

Team Manager Training:
**Selecting and Understanding
the Central Challenge**

Helping your team understand the Central Challenge is NOT interference



**DESTINATION
IMAGINATION.**

OREGON

How much time should we spend?

Most teams select their central challenge in 1 or 2 meetings

- Use the challenge synopsis to review key points and then vote or rank the challenges or vote on the NO's. Take a break (FUN) while the votes are tallied.
- If there are still 2 strong contenders:
 - Read the full challenges (maybe) but discuss key points
 - Wait until the next meeting to vote
 - Have team members “campaign” for one over another
 - Vote secretly to avoid selection by “alliance”

Once a challenge is selected

After the team has selected a challenge, the Team Manager should

- Make a copy of the complete challenge for every team member
- Create a visual that includes all key scored elements
- Discuss each part of the challenge to make sure all team members understand what needs to be done
- Find key words like **MUST** so key elements are not missed

DI-secting a Central Challenge

Although the TM cannot solve the challenge, you can help them understand it

- **Read through the challenge they have selected several times.**
Read straight through the first time. Help the kids define words and terms as they are written in the challenge. Can you summarize the challenge in one sentence?
- Read through a second time and **focus on the KEY ELEMENTS** of the Challenge. Use a highlighter to mark key elements.

DI-secting continued

Read through the challenge again and mark areas where **YOU** have questions.



Some answers may be in the Rules of the Road (ROTR).

Reread the Points of Interest

Create a poster on butcher paper with large boxes to be filled in by the team.

Challenge Title and Summary: The Team should agree on a quick summary after you've read through the Points of Interest with them several times.

Key Elements to Solving the Challenge: Use the "points" section to help identify the different areas on which they will need to focus.

Questions We Have About this Challenge: Write down questions the team will need to figure out for themselves or possibly send in for clarification.

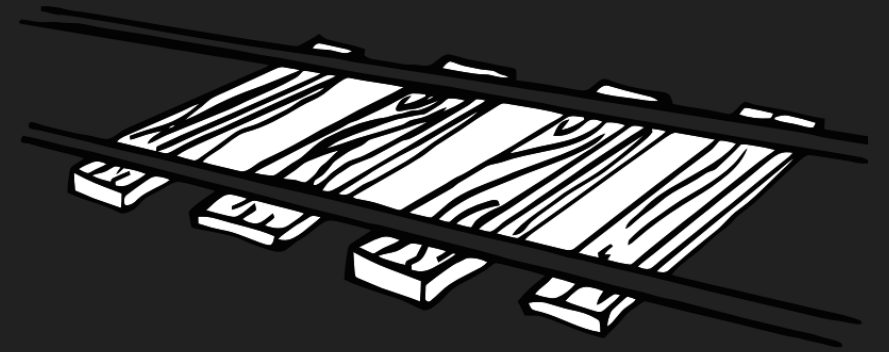
NOW, the team is ready to brainstorm!

- Take notes during all discussions, brainstorming sessions, etc.
- Create a poster for each of the key elements. Help the team summarize their ideas and keep adding them to the poster.
- As decisions are made, transfer the information to a new/fresh poster



Staying on track

- Frequently come back to the challenge and reread. At points along the way the facets of the challenge the team is solving may change shape, theme, or perspective.
- It is a team manager's job to make sure that they are not getting way off track



More on brainstorming

- **Be sure the team understands the scoring elements of their challenge.**
 - Spend plenty of time on the things that your score depends on.
- Spend enough time up front brainstorming on theme and scoring element aspects so that the team gets past the OK ideas and gets to the really outstanding ideas.
- Use a variety of brainstorming techniques until the team hits on THE idea. Try force-fitting more than one idea. You will all know it when you hear/see it!!
- The team manager's job is to **take lots of good notes.**

How does a team get ideas?

- **Think Tank** – brainstorming and recording as free-flowing idea generation – no blocks or filters.
- **Collecting** – have each team member keep a notebook and record ideas as they occur during the day,
- **Questioning** – both the team and the team manager should ask lots of open-ended questions to add ideas.
- **Raw Data Research** – Interview experts in the field, search the Internet, go on a field trip, go to the library.
- **Idea Generation** – require each team member to come up with 10 – 20 ideas independently then combine, evaluate, reduce the ideas for use as a team.
- **Start A BIG BOX** – containing idea starts, clippings, articles, drawings or design attempts, great lines to add to a script later, etc.
- **Time to think** – perhaps in different areas of the room so that they can think without distraction.

Sample open-ended questions

- What should be done?
- Why is it necessary?
- **When** should it be done?
- **Where** should it be done?
- Who should do it?
- How should it be done?
- Can this be tested?
- What kind of tests are best?
- What if this were enlarged?
- What if this were smaller?
- What could be omitted?
- What could be carried to extremes?
- What if this were lower?
- How could we make this lighter?
- How could this be done faster?
- How else could this be arranged?
- What if we changed the order?
- What should come next?