

# THE INVENTURE PRIZE VALUING DIVERSE PERSPECTIVES

## Diversity, Self-Awareness, and Teamwork

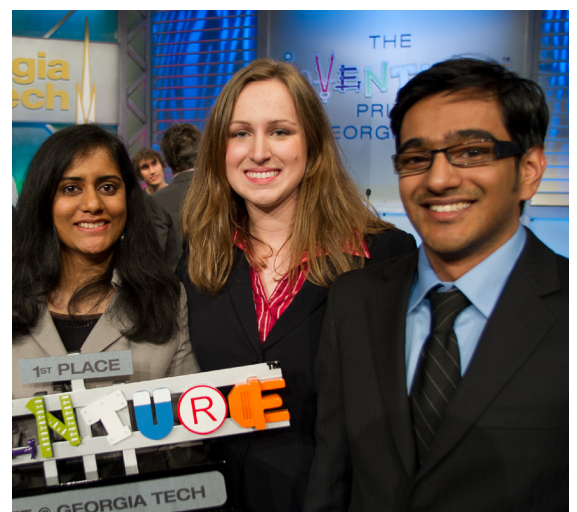
A real-time monitoring system that displays biometric and environmental data to first responders. A mobile toilet that provides a sanitary system to refugees in the developing world without violating local cultural practices. An electronic CPR mask that allows an untrained bystander to perform life-saving CPR. A software assisted home-use hand assessment device meant to aid in rehabilitation. A line of fully automated, interactive robotic toys made to appeal to animals rather than people. These are just a few of the award-winning inventions produced by Georgia Tech students and recent graduates at the annual InVenture Prize competition.

### »» High Stakes Competition

To compete, students work independently or in teams to develop and present inventions which will be judged by experts in their fields. Six finalists are then selected to advance to the final round shown live by Georgia Public Broadcasting, and winners walk away with up to \$20,000 to help make their invention a reality.

### »» Problem Solving is Key

Succeeding in the InVenture Prize competition requires that individuals or teams come up with an original and practical solution to a pressing problem. While it's possible that this problem will be one affecting the inventors, this is often not the case. Above all, a successful entry requires students to use their own strengths, knowledge, and skills while envisioning solutions to problems affecting many people (and even animals) in a variety of situations that differ from their own. That process relies on the self-awareness of the team members. They must be able to work together; communicate their strengths, skills, and perspective to others; and contribute work based on their strengths.



Photos by Rob Felt

## »» Success requires a Diversity of Perspectives

Just as importantly, inventors must often imagine a problem they have not faced. A diversity of perspectives within the team helps make that teamwork possible, and a view of the world that moves beyond their own experience is essential. Indeed, it is a balance between understanding oneself and seeing the world through another's perspective that results in an invention with widespread appeal and immediate impact.

## Activity: Identifying What you Bring

Your group is faced with a project that will require both knowledge about the subject under consideration as well as an understanding of what you do not yet know. To arrive at a place where you are prepared to accomplish your team goals, you will need to achieve clarity at the individual and group levels about what each of you brings to the table as well as what none of you brings.

### As a Team:

#### »» Step 1: Identify What You Already Know

Allow 2 to 3 minutes for each person in the group to make notes about what they know about the subject without any further research. What knowledge & skills do you have that might be useful to the team?

#### »» Step 2: Discuss What You Know

After this session, in which you are writing to learn what you know, take a few minutes to discuss your findings. Allow each person in the group a moment to share what they wrote down.

#### »» Step 3: Identify Common Knowledge and Questions

Discuss, as a group, which areas seem to be common knowledge within the group and what subjects or questions you will need to explore more. What skills will the team need to complete its work?

### Use Your Strengths

#### »» Step 4: Create Strength-Based Task List

Return to your CliftonStrengths results. Based on your own strengths, make a list of tasks and methods you could use to explore new areas of the subject and provide new knowledge to the group. Make notes to yourself for 2 to 3 minutes.

### Make a Plan

#### »» Step 5: Design A Team Plan

Discuss as a group each member's individual findings. Based on each group member's strengths and ideas, design a few concrete steps that will help your group gather new information and plan for future steps.

#### »» Step 6: Update The Team Contract

If your group has a contract, update it to include the plan you have established with this activity. If you do not have a contract, now is an opportunity to establish a plan that all group members can agree about. Take a few minutes to record a plan of what needs to be accomplished before you meet again and which team member will accomplish each item. Be sure all team members agree to the plan before you end this meeting. Start your next meeting by discussing each group member's individual contributions to the team.

# Expanded Discussion: Valuing Diverse Contributions

»» Step 7: Discuss the following questions, either with your team or with the class.

1. What aspects of your CliftonStrengths results connect to understanding the experiences and needs of others?
2. What strengths are not represented by any members of your group? Depending on the size of your team, this may be quite a few. Make a list and discuss what challenges you might anticipate having given the strengths that are not represented by your group. Remember that your strengths are not your knowledge and skills but instead are your patterns of thought and patterns of behavior.
3. Which experiences relate to the problem or subject of your group's project are familiar to members of your group? What other problems, issues, or questions might fall outside of your group's experiences?
4. Watch one of the successful group's in the InVenture Prize competition make their pitch. How does each group member contribute to the pitch? How have they contextualized the problem their invention attempts to solve?

