

Chain Reaction Contraption Competition Tips & Tricks

Project Suggestions:

1. Build / work on your machine somewhere where it will not have to be taken down and put back together each time you work on it. The more you build your machine, the harder it is to set back up. Pick somewhere you can leave it until you have videotaped your success.
2. Background Research – In order to make a successful Rube Goldberg machine, everything has to function perfectly or the chain reaction stops. Look up other Rube Goldberg machines and learn about simple machines to help make your project a success.
3. Measuring - Do NOT underestimate the importance of measuring. Measure everything and mark it down. It will probably take multiple tries to get everything perfect, so that your machine runs smoothly. Keep a record of your latest measurement so that if something gets knocked out of place, you can put it back.
4. Testing, Testing, Testing - Chain reaction contraptions take a lot of trial and error to get just right. Don't be afraid to test pieces individually and as a part of your machine. The earlier you know something doesn't work; the better.

Video Suggestions:

1. Make sure your camera has enough battery life and memory before you start.
2. Practice Roll stepping! Roll stepping is a smooth, heel to toe walking technique that reduces movement of objects in your hands! Lots of marching bands use this technique to keep their sound stable while they move; you can use it to help keep the camera still.
<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=1AAZdQ-a2hs>
3. Review how to zoom in and out on your camera.
4. When speaking on camera make sure to speak loud and clearly.
5. Make sure it is quiet when you are taping. Background noise can carry easily and make it hard to hear and focus on what is happening in the video.

Presentation Etiquette Suggestions:

1. Dress to impress. It's always a good idea to wear nice clothing when giving a presentation, this shows that you put in the work and are serious about your topic. Ask an adult for help if you don't know what professional clothing looks like.
2. Always face the audience. It is good practice to make eye contact and look at the people you are speaking to. You can look at the screen if you are using it to present, but don't keep your eyes glued there. If you are nervous about looking at everyone during your presentation try looking just above their heads instead.
3. Speak loudly and clearly. It's hard for judges to give you a good score if they can't hear you.
4. Practice with your visual aid. Having visual aids can really help make your presentation stellar, but only if you use them wisely. Practice with your visuals so you know when to change slides or point things out.
5. Practice in front of someone. It is important for your group to practice presenting in front of a parent or adult. They can help give you pointers, and make sure you are speaking loud enough. Also, practicing with someone watching makes it less scary to present in front of the judges.
6. Before you walk out on stage, take a deep breath. You are going to do great! Stand tall and be proud of what you and your team accomplished.

Visual Aid Suggestions:

1. Make sure your visual aid is easy to follow. Your presentation and visual aid (PowerPoint, Prezi, etc.) should have an order in which you want to present information and answer the necessary questions.
2. Do NOT write everything out on your visual aid. The information on your slides (or other media) should help you know what you want to talk about and show your main points. You should not write out everything and just read from your visual.
3. Link or embed your contraption video piece into you visual aid. This means you can access your video portion right from your visual aid instead of having to dig through other files! This takes less time and helps you look more organized. Ask an adult for help on this, if you need it.