

Tesla Engineering Charter School Marketing Plan

A paper prepared to partially meet the requirements of
Adult Education and Training Masters course
AD-629 – Program Development
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Tesla Engineering Charter School

The doors of Tesla Engineering Charter School, our new “school within a school”, opened this past September to 34 sophomores and juniors who will progress through a sequence of classes designed to give them a head start on engineering education. The school is supported locally as an “instrumentality of the Appleton Area School District”, by a charter board made up of educational and business leaders from throughout the Fox Valley, and financially by the State of Wisconsin Department of Public Instruction chartering authority. We have been using the DACUM process to develop curriculum for the school and are currently working on the second year classes to be introduced in September, 2003.

Yet another aspect of the new school is the recruitment and retention of students. The established capacity of the school has been set at 150 overall – 50 in each grade level from sophomore through senior. As is evident by our current enrollment numbers and our enrollment increase of 22 for next year, we are not coming close to recruiting the numbers of students that we would like to. Discussions among members of the charter board have indicated that a variety of factors may be responsible. Some of them are:

1. Not getting the right information to the right people.
2. Taking a “shotgun approach” to the marketing of the school.
3. The freshman gap between middle school technology education and enrollment in Tesla.
4. An inconsistent message of what Tesla’s mission is.
5. Not enough advocates spreading the message of Tesla.

The next logical step is to establish a marketing plan for Tesla Engineering Charter School. I have made it clear to the board that I am an educator who is not in touch with the marketing of programs. While I teach elective classes (which need “volunteer” students to run), I have been in my position long enough to have an established rapport with students and a reputation as a fair, enthusiastic, and

knowledgeable teacher. Word of mouth advertising is truly worth its weight in gold and I have not had to do any active recruiting of students...until now.

Tesla is targeting a different segment of the student population – those who are serious about their post-secondary pursuits in engineering. Being a charter school has provided us with the opportunity to offer our program to students beyond the boundaries of the Appleton Area School District. While we have the ability to enroll students from every corner of the state, we are also realists who understand that the lion's share of our students will come from Appleton and the surrounding Fox Valley area. I, as well as others, would be very surprised to enroll students who live more than 20 miles from the school. The problem is getting the right students, those interested in engineering, into the right program, Tesla. Thus, we **need** a marketing plan.

Marketing Plan

An effective marketing plan for Tesla should include a diverse variety of approaches in order to get the message out to the appropriate people. Several methods will be employed to accomplish this.

Visible Reminders

Items that can be given away to people that will provide a reminder that Tesla is here and it is an option for them or someone they know. Examples of these visible reminders include printed pens and pencils, notepads, and t-shirts.

Captive Audience

These are presentations that don't require an invitation for individuals to attend. Examples might include Rotary Clubs, parent associations, professional engineering associations, and so on. While these groups may not be made up of prospective students, they provide a reliable network to get

the word out about Tesla. Sometimes just having people talk about the school will plant the seeds for enrollment.

Targeted Recruitment

Targeted recruitment would consist of presentations to groups of students and parents who have a perceived better-than-average interest in engineering. These may include high school drafting classes (drafting is not a discrete part of the Tesla sequence), general technology education classes, middle school technology education classes, engineering explorer groups, and so on. By focusing our recruiting efforts on those who have an interest in what we have to offer or may be at a point in their education where the prospect of an engineering school is exciting to them, we keep from having our message fall on deaf ears.

“High Profile” Activities

Tesla students already participate in high-profile activities such as the FIRST national robotics competition, however, those are activities that are mostly for students *already* in Tesla. An effective way to recruit students to Tesla would be to offer summer programs for middle school students. Offer an engineering exploration session that is mornings or afternoons for one week during the summer. Young students could experience engineering through highly interactive, hands-on projects that whet their appetite for what Tesla has to offer. PR for the event could be coordinated with the local technical and community college’s summer enrichment programs for kids – each school publishes a flyer of events at each school and could be convinced to include our activity as well.

Tesla Road Show

The Tesla Road Show will consist of professional promotional materials/resources and the ability to display them with or without a Tesla representative present. For example, a professional display consisting of quotes from current students, images of students in action in the school, our mission and vision statements, and a listing of our community supporters. In addition, some of the visible reminders could be handed out or displayed as giveaways. This “road show” could be set up during the class registration fair, during local career expositions, and at each of the local middle and high schools on a rotating basis. The benefit to this type of display is its flexibility in that it doesn’t require an individual to be there with it.

Newsletters

The Appleton Area School District is notorious for mass mailing newsletters. Each high school and middle school publishes a quarterly newsletter that is sent home to parents. These newsletters contain information on a wide variety of subjects and are open to Tesla to publish information about the school free of charge. In addition, the school will publish it’s own newsletter sent out to the parents of all 8th and 9th graders providing the details of what Tesla has to offer.

For the methods listed above to be effective, their timing needs to be appropriate. Considerations such as when students register for the following year’s classes, what groups and organizations are meeting and when, and when are students available for activities or presentations all factor into the flow of activities.

In order for the marketing of Tesla to be effective, it needs to be a constant occurrence. Not just when we need students but throughout the course of the entire year so as to keep Tesla on the minds of

any who may be interested. For this to take place, a calendar of activities needs to be established. While specific dates can't be included, the general flow of the marketing year can be laid out.

The following is a plan of action for any given year:

Summer Presentations to professional organizations

Youth enrichment activities

Freshman orientation presentation

Summer district newsletters

Fall Activity Fair booth

Write up for the course description guide

Octoberfest booth

Presentations to drafting students

Fall Tesla newsletter (to coincide with class registration)

Tesla applications made available

Winter Parent information sessions open to all

Presentation at parent

Application deadline – January 31st

Winter district newsletters

Spring Presentations to middle school students

Display at National Charter School Week activities

Spring Tesla newsletter

This is not a complete marketing program, but rather it provides ideas on how to market the school and a timeline that can be used to establish a detailed calendar of activities and events. It will serve as a framework from which to build a comprehensive plan to market Tesla effectively and recruit students who will find success and fulfillment within the school.



ENGINEERING CHARTER SCHOOL

2121 EMMERS DRIVE APPLETON, WISCONSIN 54915 920-832-6210 www.aasd.k12.wi.us/tesla

Tesla Charter Board

Application Form

Today's Date: _____

Student Name: (First) _____ (M.I.) _____ (Last) _____

Male / Female (circle one)

Present Grade In School: _____

School Now Attending: _____ City: _____

Parent/Guardian Name(s) _____

Parent address: Street: _____
 City: _____ Zip: _____

Student address: (if different) Street: _____
 City: _____ Zip: _____

Phone Number: _____

E-mail _____

I desire to enroll in the engineering charter school beginning in Fall, 2004.

The Tesla Engineering Charter School has a limited number of enrollment openings. Students applying are asked to provide the information above, obtain a letter of recommendation from a current teacher, and be available for an orientation by the Tesla staff during the month of August. The curriculum of this school is challenging, yet rewarding and student selection will be determined by projected ability for student success. Should there be more applicants who meet the enrollment criteria for the school than space available a lottery system will be used.

Please complete this application and return it to the address above.

Thank you,

Sean Schuff, Lead Instructor
Tesla Engineering Charter School

Patty Van Ryzin, Chair
Tesla Charter Board

- Bruce Albrecht
- Craig Belling
- Oscar C. Boldt
- Mary Felton
- Jane Dwyre Garton
- Todd Holverson
- Mary Hultgren
- Tim Matus
- Dr. James Perry
- Joanne Pollock
- Sean Schuff
- Dr. Thomas Scullen
- Joe St. Marie
- Patty VanRyzin
- Mike Versteegen
- Dr. Michael Wage
- Becky Walker
- Bill Welch
- Mike Weller



Recommendation Form

Date _____ Student Name (please print) _____

School Presently Attending _____

Person writing reference (name) _____

How do you know the student? _____

Please check one box in each category pertaining to the student and provide any additional comments in the space provided. If you would like to provide general feedback on the student, please feel free to do so in the space provided at the bottom of this form.

Criteria	Level 1	Level 2	Level 3	Level 4
Punctuality	Arrives late	Arrives just on time	Arrives, has textbook, notebook, equipment on desk	Arrives, has textbook and notebook open, ready to start
Student Level (check one)				
Comments				
Works Independently	Distracts others; talks to others instead of working; teacher must remind student about getting to work	Quiet, daydreaming; eventually may get to work on assignment	Works quietly on assignment, asking questions when necessary	Remains on task without reminders; works quietly and efficiently using notes and textbooks
Student Level (check one)				
Comments				
Initiative	Has difficulty starting to work; Doesn't ask for help; Doesn't get caught up after absence; Doesn't participate	Rarely participates; Starts work when reminded; seldom asks for help	Participates when asked; begins to work when assignment given; works hard most of the time	Volunteers to answer and ask questions; will help others; know what needs to be done and does it
Student Level (check one)				
Comments				
Homework and work habits	Few assignments and homework complete; answers not checked	Some assignments and homework complete; answers checked occasionally	Homework and assignments usually complete but answers are not always checked and corrected	Homework and assignments complete and answers have been checked and corrections are made
Student Level (check one)				
Comments				

- Bruce Albrecht
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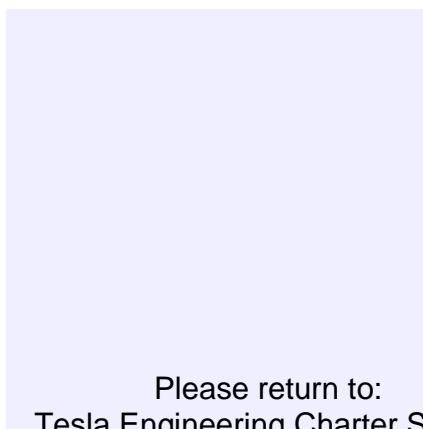


2121 EMMERS DRIVE APPLETON, WISCONSIN 54915 920-832-6210 www.aasd.k12.wi.us/tesla

Tesla
Charter
Board

Organization	Does not bring notebook, textbook, pencils, paper...	Does not have notes and work up to date; notes are not in order pages falling out; has agenda but rarely used	Notebook is fairly complete but needs some organization of pages etc.; uses the agenda most of the time	Notebook is organized and complete; uses the agenda to record all homework, assignments and important dates
Student Level (check one)				
Comments				
Teamwork	Interrupts, distracts, or disrupts others; difficult to work with	Does little to participate; lets others do the work	Cooperative, participates and follows the lead of others	Demonstrates cooperation, respect, and leadership
Student Level (check one)				
Comments				
Academics	Student shows minimal academic achievement	Student performs at a below-average to average level	Student performs at an average to above-average level	Student consistently performs at an above-average level
Student Level (check one)				
Comments				

Additional comments:



Please return to:
Tesla Engineering Charter School
2121 Emmers Drive
Appleton, WI 54915

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