**Instant Challenge Tips, Ideas, and Practice**

Instant Challenges are FUN!!

The Instant Challenge competition is a chance for your team to show off its creative problem solving skills as they demonstrate their teamwork and ability to "think on their feet."

Don't leave them to be done if there is time. Make time for them in your meeting schedule or have Instant Challenge Meetings. They can help warm up teams before working on their solutions for the main challenge, provide a way to break up a team meeting, or be a means to try out hypotheses teams have brainstormed as possible solutions to the main challenges. Instant Challenge Competition can often make or break a team at a tournament. It can separate a team that has learned to work well together from a team that never practiced team building skills.

**Basic Tips**

* Practice Instant Challenge at least once a week from the beginning.
* Do at least three (3) challenges each time.
* Spend 15-20 minutes to 1/2 hour
* Increase time as competition date nears
* Do as many types of each challenge as possible
* Teach the team how to generate a variety of creative responses.
* Use unusual materials
* HAVE FUN!

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| **TYPES OF INSTANT CHALLENGES** | |
| **Performanced-Based** | **Task-Based** |
| Without Props | To Communicate |
| With Props | To Move |
| Team Created Props | To Change |
| Imaginary Props | To Protect |

**Performance-Based Instant Challenges** require teams to create a performance from real or imaginary props. The team must either create these props from given materials or use ones already provided. The type of presentation for these Instant Challenges will vary. They may include one or more of the following: singing, miming, rhyming, dancing, etc. Team members may enhance their characterizations through the use of Improv, Mime, Body Language, Stage Presence, and/or Voice Alteration. When brainstorming a solution to a performance-based instant challenge, teams should make sure they consider areas of Story Line Development such as: Situation, Conflict, Resolution, and Beginning-Middle-End. They may also want to think about using other theatrical elements including: Staging, Music, and Special Effects.

**Task-Based Instant Challenges** are more hands-on type challenges. Team members must work together to communicate, move, change or protect something with the materials they are given by the Appraisers. Sometimes they will be given items which they must manipulate and then give related verbal responses about what they have done with them for score.

In a Task-Based Instant Challenge the team will be given a variety of materials to use to solve the challenge. These materials will fall into three main categories: *Extenders/Structural Items; Connectors/Adhesives; and Controllers/Holders/Transporters*. When beginning task-based Instant Challenges it is recommended that you first discuss the three basic types of materials with your team. Then gather a wide variety of items from the lists below and have your team determine what the function(s) of each item might be. Remember keep asking the team in what ways could they use each item.

**General tips for solving all instant challenges:**

1. Speak loudly and clearly. If you can't be heard, it doesn't matter how creative you or solution is.
2. Know where the points are. Listen carefully to where the largest number of points will be awarded and work from there.
3. Know your teammates and their strengths. Everyone has different areas in which they excel.
4. Listen to the instructions carefully. Ask questions if you're unclear about what is expected. There are no stupid questions; just speak up.
5. Time is very important. Although the team should take responsibility for keeping ttrack of time, you may ask how much time is remaining.
6. The entire team should evaluate their performance, noting areas needing improvement. Then do the challenge again.
7. You will notice teamwork is a very important in instant challenges. Never argue

with your teammates while trying to solve your challenges.

**How to present Instant Challenges to EACH team**

Keep copies of the Instant Challenge a safe place away from the team. The idea behind

Instant Challenges is on the spot problem solving. If you allow any team member to

read any of these challenges prior to the presentation to the entire team, it defeats the

purpose of being able to think on their feet.

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**Preview the challenges for difficulty**. Many challenges can be modified to fit different

skill levels. To be successful with Instant Challenges be sure to read each one carefully

and assemble all required materials prior to presenting the challenge to the team.

Materials may be substituted, but be sure to make the appropriate changes in the written

text of the challenge. Be sure to set the challenge up in a place suitable to the

challenge requirements.

Performance based challenges may need lots of room, and task based challenges usually need a table or workspace that can stand the punishment of a truly creative team. A quiet, well

lit room away from distractions, is preferable.

All challenges should be timed. Although, teams may not finish within the stated time

**Performance Based Instant Challenges are written** with the following subheadings:

1. Challenge:

A brief summary of the team’s Challenge.

2. Time:

A statement of how much time the team has for each part of the Challenge. Usually a team may

ask to be scored early before time has been called.

3. The Scene:

This section sets up the rules for the team’s presentation before the Appraisers.

4. Materials:

Items to use in your presentation usually will be separated into things that can be changed

(or altered) and things that cannot be damaged.

5. Scoring:

This section gives the details of how the team will be scored on the Challenge.

What Appraisers Look For:

Presentation Tools:

How might the team portray the characters?

How might the team use posture, gestures, facial expression, body movement, and choice of words to enhance their Presentation?

How might the team develop the story line?

How might Improv Skills add to the Performance?

How might special effects be used?

Materials:

How might the team use the materials provided in a unique way?

How might the materials be combined, be made stronger, be taken apart, be put to other use, be helpful, be used in an original manner?

Task Based Instant Challenges

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Making Materials Work

It is very important that teams understand the properties of common materials that they will encounter in task based challenges. Remember, materials can have multiple properties, for example a straw can be both an extender and a connector depending on how it is used. Try the following activity below with

your team.

Activity: It’s All Material

This activity provides reinforcement of recognizing a material’s original design and its alternative uses.

Give the team:

Plastic Straw

Paper Clip

Label

Toothpick

Index Card

Newspaper

Envelope

Clay

Toilet Paper Tube

Piece of paper

Piece of notebook paper

Ask participants to set up a table like the example below. Then have them

list the items on the piece of notebook paper.

Choose one design function

Extenders, Connectors, or Controllers.

Ask the team to determine if the various items fit into the chosen design function as original design or alternative use.

The team should record its responses on the notebook paper, beside each item listed.

When finished, ask the team to report its findings.

Example:

Extender

Item

Original Function (Yes or No)

Alternative Use

Wire Coat Hanger

No

Extender: unwind, cut, open to straighten

Debrief:

Discuss how each item has an original design and many alternative uses. One way creative uses of materials can be achieved is to implement alternative uses.

**Appraising Team Work**

When observing team work, the following elements become evident:

1. Cooperative Spirit:

positive attitudes and reinforcement of all team members absence of negativism

2. Team Identified Roles:

tasks may be divided equally among the team

a leader’s role is identified immediately or at some point in time roles may have been pre assigned prior to arrival at challenge site

3. Acceptance of Ideas of Others sharing of ideas acceptance of ideas of others

4. Diversity of Ideas, numerous ideas,ideas discarded and implemented

5. Ability to work through disagreements in constructive rather than destructive manner.

6. Ability to work on solution together utilizing the combined skills of all team members.

7. Ability to come to a consensus for the purpose of solving a challenge