



Charging *Solar Team Twente* with fresh energy and a new direction

When success reaches its limits, a bold new direction reignites the future

Even the most cutting-edge groups must occasionally inject fresh ideas and consider new directions. Solar Team Twente and Capgemini partnered to accomplish just such a refreshing pivot. Through a series of workshops and coaching sessions, we helped the team identify an exciting new opportunity and identify the steps needed to realize its daring vision to compete in a new field: rally racing.

Client: Solar Team Twente

Region: Netherlands

Industry: Automotive

Client challenge: Facing the limitations of innovation and enthusiasm related to its participation in the World Solar Challenge, Solar Team Twente searched for a new opportunity that would reinvigorate the project.

Solution: Originally brought on as a financial sponsor, Capgemini quickly became a true partner and worked with the student team to develop a strategic plan that would see it pivot from asphalt to rally racing.

Finding new avenues for innovation

For generations, cars have captivated people young and old around the world. From drivers to race spectators, we admire sleek design and roaring engines as, year after year, the automotive industry sets new standards for safety and performance. This has pushed innovation as engineers strive to find a new edge in every element of car design.

Solar Team Twente is one such response to the race for vehicular advancement. This team is made up of a group of students attending the University of Twente, Saxion University, each of whom pause their studies for a year-and-a-half to participate in the World Solar Challenge. This competition called for custom-built and solar-powered cars to compete in a 3,000 km race drawn through the Australian outback from Darwin to Adelaide.

"It's an opportunity to show the world the potential for solar power in the automotive field," explained Daniel Blik, Team Manager, Solar Team Twente 2025. *"We can push the boundaries of design and technological innovation to demonstrate what can be accomplished with the right attitude and mindset."*

Over time, the team saw a great deal of success, beginning with a second-place finish in 2015. Solar Team Twente then led the entire race in 2019 until an accident occurred near the end. Finally, in 2021, all of this work came to a head when the team became champions in Morocco.

These events have brought together 150 partners in and beyond the Netherlands to sponsor Solar Team Twente, one of the largest student teams in the nation. This meeting point of business sponsorship and youth-driven design has led to exceptional results, with the team finishing third in 2023 and second in 2025, both times in Challenger Class.

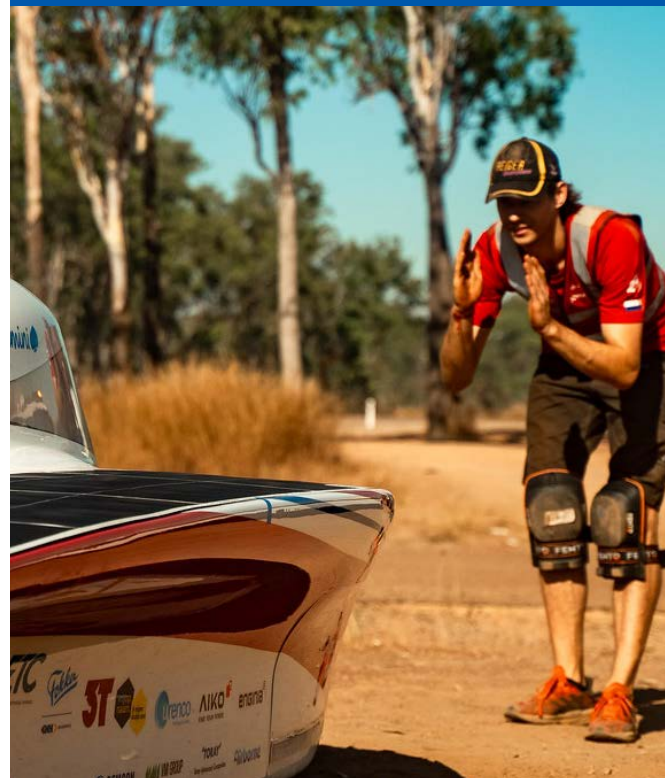
Despite this success, Solar Team Twente found itself in uncharted territory. While the number of students at the university was increasing, the options they had to choose from had also expanded. Meanwhile, it became more financially challenging for Solar Team Twente to continue operating in the same way to which it was accustomed. Finally, Solar Team Twente identified that fascination with solar cars had begun to fade as innovation potential had become increasingly limited.

"It's natural for any group to reach the end of a chapter, and then the question is where do you go from there?" said Daniel Blik. *"We wanted fresh ideas and new participants, which brought us to Capgemini. While we reached out first about financial sponsorship, it became clear very quickly that the potential there was much greater and so our relationship evolved into a true partnership."*



"It's an opportunity to show the world the potential for solar power in the automotive field."

Daniel Blik
Team Manager,
Solar Team Twente 2025



Steering onto a new course

Given the team's circumstances, Solar Team Twente and Capgemini agreed to focus on guiding the creation, design, and execution of a strategy that would explore new opportunities.

To match the students' energy, enthusiasm, and innovative spirit, we established the SunChargers Program, which consisted of a group of ambassadors from across a wide variety of Capgemini departments. This group had a single goal: identifying exactly where Solar Team Twente could most use support and how to boost enthusiasm once again.

"We were all incredibly excited to jump head-first into this project. Solar Team Twente had already covered a great deal of exciting ground with solar cars and the potential for more was really enticing," described Dennis Leicher, SunCharger. *"In the beginning, we were still finding our rhythm. It wasn't yet clear what Capgemini could bring for Solar Team Twente, and the first steps felt quite delicate. Initiatives like the SunChargers helped build trust over time, creating space for a more open dialogue on challenges and where we could add value, and from there, connect to the team's legacy, like the World Solar Challenge, and carry that spirit forward."*

A series of workshops helped further clarify present challenges and future ambitions. These events, which brought together Solar Team Twente members and the SunChargers, produced several ideas, including the North Star session, a wide-ranging co-creation workshop that explored potential strategies and helped define a pathway to a more energized future that extended beyond the World Solar Challenge.

"Once we all agreed that the team's future likely lay beyond one competition, the partnership was able to look farther afield and focus on how to get Solar Team Twente where they wanted to go," Dennis Leicher. *"Together, we were able to combine so many different*

backgrounds and ideas and develop a really exciting blueprint that laid out exactly what this journey would look like."

Once the roadmap was in place, we then provided Solar Team Twente with the coaching needed to undergo the change it would require. Together, we helped define a new direction for Solar Team Twente, unlocking a sustainable future beyond solar racing.

Rallying the team in a different direction

With a clear new strategy, Solar Team Twente is now pursuing a transition from asphalt racing to rally racing in the Rallye du Maroc, an annual event wherein competitors traverse around 2000 km of off-road terrain as part of the FIA World Rally-Raid Championship. Throughout this pivot, Capgemini will continue to provide hands-on support so that we can enable the team to do what they do best: innovating, building, and racing.

And while the partnership has already covered substantial ground, this is far from the limit of what Solar Team Twente and Capgemini can accomplish together. In the future, we will work with the team to explore new horizons for the partnership and find ways to expand our support, including help with development of the buggy for the 2026 rally race.

"We've seen a fresh injection of enthusiasm for the team with this new direction," said Daniel Blik. *"More students are expressing interest in joining. More students mean new ideas and more opportunities to show how renewable energy can help tackle even the most challenging environments. I can't wait to see where we go from here and how Capgemini can help the students pursue their mission!"*



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