



All Academy Day: Technical Assistance Center/Professionalism Event Details

Overview

Description

The teams, who work at a technical assistance call center, will demonstrate their professionalism while helping their clients (the judges) resolve a technical issue.

Related curriculum

Developed for IT Essentials but may be adapted for all curricula

Number of players

These instructions are written for two teams made up of four to five competitors, each to compete simultaneously.

By increasing the amount of equipment, the event may be expanded to have as many teams competing at the same time as you like.

Time required to prepare for or set up this event

10 to 30 minutes for preparation: setting up the room, testing the phone equipment, downloading and printing documents

Length of time to play

We suggest giving the teams 10 to 15 minutes to complete the activity and the judges 10 minutes to score the results and reset the challenge for the next team.

Important note

The Technical Assistance Center/Professionalism scenarios and scoring sheets files are kept on a secure site. Cisco Networking Academy instructors and administrators may request access to the site by sending an e-mail to allacademyday@external.cisco.com. Please include your name, Academy Connection ID, and academy name.

Rules

Object of the game

- Respond to calls to the Technical Assistance Center (TAC), helping customers resolve technical issues quickly and professionally.
- Contestants are expected to communicate well, work as a team, resolve customer conflicts, and manage their time in an effective manner.

Playing the game

- Each team is composed of TAC associates who are responsible for supporting their company's clients.
- The teams will receive two phone calls (one scenario per call) from customers (the judges). Teams will then work as a group to help resolve the customer's technical challenge within 10 minutes.

- The judges will call the teams and work from scripts that lay out, step by step, the questions for the TAC team and the anticipated responses.

Scoring

- Judges will score each team based on a judging sheet.
- In case of a tie, the team that resolves the customer's issues in the shortest time wins.
- In addition to technical skills, scoring will be based on the following skills:

Speaking skills

Contestants should...

- Speak at a volume level that is acceptable to the customer.
- Use tonal changes in their voice to show emphasis when needed and to welcome the caller.
- Use generic speech rather than slang or other colorful words.

Phone skills

Contestants should...

- Answer the call right away.
- Greet the caller as follows: company's name, their department or division, their name, and "How may I help you?"
- Ask for the caller's name and company, then use the caller's name throughout the conversation.
- Listen to the caller's situation (who, what, where, and when) to understand the purpose of the call.

Problem-solving skills

Contestants should...

- Ask clarifying questions to ensure they fully understand the problem.
- Determine the caller's orientation (where the caller is in the program and how much expertise the client has) and then direct the caller from there.
- Isolate the problem by asking questions, and be honest if they don't know the answer.
- Offer a solution and have the caller try the solution before ending the call.
- Hang up the phone after the caller hangs up.

BONUS: Time-management skills

Teams that complete the task in the shortest time will earn bonus points.

Earning points

- Each team can earn up to 102 points, including bonus, per scenario.
- Enter the Team Grand Total from the event scoring form into the All Academy Day scoring sheet.

Equipment List

To ensure the contest is fair, the materials should be identical for each team.

General supplies

- Three separate rooms if possible: one for the call center, one to house the judges/callers, and one for the other team to wait in. If you only have one room available, you can use dividers to separate the call center, the judges/callers, and the waiting team.
- For each contestant: one laptop or desktop computer complete with monitor, keyboard, mouse, and power supply. Contestants may use the computers to walk the client (the judge) through the steps to resolve the technical issue.
- Two to four telephones (PBX or IP). Ensure the speakerphone works for the contestants' phones. If your set-up does not allow for live phone connections, you may erect a barrier between the contestants and judges so both parties can hear each other but not see each other.
- Optional: headset for the judges' phones
- One power strip
- Timer or stopwatch
- Pens for the judges and contestants
- "Technical Assistance Center/Professionalism" sign for the room or area

Judges

- Two judges, one judge will serve as the caller and the other judge will record the scoring
- One timekeeper

Downloads

- Scenario problem sheet (print two, one for each judge)
- Scenario judging sheet (print four, one for each judge for each team)
- Scenario contestant worksheet (print two, one per team)
- Rules (print four, one for each team plus one for each judge)

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Room setup

- Four or more six-foot tables (eight-foot tables are fine)
- Enough chairs for contestants, judges, and audience

Room Setup

General room setup

- Post a "Technical Assistance Center/Professionalism" sign on the door or in the room.
- Place two tables perpendicular to each other to form one T-shaped work area. The customers/judges and each team should have one work area.

- Check to be sure the phones work between the TAC and the judges.
- Be sure that the contestants can't see or hear the judges directly. All communication should come through the phone.
- Seat the audience members so they can see the teams.



Place the following on the work area for each team

- For each contestant: one laptop or desktop computer complete with monitor, keyboard, mouse, and power supply
- One telephone (PBX or IP) with a working speakerphone
- One power strip
- One set of rules for each team
- One scenario contestant worksheet for each contestant)
- Pens for the contestants

Place the following on the judges' table

- One telephone (PBX or IP) with a headset if desired
- One power strip
- Timer or stopwatch
- One scenario problem for each judge
- One scenario scoring sheet for each judge
- One set of rules for each judge
- Pens for the judges
- Backup computer with monitor, keyboard, mouse, and power supply

- Backup telephone
- Backup power strip

Hints for Success

- Ensure you have the phone number for each telephone.
- Test each computer and telephone the day before the contest.
- To help ensure teams do not inadvertently pick up visual or verbal cues from each other, we suggest the following:
 - Play background music or white noise.
 - Use a different sequence of scenarios for each team. For example:

Team 1:	#1: scenario A	#2: scenario B
Team 2:	#1: scenario B	#2: scenario A
- Tape the rules to the contestant and judging tables.
- Have academies and students read the rules before they come to the event.



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