

ODYSSEY of the MIND: It takes TEAMS, COACHES and JUDGES who...

1. Make a commitment to accept a fun and challenging, creative assignment.
 - T(eams) Commit to meeting on a regular basis to develop a creative solution to one of five problems. They will present their solution at the Regional Tournament.
 - C(oaches) Commit to providing time, space, resources and encouragement for the team.
Commit to attending a fun, informative and supportive “Coaches Training” session.
 - J(udges) Commit to attending a fun-filled day of “Judges Training.”
Commit to a full day of judging at the Regional Tournament. Please understand that you will NOT be able to see “your” team present their solution.

2. Develop an appreciation for the unique contributions each team member is capable of. Affirm that the collective efforts of your team can produce a creative solution unlike any other!
 - T: Spend time: a) exploring the talents and temperaments, experiences and expectations that members bring to the team; b) researching ideas and learning new skills.
These are the building blocks and tools you will use creatively to develop your solution.
 - C: Help team members recognize and develop their own creative abilities and to affirm the creative abilities of their teammates. Provide teambuilding activities which encourage collaboration. Promote research and new skill development.
 - J: Appreciate that the primary objective of the team is NOT to showcase talents and skills, but to apply these tools to fashion a creative solution.

3. Share your Best ideas and efforts with your team. Encourage your teammates to do the same. Incorporate everyone’s efforts into a Quality solution! Do not allow any Outside Assistance.
 - T: Recognize that, although your teammates’ contributions will be different from and perhaps in conflict with yours, they are every bit as valuable. Remember that multiple ideas provide an opportunity to incorporate the best features of each for an even better solution. Respectful behavior is absolutely necessary in presenting ideas and in resolving any conflicts.
 - C: Remember that OOTM is an opportunity for divergent problem solving; there isn’t a single “right” answer. Teach the team effective “brainstorming” techniques. Do NOT let them bounce ideas off you in an effort to gain your approval of a “right” answer. Allow the team full ownership of their solution, from conception, to development, through implementation and presentation...WITHOUT Outside Assistance. Be firm in maintaining meetings in which unsportsmanlike or disrespectful behavior will not be tolerated.
 - J: Congratulate each team! They have successfully resolved an incredible number of issues on their own. Expect teammates to show support for one another and to behave respectfully at all times. Make note of any unsportsmanlike behavior.

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4. Take risks! Be willing to try, to fail and to try again!

- T: Don't discard that fantastic but "impossible" idea without deciding what makes it so attractive! Modify the idea! Try again! Persevere until you reach a solution which satisfies both the requirements of the problem and the sensibilities of the team.
- C: Allow the team time to explore what appears to you to be an impossible solution. They may make it "work" in a way you could never have imagined. And if it fails, perhaps, a better solution will present itself for having tried. Help the team learn the questions they must ask of themselves: "Does it fulfill the problem requirements? Can it be done in the time we have available? Do we have (or can we acquire) the necessary resources and skills? Are the materials within the cost limit?"
- J: Be fully aware of the problem requirements so you can evaluate whether or not the team has satisfied them. Recognize that some teams may risk presenting a very creative solution which challenges your understanding of the problem! Other teams may risk presenting a subjective element of the solution that they know may fail. The judging team, aided by the Problem Captain, should be prepared to credit extraordinary creativity without sacrificing a fair evaluation of how well the team's solution satisfies the problem.

5. Be accountable- volunteer your talents and efforts and live up to your commitment to the team.

- T: Enjoy this unique opportunity to "do it all, yourselves" and participate fully in each phase of the process. Show up for all meetings. Expect to dedicate some time outside of meetings for research, writing, obtaining materials, construction, etc. If you've said, "I'll do it", DO it! Express your creativity!
- C: The team couldn't do it without you! Seeing them through this process will be one of the most satisfying things you've ever done. Give them the tools they need and cheer them on!
- J: No one wants to perform for an audience that "doesn't get it." Know the problem, appreciate the solutions and applaud the effort! The teams will be grateful for the recognition. Recognize the duties and importance of each judging position and be part of a great judging team!

6. Be proud of being part of an exceptional program!

- T: Be proud of your unique, creative solution and be prepared to present it to a team of appreciative judges and amazed family and friends!
- C: Be proud of having coached your team through a demanding process. You have helped them understand the problem without imposing your solution. You have helped them coalesce into a "team."
- J: Be proud of playing a critical role in OOTM. Your positive comments will reaffirm the value of the teams' creative efforts. Your evaluations will give credit to their accomplishments and, perhaps, incentive to reach for even better solutions in the future.