

Thinking



by
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Thinking **Inside** *The Box* Conference

Dear Fellow *Box* Researcher:

It is my pleasure to invite you and the members of your research group to attend the First Annual "Thinking Inside *The Box*" Conference. We would like you to present the results of your investigative studies on the contents of *The Box*.

A reminder of the ground rules for these studies:

1. Investigators must, to the best of their ability, *describe* the contents of *The Box*.
2. *The Box* may never be opened; the contents may NOT be looked at.

We look forward to your presentation at this conference.

Sincerely,

Chester Intrados

Chester Intrados
Conference Chair

You are working in your office at GenChemCo Industries one day when the above letter arrives. Of course, you had forgotten about your earlier commitment to assist *The Box* Studies Department in their quest towards a better understanding of the contents of *The Box*. So, you locate *The Box* sample that had been given to you (so long ago it now seems) and quickly gather your research group together.

I. The Research Group Study

"We've been invited to attend the *Thinking Inside The Box* Conference," you tell your group. "Let's see what we can do to put together a presentation for the conference. We need to describe the contents of *The Box*, but we may not open *The Box* or in any way look at its contents. Our goal is to characterize the contents, not guess what they are."

You choose a recorder, pass *The Box* around to each member of your research team, and begin to record and organize your observations. You, as the leader of your research group, should direct this conversation.

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II. The Conference

A member from each research group (not the leader or the recorder) will be asked to make a formal presentation to the conference on their group's findings. This presentation should summarize your findings and should not be a simple list of observations. The conference chair will act as a recorder.

III. The Agency

Following the conversation about the conference as a whole, a person in the back of the hall (whom no one had noticed previously) stands up and says, "I am Dr. Kasten, and I represent the F.B.I., the Federal *Box* Institute. I must say that the level of scholarship that I have seen at this meeting impresses me. We are in the process of accepting grant proposals to further *The Box* studies and would be willing to entertain proposals from each of the groups represented here today. Please be sure that these proposals fit within the tenets of *The Box* Studies: that we are striving for the best description of the contents of *The Box* and that *The Box* may never be opened."

Each group will have five minutes to prepare a short research proposal. This proposal should indicate what, experimentally, is to be performed and what results might be expected. Each group will make their presentations to the conference. The conference will act as a review panel, with each member of the conference "voting" for his/her favorite proposal (an individual may not vote for his/her group's proposal). The two proposals with the greatest amount of support will be funded.