



STEM

## ROBOTICON

07 January 2017

The Tampa FIRST Robotics Competition 2017 season kick off, hosted at SOFWERX, brought together 13 teams from around Tampa Bay and the Florida Gulf Coast to learn what the new season engineering challenge is, and to pick up the Kit of Parts from which they must build their competition robot. Student and adult representatives of each of the teams got to hear from local business, academic and technology leaders about real world applications of the skills they're learning, and the types of college and career opportunities available to them. Teams also each received a \$550 donation from the Doolittle Institute.

### Event Outcomes

- Hosting the kick off at SOFWERX helped students see and learn about real world applications of their game based learning experience
- Students learned about career opportunities and pathways from SOCOM and SOFWERX speakers
- Students learned about academic opportunities for them at the University of South Florida, including the new Medical Engineering program
- Students learned what the most common design problems were that SOFWERX engineers discovered while working with teams in 2016 - hopefully encouraging them to address that issue at the outset
- Students learned the new season game challenge and were able to begin collaborating early on their robot design and strategy
- Teams were able to pick up their Kit of Parts at no charge - Live kick off events enable FIRST to ship bulk quantities of kits to a single location at no cost to teams, saving teams hundreds of dollars
- Teams each received a \$550 mini grant from the Doolittle Institute, which they were able to receive on site when they picked up their Kit of Parts
- Local business leaders were able to learn more about FIRST and see the new season engineering challenge, so they could get a better understanding of FIRST in context