**PURPOSE:** This badge showcases the versatility and helpfulness of the dog due to all the training he has had. Additionally, it shows that the handler has the ability to direct and control the actions of the dog. The badge requirements may be completed in a competition setting but this is not required.

**DOG REQUIREMENTS:** The dog must perform various IMPROV exercises, as would be required for competition including the not so straight recall, heeling with obstacles, remote control, target exercise, and retrieving unusual objects. The dog must also perform a potentially useful behavior or trick. The dog and handler must work as a team to solve training puzzles.

**HANDLER REQUIREMENTS:** The handler must understand the concept of operant conditioning and shaping, how to teach the various behaviors using positive reinforcement. Handler understands the concept of lateral thinking and is able to work with the dog to solve behavior puzzles. The safety and the physical and mental well-being of the dog as a top priority.

**EQUIPMENT NEEDED:**  A variety of retrieve objects are needed. Objects should be floppy, noisy, awkward, cumbersome, or otherwise not your average thing to retrieve. Consider things like a book, a toy dump truck, an infant’s teething keys, a plastic bowling pin, or new plastic horse stall mucking barrels. These items should be obtained in large and small sizes, so that smaller dogs will be performing the same test as the bigger dogs, but on a smaller scale.

A set of objects that can be used for the placement exercise is needed. Look for things like a hoop to go over a cone, a toy to go into a box, a ball to roll onto a square, etc.

Three “unusual” objects are needed for the contact exercise. Items should look weird or unusual to the dog and should be things the dog doesn’t see in his everyday life, like a chair sitting upside down, a shower curtain draped over a bicycle, or bundle of empty milk jugs tied together. Many times items already in the area can be used if they are changed a bit to look different or unusual.

A stopwatch is needed to time several of the exercises, and a score sheet is needed to keep track of points.

**PROCESS:** The course exercises must be selected and set-up by another person, usually the evaluator so the handler doesn’t know what will be asked of him/her until the test. The difficulty level should be based on a Standard level (as opposed to Novice level) of IMPROV. When selecting items and exercises, the evaluator must keep in mind the behaviors on the check off sheet that need to be demonstrated. The dog/handler team will perform each of the exercises as directed by the evaluator. The evaluator observes the team while they perform the standard level exercises and provides a score for each. A score that would be qualifying if in a competition is needed to earn the badge.

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| ALLOWED: | NOT ALLOWED: |
| * Extreme lateral thinking
 | * Leashes – unless that is the chosen item
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| * Bringing one object to aid performance – object may not be alive or previously alive; it may not be food or a clicker
 | * Demonstrating any behavior where the primary method used to get the behavior is punishment
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