

Section 5: Solving the *Central Challenge*

Strategies and questions you can ask the team regarding its *Team Challenge*.

1. What Does the Challenge Say You Must Do?

- ★ Each team member must have a copy of the *Team Challenge*, the *Rules of the Road*, and the published Clarifications.
- ★ Focus on the main parts of the Challenge and then look for specific requirements.
- ★ What specifics does the team need to know?

2. What Facts Does the Team Know About the Challenge?

- ★ Have the team members make up Who, What, When, Where, Why, and How questions that they will need to answer.
- ★ If it doesn't say the team can't do something (either in the Challenge itself, the *Rules of the Road*, or the published Clarifications), then the team can.

3. What Else Do They Need to Know? Or Find Out About?

- ★ If the team is not sure about some aspect of the Challenge, encourage them to request a Clarification. This can be done in two ways: By mail, using the *Clarification Form* in the *Rules of the Road*, or by completing a *Clarification Form* on the Destination Imagination, Inc. web site: www.destinationimagination.org
- ★ Utilize reference books, field trips, resource people. Resource people, whether the Team Manager or an 'external' resource, must never teach to the specifics of the Challenge.

4. Review The Facts: State the Challenge.

- ★ Select each part of the Challenge and have the team members restate it in their own words. Write each one on a large piece of paper.

5. How Else Can You Say It? Consider All Possibilities

- ★ Restate the Challenge using all possible aspects.
- ★ Use the CPS Techniques in Section 2 to Generate Options.
- ★ If there are not enough possibilities, team members will fall back on the tried and true.
- ★ Look at the plays on words: If it has to move ten feet, could this be ten one-foot rulers? Or real feet? Or feats of strength?

6. This is What the Team Decides Their Challenge Really Is!

- ★ Restate the team's interpretation and the Challenge they believe they must solve.

7. Look For Ideas That Might Solve the Challenge

- ★ This is the **Generating Options** Phase.
- ★ Review Tools for Generating Options – Brainstorming, SCAMPER
- ★ Record all ideas.
- ★ Encourage piggybacking of ideas.
- ★ Push for something more. Ask what else they might like to consider.
- ★ Use Forced Association. Take two objects and make them work together, e.g. How could glasses be used to make a robot move?

8. Which Two or Three Ideas Might Be Really Good?

- ★ Have the team begin by narrowing and clarifying possible solutions.
- ★ Use the CPS Focusing Technique: A-Lo-U.
- ★ Make sure the ideas meet the requirements of the Challenge.
- ★ Combine one or two ideas.

9. Test Some of the Solutions

- ★ What does the team want this solution to accomplish?
- ★ What criteria are important?
- ★ Does the solution meet the specifications?
- ★ Can the solutions be accomplished in the time given?
- ★ Does someone on the team have the expertise to complete the solution?
- ★ Does the solution meet the scoring criteria?
- ★ Does the solution cover all the scoring elements?
- ★ Does the team have the resources available?
- ★ Is this solution REALLY creative, or will other teams also think along the same lines?

10. The Team's Special Qualities

- ★ This is the elaboration of the basic solution.
- ★ Can the solution be made more beautiful, cleaner, more unique, more creative?
- ★ Has the team paid close enough attention to details?
- ★ Does the solution draw attention to the team's Specialties – *Side Trips Specialties Inventory (STSI)* – Section 6?
- ★ Does the solution truly reflect the team's special interests/skills/qualities?

11. Fine Tuning

- ★ This is the “What If?” time. Teach the team to handle the unexpected. Teach the team that things may happen over which they have no control. They need to be prepared to problem solve on the spot. Have the Team develop an action plan so each team member knows his/her responsibilities.
 - What if the power goes out?
 - What if a prop falls over?
 - What if the vehicle doesn't work?

Additional Tips for the Team Manager

- ★ Read, Read, and Read the team's Challenge and the *Rules of the Road*.
- ★ Use the CPS process and tools mentioned in Section 2 and the Teamwork ideas in Section 3.
- ★ Know the rules about Interference – Section 4 and in the *Rules of the Road*.
- ★ Know about *Side Trips* – Section 6. Use the *Side Trip Specialties Inventory (STSI)* in this Section to help the team determine its Specialties.
- ★ Know what is needed on the various Forms in Section 7.
- ★ Practice Improvisation Techniques with the team. (This is fun) - Section 8.
- ★ Have the team practice *Instant Challenges* starting with the very first meeting, and continue doing so throughout the Destination ImagiNation® year. The skills learned from *Instant Challenges* will help the team develop more creative/unique solution(s) to their *Central Challenge* – Section 9.
- ★ Take a look at the Other Resources and Bibliography in Section 10.

Questions a Team Manager might consider regarding his/her management style:

- ★ Is there sufficient time for student interaction?
- ★ Are there sufficient periods of time and optimal conditions for creative problem solving to take place?
- ★ Where can I go for help, e.g. speakers, resources, etc.?
- ★ Is each team member participating as an equal?
- ★ Is each team member provided a positive atmosphere for creative problem solving with no put-downs allowed?
- ★ Are team members taking the initiative in: Planning? Discussions? Decision Making?

Strategies a Team Manager might use when the team is discussing their solution:

- ★ How could they restate their Challenge?
- ★ Could they focus on one part of the Challenge, if the whole idea is too big?

- ★ When the team gets stuck or reaches a roadblock, have them try **something**. Even if it fails, there will be something to discuss.
- ★ If a solution is arrived at too easily or too early, the TM might want to guide the team to explore further. Ask, “Is there anything else you could do?” “How could you be more creative?”
- ★ Keep the various CPS Tools in mind as the team works through the **Generating Options** and **Focusing/Evaluating** Phases of the Challenge.
- ★ Make certain the Team keeps its focus on producing a fresh and creative solution rather than simply focusing on ‘winning.’ ‘Winning’ can certainly be *A* goal, but it should not be the team’s **ONLY** goal.
- ★ The Team Manager’s main job is to see that the true spirit and intent of Destination ImagiNation® is maintained: Destination ImagiNation® is a hands-on educational program for kids. Participants will only benefit if they are allowed to try and fail, and try and fail, and try again. Learning that trial and error is not wrong — but is simply a path to success — is important!!

Points To Remember – Team Manager Survival

- ★ Know the Rules and the Challenge backwards and forwards. Team Managers’ greatest concerns come from NOT knowing the Rules.
- ★ Do not feel that you must tolerate inappropriate behavior. Inappropriate behavior on the part of a team member is not acceptable.
- ★ Ask for help from your Program Coordinator whenever you need it.
- ★ ABSOLUTELY go to every training you can. Information and understanding are key to a high comfort level as a Team Manager.
- ★ A month before competition, you will feel that they will NEVER be finished. They will, but almost always at the last minute!!
- ★ And, if for some reason the team doesn’t complete its solution by the date of the tournament, please remember: This is the TEAM’S Challenge and the TEAM’S solution – NOT yours. You are the facilitator, not the Challenge solver!
- ★ You are SPECIAL to do this with and for the team. They will remember you for years to come as a very SPECIAL person to them.
- ★ Have FUN with your team. They are special too.