the presentation which result in the winner of the competition.

“[THE RACE] GIVES STUDENTS A TRUE PICTURE OF WHAT IT’S LIKE IN THE INDUSTRY.”

The event has created an enormous impact, causing teachers to even

incorporate the event into their curriculum at local high schools. The race generates energy and excitement among high school students to get them interested in manufacturing.

“I think that it is wonderful how it relates to manufacturing and gives the students a true picture of what it’s like in the industry because it involves not just one element, its all of them,” said Evelyn Sabina, program coordinator, DIDI Western New York.

A great appeal of the DIDI500 is the aspect that high school students get to work with and learn from real college students and engineers. The students get a genuine feeling of the overall picture of manufacturing. They get to work on design, finance, marketing, production, problem solving, and teamwork – all integral parts of the manufacturing business.

“Seeing how rewarding it was and seeing the students’ determination was the best part. It’s not this idea of failure or their car didn’t work, they continued to problem solve, and they were determined to see how their car could work,” Sabina said.

“The event itself is not only challenging for the students, but its rewarding at the end of the day, whether they win or not. For six hours on that day, on a Saturday, I don’t think one kid looked at the clock and said ‘when am I getting out of here.’ They were challenged and rewarded with their efforts,” said Chris Napoleon, president and CEO of Napoleon Engineering Services, supporter of DIDI500.

Not only does DIDI500 benefit the students, it’s a huge benefit for local manufacturers as well. The race allows manufacturers to have exposure to their future workforce in a different

environment. Manufacturers are always looking for a robust supply of young talented people to fill their businesses, and an event like this allows for great exposure.

“I DON’T THINK MY BUSINESS WILL SURVIVE WITHOUT PROGRAMS THAT DREAM IT. DO IT. PROVIDES.”

“I don’t think my business will survive without programs that Dream It. Do It. provides. Period. It’s the lifeblood to my organization,” Napoleon said.

The race is continuing to grow – St. Bonaventure, along with Dream It. Do It. Western New York, is working to expand the event to other counties and even other states to continue to engage students in manufacturing at a young age.

“That was one of the best parts about the growth. It has more and more college kids and engineers involved in working with these high school students,” said Michael Pingelski, St. Bonaventure University student, organizer of DIDI500. “Students have been able to establish relationships with engineers and develop technical skills, producing even better cars and a more exciting event each year!”

