

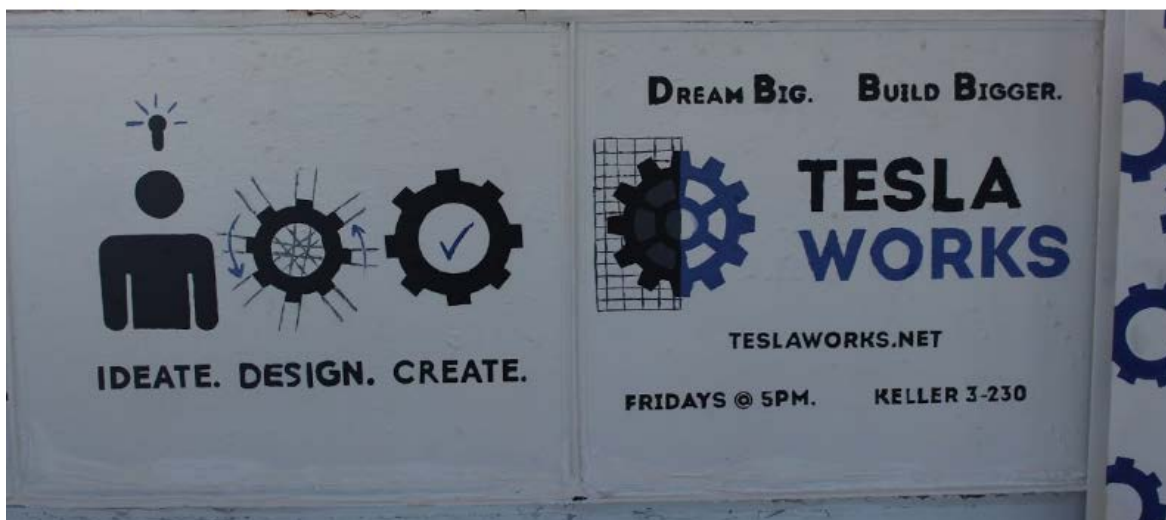


## Project PlayBook Part 1: HOW DO I BECOME A PROJECT?



### What is Tesla Works?

Tesla Works is a project-based community of makers that brings together passionate and goal-oriented students from around the university to turn conceptual ideas into reality, by providing funding, lab space, online tools, and an environment for collaboration.



# Idea!

Basically all you really need to have is:  
**“I want to make this cool thing.”**



Many projects start as an energetic lunchtime conversation, a memorable meeting of minds, or the discovery of something mind-blowingly awesome. If you are passionate about an idea to bring something new to our campus, our surrounding community, or our world, you are ready to initiate a project with Tesla Works.

If you're at this stage, you probably have a lot of enthusiasm, and also a lot of questions. This document is a great place to learn how to start a Tesla Works project. You can learn a lot by attending an Officer Meeting. (Check the website or e-mail [tesla@umn.edu](mailto:tesla@umn.edu) to find the location and time for officer meetings.)

## Inspiration: Where does it come from?

### Talk to People: Are others Interested?

Talk to people about your idea. Find out if others are interested and get their opinions and suggestions before proposing your idea to Tesla Works.

Tesla Works meetings are a great place to seek advice and find others who are interested!

Discuss your idea with the Project Director or any Officer. They have a lot of experience and may have advice relevant to the specifics of your project.

### Research: Know the basics.

Do some basic research and brainstorming. Know a bit on the topic!

Find out some basic info about your project idea -- you don't need to know everything, but at least know the answers to: Is it safe? Is it legal? Is it feasible?

If you don't know where to start, find a professor or another "expert" in the topic, or talk to the Tesla Works Officers -- they're pretty cool and pretty smart and can help find places for you to start.

\*See Resource Appendix B: General Resources for more places to look for information.

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**What's your Project? I don't know, what are you going to do?**

# What is a Tesla Works Project?

Definition from our constitution: A Project is a creative, collaborative venture approved by the Board of Officers and given access to Tesla Works resources, working with a clearly defined purpose that utilizes team members' abilities and knowledge.

Tesla Works Projects bring together teams of students to transform their ideas into technical and workable Projects. All Tesla Works Projects are student-led; students propose, manage, and complete Projects that they are passionate about. Projects provide our members with the opportunity to learn, develop technical skills, educate the community about science and engineering, and have fun.

## Goals and Timeline: Be S.M.A.R.T.

What is your Project's vision? And what are you looking to accomplish along the way?

I know we are not 5 years old, but SMART goals are the kind we want.

S - Significant

M - Measurable

A - Achievable and Action-oriented

R - Realistic and Results-oriented

T - Time-Based and Trackable

Come up with some major goals for your project. Arrange these milestones into a general timeline. Even if this changes in the future, having deadlines helps guide your project towards success.

Here are some questions you can ask to help create your timeline:

What is going to be finished in a month?

At the end of the semester?

At the end of the year?

When do you hope to complete your project?

- You might have to meet an outside deadline that is out of your control, like an event or a competition. Otherwise, you decide what a reasonable time to finish is. Remember -- nothing has to be perfect to be successful, and you can always make a second iteration that's better!

(For example: the light show has to be done by the day of the show but even if it's not perfect for the first show there's at least something and they can always fix it for the next show. Normally it's not "perfect" until the last show, if at all.)

**\*Intent:** Why do you want to make this thing?

-This is just something to be aware of. You can come in with different intents and still be accepted.

# Getting Started:

## Proposing your project

(These HAVE to happen to be an official project)

1. Online Application It's not hard. Fill it out.

[z.teslaworks.net/newproject](https://z.teslaworks.net/newproject)

### Tesla Works Project Application Form

Welcome! We're excited that you want to start a project with Tesla Works. Once your Project Application Form has been received, your project has officially begun! At this point you will be assigned a Tesla Works Officer as your One-on-One. You'll stay in close contact with them, and they will help you proceed.

The first official step to become a project is to go to [z.teslaworks.net/newproject](https://z.teslaworks.net/newproject) and fill out the form. (This will require you to log in with your University of Minnesota account).

If you have any questions just ask an officer or email [tesla@umn.edu](mailto:tesla@umn.edu). A few days after you submit the form, our Project Director will reach out with details about the next step of the process.

Now get ready for your pitch!

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## 2. Officer Pitch

Anyone who proposes a project will have a chance to present the idea at a weekly Officers' meeting. To become an official Tesla Works Project, you have to be approved by a two-thirds majority vote of the Board of Officers. If you can't make it to the meeting, let the Project Director know and we'll work out another time for you to talk to us.

### Structure: What to expect?

Before the pitch: Plan a short presentation to help us understand your whole idea, and try to make sure people with no background knowledge of this topic can understand what this is. This doesn't have to be long -- shorter might actually be better. Having a visual is really helpful. This could be a PowerPoint, a video of something that's already been done, or a picture/diagram of what you want to do. If you make a PowerPoint now, this will save time at the next step of this process.

Decide who the official Project Manager will be if your project is approved. This doesn't have to be you, but you have to know who it will be before you pitch to the Officers' Board.

Make the actual presentation. Remember: the officers are cool and friendly, and we're excited to hear about your idea! You're not being graded on this presentation, just try and explain what you're thinking. If you'd prefer, you can ask an officer or someone else to present for you, as long as you're sure they know enough to explain the idea. After your presentation, the officers will ask some questions. Don't be nervous -- we don't expect you to know everything yet. Most project ideas get approved, and if yours isn't, we'll explain the issue. You can always revise your idea and try again!

### What are you going to be asked? Be prepared.

Look back at the questions on the application form. The officers will ask whatever they want to know about your project, but a couple questions that almost always come up are:

- Is there anything possibly illegal or dangerous? If so, how are you going to make sure your project stays safe/legal?
- Why do you want to make this?
- Has anyone else showed interest?
- Can you explain what your project is as if I was a child? (For the more complicated projects)
- What's your timeline/goals?
- What problems do you think you're going to have and how will you solve them?

\*After the questions portion, the officers will vote and then tell you if your project was approved or not.

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What do I do if my project is approved?



You now have an official Tesla Works Project!

You're going to get a bunch of information right after becoming a project manager and it might be scary.

Don't worry! The Project Director will let you know what specific things you need to do right away. On your own time, you can start looking through the resources and advice for your Project, and thinking about how you want to get started!

What do I do if my project is NOT approved?

Back to the drawing board--the officer board is going to give you a good reason for not approving your project.

If it was because your project...

- Was too unrealistic? Tone it down or do more research. Prove it can be done.
  - Might be unsafe? Do more research or adjust the idea. Prove it can be done safely.
  - Is illegal? For this one, you'll have to adjust your idea. Maybe you can do a portion or a variation of the idea legally. (However, if it's illegal there's nothing Tesla Works can really do about it. We're sorry, but it just can't happen.)
  - Other? Maybe Tesla just isn't the right place for your project. Maybe go back to Step 1 and see what you can do. Don't fret -- the officers are there to help.
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## 3. General Meeting Pitch

### Structure: Hype it up!

You just made a pitch to the Officer Board and now it's time to do it again! Don't worry, it's going to be similar, if not the same presentation that you gave to the officers. But now, instead of talking in front of a small group of scary officers, you get to talk to the general population of Tesla Works. The Outreach Coordinator will let you know what format they want your presentation in. You can use the slides that you used for the officer pitch (if you made some), or you can make new ones, but either way focus on why you're excited about your project.

### Advice: The Dos and Don'ts

#### Scared about talking in front of a big group?

Don't worry. Tesla people are generally cool, and we all want to hear about your project! Just take a deep breath and let us know why your project is so awesome. If you're excited, others will be too.

#### Something to consider...

Think about which skills would be useful, but also remember that majors don't mean everything. A person who isn't a mechanical engineer could still have the skill set that a mechanical engineer would give you. Remember that anyone can be useful, and anyone can acquire the skills you might need if they don't already have them.

Make sure you don't exclude anyone who doesn't already have specific skills related to your project. Tesla Works and all of its projects welcome anyone who wants to be involved, regardless of their identity or background. Besides, the most valuable members of a project are often the ones who learn as they go.

### Warning: People are Coming

Hopefully, people will come talk to you after your presentation! Make sure you're ready to answer questions and let them know what next steps they can take to join your project. Have you scheduled a first meeting yet? Will you schedule a meeting based on common times with the people you're talking to now? Can you add them to your project's Basecamp? (Look at Resources Appendix C to know what this is). Should they google some basic information about the project, or can you give it to them now? Make sure you are prepared for people to join your project, and have a plan for what you want to do.

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## 4. First Meeting

**Get to know your members!** Find out what skills they have, and what they are interested in. In addition, see what suggestions they have for your project. Finally, try to remember the names of everyone in your project--this will make them feel welcome, and will encourage them to keep going to meetings.



### Plan of Action

Revisit the goals and timeline you initially made for your project based on the group of people you have here. Do you have enough people to get things done faster than you thought? Do you have new info about whether one of your goals is realistic? Do some of your new team members have ideas for a better way to do something?

Plans go hand-in-hand with goals. Think about your goals and then start making more specific plans to reach them. What do you want to make? What do you need to make it? Who is going to help you make it? When are you going to make it? Write out the plan! Change the plan as you learn more.

What can you start doing right now? Have action items for your second meeting!

For tips on meetings, see Meetings Section of “I am a Project”

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