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# CreativityNews



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## Top 10 Secrets of Top Ranked Teams

1. **Read the challenge again and again.** It is very important to know the challenge well. Always have a copy of the challenge handy. Too many teams lose focus of what they are doing because they stray from the rules or scoring categories.
2. **Define creativity.** As a team, define creativity. Make sure that you are getting the most creativity out of your ideas. Think about creating and what that means when trying to make a creative solution to the team challenge and when practicing brainstorming.
3. **Eliminate the common.** When trying to solve a challenge, eliminate the common ideas. For example, a cat and mouse theme in a challenge based on mousetraps is probably not going to seem creative (appraisers will be expecting it). Be different. Do something inspired - be creative!
4. **List your goals.** DI is a great place to learn real life skills. Setting and accomplishing goals is a skill that works beautifully in DI and in real life. It is a simple task which can add a lot of efficiency to a team.
5. **Use creative inspiration.** If you know of a painting, play, TV show, book, piece of music or any other work of art which is very creative, watch, read, listen or do it. Creativity is contagious. Try to have music a constant creative atmosphere at meetings. Relax and be creative.
6. **Work hard and often.** Have consistent meeting times and meet at least three times a week during the last month before competition. Team members should be welcome to work above and beyond scheduled practices. This much work is not for everyone, but it is necessary to reach the top.
7. **Solve the challenge completely.** Some teams do great with one part of the challenge, but get too wrapped up on one aspect. Take the time to try and cover every scoring category. Get a strategy and decide specifically what direction to take. Then delegate duties and trust your teammates to get it done. In creative categories, make it so creative that appraisers can't help but give you high scores.
8. **Have a good attitude.** Do your best and worry only about your team. You can control how well you do and how you carry yourself. But remember that DI is not about winning. Don't be so competitive that you miss what DI is really all about.



I never did anything by accident, nor did any of my inventions come by accident; they came by work.

-Thomas Edison

9. **Simplify Instant Challenge.** IC can be the most intimidating part of DI. Practice a lot. Try to recreate competition situations. Do challenges over and over again, analyzing what you can do better the next time. The most important fact to remember when training for IC is this: your goal in training is not to solve many Challenges, it is to learn the skills to solve any Challenge.

10. **"Gifted" doesn't always mean "Creative."** Gifted students are usually given this label due to testing of language, math, memorization, etc. Rarely are students ever tested for creativity. Open team membership to all students.

### Script-Writing Tips From A to Z

A - Action, appropriate, keep the audience in mind

B - Backdrop, background of characters, balance, build logically to a conclusion

C - Conflict, costumes, number of scene changes, characterization

D - Dialogue

E - Expression, emotion, enunciation

F - Finish, fit in the performance area, function of each prop & backdrop

G - General tone of the script - drama or comedy, reality or fantasy

H - Humor - is it funny to all?

I - Innovation, imagery, improv, imagination (but it still has to make sense)

J - all team members join together to give input and write script

K - Knowledge of subject - research before and while writing script, keep the interest of the audience

L - where is the play located geographically, do props fit in limited space

M - moving in the presentation area, who moves where when? Music, moral at end?

N - accentuate what you want the appraisers/audience to notice

O - originality, opening, start with an outline

P - plot, plot, plot, parody, props, is your script practical?

Q - question each line/action to make sure it fits



R - resolution of conflict, are you taking a risk? rewrite, rewrite, rewrite

S - sound effects, number of scene changes, have you solved the challenge? Setting, does it tell a story? Special talents of team members

T - transitions between scenes (are they smooth), time period, technical aspects

U - understand the challenge and the characters, does every line have a use?

V - voices of the characters

W - write tight, write long first - tighten and cut it later

X - eXamine the script for eXcellent eXamples of eXcessive eXaggeration

Y - yesterday - when the script was due!

Z - does it pass the ZZZZZZZ test - does the script put people to sleep?

### A Tip for Success – Roles in Instant Challenge

At the moment, I think that successful ICs have more to do with teamwork than just thinking creatively (although that certainly helps.) With a young team, try to come up with different "roles" or jobs for each to have responsibility in the IC. My preference is NOT to assign these roles, but to describe them and ask who in the group thinks he/she would be good at this role or like to try it? If more than one person, you can have TWO in a category - can't hurt. If nobody volunteers, have them draw "roles" from slips of paper for a few times and see if they fall into anything that is comfortable. Or if they've chosen roles and it doesn't seem to mesh; that's the time to insist everyone try a new role.

#### Examples of roles might be:

**1. The rule person.** This person reads the IC (if on paper) and throughout the solving is the person who refers back to the written challenge to be sure they are solving as directed and following rules. Many an IC has run aground when a team has an amusing presentation, but talks in a nonverbal, or touches the tape that can't be touched, or changes the item that "can't be changed." The rule person keeps the focus on what is allowed.

**2. The points person.** This person makes sure the team is getting the most points possible. [for example, if the challenge said 10 points for a skit and 50 points for each creative costume, the rule person would remind the team that costumes were important, point-wise, esp. if they got stuck writing a skit and forgot to dress up.]

--Yes, rule person and points person might seem redundant, but you WANT two kids checking the rules and paper and points throughout, so there are two slightly different roles that overlap.

**3. The timekeeper.** This person must have a watch and must get used to checking it and telling the team when they are half-way through, or have a minute left, or whatever is appropriate. [sometimes, when the timekeeper isn't paying attention at IC practice, I let the time run out and call TIME.]





**4. The laugh meters.** Often more than one person volunteers for this, but this is a job to be sure that the skit or whatever is funny (assuming it is supposed to be funny) and suggests quirky actions, character voices, funny lines and whatever else tickles their fancy.

**5. The idea/teamwork facilitator.** Hmmmm. need a kid-friendly word here, but can't think of what I called it before! Anyway, this is the moderator of the group, who makes sure that everybody is participating and encourages the less-outgoing kids to speak up, and asks the babbling kids to "hold that thought" while another idea is heard. Maybe we called it the brainstormer? Anyway, this person makes sure that there is some order to the teamwork and participation; if several people want to talk, this person identifies people in turn to speak, so that everyone gets a turn.

**6. The "what if?" person.** If you don't use up all your kids with jobs above doubling up, add a "what if?" person. This person listens to the first two ideas and then says "what if..." and adds on or changes one of the ideas. Even if they don't do this in a meet, this is great practice for thinking outside the box. There can be more than one "what if?" person.

## TEAM CHEER ADS FOR TOURNAMENT PROGRAMS A FUNDRAISER FOR YOUR TEAM!

This year we will once again be offering **Team Cheers!** in our **Western Region & State Tournament programs**.....and hopefully help your team raise a little money for an end of year party! A **Team Cheers!** is an ad wishing a team, school, team member, coach, judge, or district good luck. Here's the way it works...

Each 1/8 page (2" x 2.25") ad costs \$10 (team keeps \$5)  
 ¼ page (2" x 5") costs \$20 (team keeps \$10)  
 ½ page (4" x 5") costs \$40 (team keeps \$20)  
 Full page (8" x 5") costs \$80 (team keeps \$40)

Your team sells the ads to parents, teachers, administrators, PTOs, local businesses and keeps half the money raised. The other half (in a check made payable "Destination ImagiNation of New York") along with the text for the ad is forwarded to the Affiliate Director at the address listed below **no later than March 1, 2004** for inclusion in our **Western Regional tournament program**. **No later than April 1, 2004 for inclusion in our State Tournament program**

I hope this will be a successful fundraiser for your team. Please use (and duplicate) the form on our website with this letter to take ads. Send all your **Western Region & State Tournament** ads to the Affiliate Director at the address below, in one envelope along with a check made payable to "Destination ImagiNation of NY" for Tournament program Ads!.

Please use the order form for Team Cheer Ads from our website. You can find it at <http://nydi.org/2004TEAMCHEER.htm>

Dee Urban, Affiliate Director  
Destination ImagiNation of NY

73 Minden Drive  
Orchard Park, New York 14127

Telephone- 716-675-7566  
e-mail: [deeurban@adelphia.net](mailto:deeurban@adelphia.net)

ny website: <http://nydi.org>