

## VERBAL SPONTANEOUS PROBLEM: **AND THE MESSAGE IS...**

A. *When the team enters the room, tell them "This is a verbal problem. You have 1 minute to select the team members who will compete. The other team members must sit in these chairs and watch (indicate seats) or may leave the room. They may not participate in any way. (Allow the team 1 minute to decide.)*

### B. JUDGE READS TO TEAM:

(1) You will have one minute to think and four minutes to respond. You may ask the judges questions; however time will continue. You may not talk to each other at any time.

(2) You will receive 1 point for each common response, 2 points for each creative response, and 5 points for each highly creative response.

(3) Each of you has a set of 8 paper clips. When the first person responds, he or she is to pass a paper clip to the person on his left. When that person responds, he or she is to attach one paper clip to the previous one. Thus, you will begin a paper clip chain. Each person adds one paper clip after giving a response and passes the chain to the next person.

(4) You will give responses in turn. Time ends when the chain is completed or four minutes ends. The person in seat #1 will begin, and you will answer in a clockwise direction. (*Judge indicates first person and indicated the direction of responses.*)

(5) When it is your turn to give a response, you will give a response, add a paper clip to the chain, and pass the chain to the next person. You may not remove a paper clip from the chain at any time, nor repeat a turn, nor skip your turn, nor pass. If one member of the team is stuck, the team is stuck.

(6) Speak loudly and clearly. Once time begins, it will not be stopped, even if the judge asks you to repeat your answer or to clarify your answer, or to give a more appropriate response.

(7) **YOUR PROBLEM IS:** Almost everyone uses telephone answering machines, text messages or answering services to leave messages for others. On your turn, you are to pretend you are calling a well-known person from literature, films, art, history or politics, and leave a message for him or her. You will begin your answer by stating the person's name whom you are calling, and then give your message. For example, you could say "George Bush, this is Joe Smith calling to ask for a donation."

*(Judge repeats #8, beginning by saying, "I repeat..."; then begin one minute thinking time. At the end of one minute, reset the timer and begin four minute response time.)*

### FOR JUDGES ONLY:

(1) You will need 40 paper clips. If you can use 8 clips of 5 different colors, this would be ideal, as each person would receive 8 paper clips of the same color. However, you can use all the same color; just be certain each person starts with 8 of them.

(2) If a team member gives a response and passes the chain before adding a paper clip, stop him or her and remind the person to add a paper clip before passing the chain.

Common responses: Any usual voice messages someone might send or receive, such as "George Bush, this is your mother reminding you to go to the store," or "Julia Roberts, your book is on hold at the library." (A famous person, an ordinary message)

Creative responses: These might include messages which are particular in some way to the person who is getting the message and makes some reference that connects with that person. For example: "Napoleon, this

is your mother calling to tell you to take your hand out of your coat for portraits – it looks silly,” or “Shakespeare, your plays are on hold at the Folger Shakespeare library.”

Highly creative responses: These might include any messages that are highly humorous, have creative additions/projections, or make connections that go one step beyond the first, more immediate association you have for a person or name. For example: “Napoleon, this is The Inn at Waterloo calling: shall we cancel your celebration party?” or “Shakespeare, this is Hamlet calling. Have you seen Ophelia around since I asked her to get to a nunnery? I’ve been looking for her.”

For younger teams, a highly creative answer might be something like “Spiderman, this is the Webmaster: your web goo is ready for pickup,” or “Roadrunner, this is Wile E. Coyote calling to remind you we’re supposed to meet at the edge of the cliff.”