

## OCCUPATIONAL CREATIVE THINKING

### **Purpose:**

The workplace is filled with issues that employees must face on a daily basis. Using critical thinking and teamwork skills, students are given the opportunity to identify possible solutions and develop a plan of action. Public speaking skills are strengthened as students present their plan in a logical, organized manner.

### **Description:**

Provide students with an opportunity to express realistic solutions to problems or conditions that occur within employment settings. **This is a team event.**

### **Participants:**

Team should consist of two or three students.

### **Rules and Procedures:**

Participants are given a “work related issue” then allowed time to plan and present a possible solution to a panel of judges. All teams will receive the same situation.

1. Each team must report to the event holding room and remain there until their time to report to the preparation room. No contestant may enter or leave the holding room.
2. Each member of the team must provide a CTI competitive event portfolio which meets all guidelines laid out in the Occupational Creative Thinking Rubric at the time of the competition.
3. Each team will have 10 minutes in the preparation room to review the issue and develop a solution. Index cards and pencils will be provided to the team members.
4. Each team will have 5 minutes to present the solution to a panel of judges. The attached judging rubric will be used. All judges' decisions are final.
5. Each team will be notified prior to competition of their performance time.

### **Example:**

Examples of a “work related issue”:

The company you are working for is not making a profit due to employee theft. The company is considering layoffs in your department. Present to your supervisor in a positive manner your arguments and plans for making the layoffs in another department.

Or

Several of the workers in your department have become ill. You suspect that there are unsafe materials in your area. A costly inspection that will require the plant to close for half a day can only be requested by your supervisor. Present a request to your supervisor for the inspection and plan for the loss of half a day's production and half a day's wages.

## **Suggested Judge Questions:**

### **1. Tell me about yourself.**

*This question is often used to break the ice and see how personable you can be. Be careful not to drone on endlessly for this question. It's easy to get caught up in your back story and lose track of time. A safe answer is to give a brief overview that covers where you grew up, where you went to school, why you chose your major, any internship experience you have, and why you're applying for this job.*

### **2. What are your strengths? Your weaknesses?**

*To answer this question, you need to do some introspection. Ask your friends, family, and any previous coworkers what they think they view your strengths and weaknesses. Prepare to discuss at least 3 strengths and 3 weaknesses. Stay away from clichés like “perfectionist” and “workaholic” as they can be interpreted as weaknesses. Own up to your faults. Everyone has them. Just be honest and open to improving yourself.*

### **3. Give me an example or a situation in which...**

*These questions are not only used to determine what you learned from a particular experience, but also to assess how you would respond to potential workplace scenarios and situations. Prepare to talk about 3 scenarios in which you faced conflict or difficulty in either work or school, had difficulty with either a supervisor or peer, and a leadership opportunity or a project you are particularly proud of.*

### **4. Tell me why you chose this specific project?**

*The good news here is that nobody knows and understands your experiences better than you, so you should be confident for this question. This is a great opportunity for you to sell yourself. A good framework for your answers is to explain the goals for any class or internship, cover your personal responsibilities in any projects, and discuss the outcomes. Again, avoid droning on for too long about any particular experience and wrap things up concisely.*

### **5. What are your longer-term career goals (or where do you see yourself in 5 or 10 years)?**

*There is no “right answer” to this question and it's certainly ok to say that you don't have any. However, be prepared to explain why you don't have any. One solid strategy is to downplay your career goals and aspirations (you are young after all) and play up your interest in the company and industry of the job you're applying for. Showcase your passion to be a part of whatever it is they are doing.*