

TOOL KIT





BRAINSTORMING

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PURPOSE

GOAL

Goals

to stimulate idea generation, gathering as many ideas as possible.

to find a conclusion for a specific problem by gathering a list of ideas spontaneously contributed by its members.

to reduce social inhibitions among group members, increase overall creativity of the group.

Brainstorming is a great way to generate a lot of ideas that you would not be able to generate by just sitting down with a pen and paper. The intention of brainstorming is to leverage the collective thinking of the group, by engaging with each other, listening, and building on other ideas.

DESCRIPTION

INSTRUCTION

Brainstorming is a well-known collaborative method, is a situation where a group of people meet to generate new ideas and solutions around a specific domain of interest by removing inhibitions. People are able to think more freely and they suggest as many spontaneous new ideas as possible. All the ideas are noted down without criticism and after the brainstorming session the ideas are evaluated.

Conducting a brainstorm also creates a distinct segment of time when participants intentionally turn up the generative part of their brain and turn down the evaluative part. Brainstorming is the most frequently practiced form of ideation.

This method combines a relaxed, informal approach to problem solving with lateral thinking. To get the most of your brainstorming session, choose a comfortable place to sit and think. Minimize distractions so you can focus on the problem at hand and consider using mind maps to arrange and develop ideas.

INSTRUCTION

In Spanish, *brainstorming* is called “*lluvia de ideas*”, which literally means “*rain of ideas*”. So you can picture how fun that would look like: a colorful shower of the things that come up to your mind, no matter how crazy they are.

Four rules

- *Go for quantity*: This rule is a way of enhancing divergent production, aiming at facilitation of problem solution through the maxim *quantity breeds quality*. The assumption is that the greater the number of ideas generated the bigger the chance of producing a radical and effective solution.
- *Withhold criticism*: In brainstorming, criticism of ideas generated should be put 'on hold'. Instead, participants should focus on extending or adding to ideas, reserving criticism for a later 'critical stage' of the process. By suspending judgment, participants will feel free to generate unusual ideas.
- *Welcome wild ideas*: To get a good long list of suggestions, wild ideas are encouraged. They can be generated by looking from new perspectives and suspending assumptions. These new ways of thinking might give better solutions.
- *Combine and improve ideas*: As suggested by the slogan “ $1+1=3$ ”. It is believed to stimulate the building of ideas by a process of association

INSTRUCTION

There are two types of brainstorming.

- Structured brainstorming: Members of group will sit in a circle. The leader facilitates the brainstorming. The facilitator will write their ideas in a rotational form on the board. This exercise will be carried out in particular order till each person contributes an idea. If a member is not ready with his/her idea it can be passed, later he or she may provide an idea or pass again.
- Unstructured brainstorming: Members of group can sit in a circle or in a classroom in any form of arrangement. There is no order of response. The facilitator will motivate everyone to provide his/her idea.

Every step is important in the brainstorming process, ignorance of steps will result in incomplete results or disadvantages. Skipping out the steps in a brainstorming session can be a expensive mistake and time consuming. If all steps are carried out properly, it is very powerful to find a better solution.

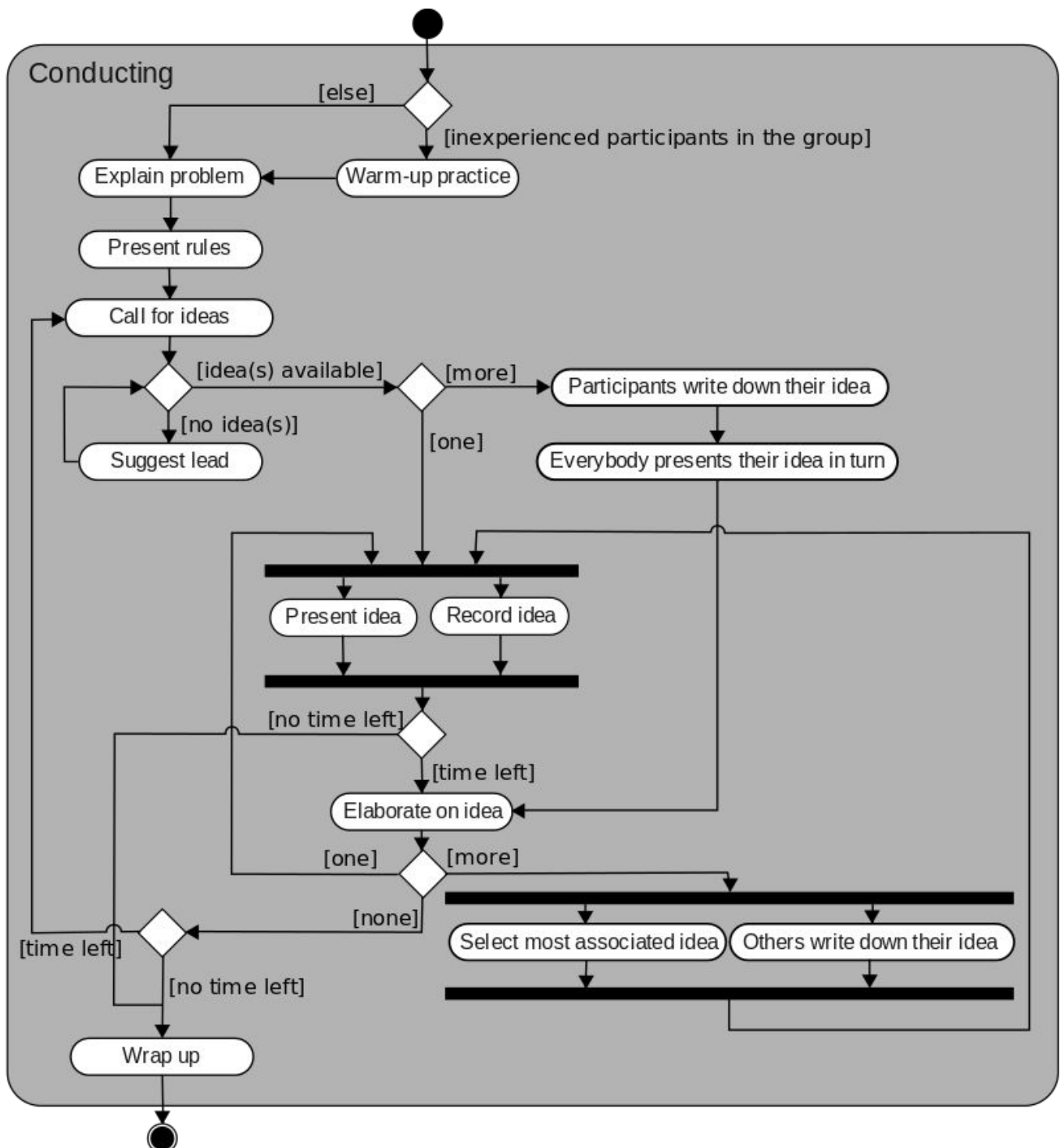
INSTRUCTION

Steps of Brainstorming:

1. Select the group: facilitator must select the members not less than 5 or more than 20.
2. Specify the objectives: Facilitator should build objectives and define why he wants to brainstorm. He will find out about all members interested and happy for selected central question. Allow people to make noise, shout, laugh, and enjoy.
3. Define the roles- facilitator must decide the role of leader, recorder etc.
4. Explain the rules: facilitator should explain the rules to every one before discussion begins. Every one must be clear about question.
5. Start the discussion: begin to start discussion rounds, they should take some rounds and produce ideas.
6. Record the ideas: Ideas must be recorded and arranged.
7. Encourage the Ideas: wait for ideas, don't hurry, participants must get sufficient time to think and present better idea. Facilitator should encourage the members to present ideas and appreciate all ideas.
8. Do end on the wild ideas.

INSTRUCTION

Brainstorming activity conducting



EXAMPLE



1. Associations of ideas

This game is very simple. You just need to establish a given order of people who will have to say the first thing that comes to their mind in turn. It's a good thing to set a timer so that people feel pressured to respond quickly and don't overthink their responses.

Nathalie: If I say tree, what are you thinking?

Sophie: Bark! and you Jean!

Jean: Birch. Work!

Nathalie: A pencil sharpener

Jean: A mine! A wealth of ideas!

Output: Ideas are noted in the form of keywords, concepts or idea cloud.

Tip: The session facilitator is strongly encouraged to pick up on some of the things that have been said along the way.



2. Role play (put yourself in the shoes of ...)

Role play involves giving a team member a role to ask questions. So you can ask a member to put himself in the shoes of a customer, an employee, a supplier, a competitor ... and even a product. Very useful when looking for an advertising campaign concept or a different point of view on a recurring issue.

For example

Jean-Guy: I am a bottle of Ketchup

Nathalie: What are you dreaming of?

Jean-Guy: To marry me with a hot dog!

Sophie: Here, you turn red all of a sudden!

Jean-Guy: I am a spicy ketchup you will know!

Output: Ideas in the form of phrases, sentences or ideas will emerge.

Tip: To be successful, the actor must put himself in the shoes of the character (tone of voice, vocabulary, method of thinking, etc.) and limit misconduct as much as possible.



2a) Variant : At the psychologist

A variation of this game is to name a member as the "psychologist"! Each of the other members will have an assigned role (product, customer, supplier, etc.) Members have a set amount of time to write down their problem and symptoms on a piece of paper. Each member then presents their problem openly and the therapist tries to answer it.

Tip: The psychologist can take on the role of being the spokesperson for the company in a way, but they can also deliberately choose to take another point of view (which may spice up discussions and open up ideas)



2b) Variant : OBJECT PSYCHANALYSIS

The brainstormer is responsible for bringing physical objects to you. Each member will have to psychoanalyze the object, trying to take a different point of view, which their teammates haven't yet taken.

For example

Host: Here is a tomato

Jean-Guy: I have a phobia of tomatoes. It's full of GMOs!

Nathalie: Tomatoes. It is Tuscany. It's Italy and red wine. These are my childhood memories.

Sophie: It's the apple's alter ego!

Bastien: I AM the tomato and I like it to be relaxed. I don't like being in a hurry!

Host: Oh yeah, and what would you do if you were juice?

Tip: Do psychoanalysis by forcing yourself to wear different glasses. It will force you to take your thinking beyond the physical object and come up with much richer ideas.



3. WHAT IF?

The idea of this game is to ask wide, open-ended questions that start with "what if". The facilitator then lets each participant answer their ideas fully and reserves the right to ask them questions.

For example

Host: What if ... your product was a color

Nathalie: We would be creamy yellow. Like ice cream

Host: What if ... you were ice cream

Sophie: We would be a banana split, double chocolate with candy

Host: What if ... your mouth was full of cavities?

Jean-Guy: I wouldn't go to the dentist. I hate dentists.

Host: What if there were no more dentists?

Output: This activity gives rise to deeper reflections on substantive or very complex issues. Obviously, this can bring a marked creative perspective if one asks questions such as "What if ... there were no more cellphones?"

Tip: It is strongly recommended that the session facilitator relaunches the different members with the result of the answers (adding their ideas of course) in order to deepen the team's reflections.



4. Iteration sprint

A very effective formula is to do CREATIVE SPRINTS in teams of about 5 min and take a 3 min rest period. This allows the team to quickly focus on ideas and then take a break to re-energize. Here are some ideas for iterative brainstorming games based on this concept:

Step ladder

Each person writes their ideas alone on paper for 3 minutes.

Then, we form a group of 2 people who will take turns reading what they have on their sheet and adding notes to their sheets.

Then, we integrate one more person who joins the group and who speaks BEFORE the others. The other members then take turns presenting their notes followed by a short discussion where the members exchange comments, adding their comments and asking each other questions.

Then, we integrate one more person... so goes the brainstorming!

Pass left

Each person writes on their own on a piece of paper for 3 minutes. Once the stopwatch has stopped, we GO LEFT! Repeat until death ensues! Output: A series of ideas in the form of keywords, phrases or word cloud.



5. 6 hats, 6 postures: the rules of this collaborative game.

The principle of hats is simple: each hat corresponds to a posture, which all team members must adopt at the same time.

Discover the 6 existing colors, the associated meaning, as well as a concrete illustration of the ideas that can be generated. Let's take the example of a team that has to work on the question: "How can we improve our offer to better satisfy our customers? "

White: the facts. When the team thinks with the white hat, they are only formulating facts, without any comment or interpretation. For example: "The results of our last satisfaction survey tell us that 68% of customers say they are satisfied with our services. "

Green: creativity and new ideas. When they think with the green hat, team members have the freedom to make whatever suggestions they can think of. For example: "Set up a chatbox to respond to requests from our customers 24 hours a day. "Or" Let's create an ambassador club for our VIP clients.



” **Black:** the risks and weaknesses of an idea. The black hat is an opportunity for team members to think in the most pessimistic way! For example: "There aren't enough of us to work on the offer. Or "Lack of time."

Yellow: the hopes and the benefits. This time the team takes a decidedly positive stance. For example: "With CRM we will finally have data to move forward!". "I think we can aim for +20 satisfaction points."

Red: emotions. With the red hat, the team expresses their feelings, whatever they are, without having to justify them. For example: "I am skeptical about our ability to change offers", "I am so proud to be part of the team in charge of this reflection!"

” **Blue:** the blue hat has the particularity of guiding all the others. It symbolizes taking a step back, organizing thinking. When thinking with the blue hat, the team proposes solutions, organizes their implementation. For example: "Let's divide the ideas into groups of 3 to 4 people to move forward. "; " Let's work in test & learn mode, do a first test and see! "



Remember: the hat never corresponds to a person, but always to a posture. The exercise therefore involves all team members adopting the same hat (same posture) at the same time. Over the course of the reflection, the team should change hats, until they have covered the aspects to be covered.

To properly prepare for a brainstorming session based on the 6 hats method, the team should have in mind a simple rule: everyone must play the game! When the time comes to reason with the green hat, for example, the whole team makes its proposals, trying to put aside ideas that correspond to another color. Ideas must thus be able to be expressed freely, everyone having to bear in mind that when the time comes, it is with another hat, another point of view, that they will be able to express themselves.

<https://www.mindtools.com/downloads/lbr5283hs/BrainstormingToolkit.pdf> :

PROS



This method:

- encourages creativity, imagination and creates maximum ideas in less time from participant members. It helps to record maximum ideas and can give number of options.
- permits to find the solution and the idea that the group probably wouldn't have had otherwise.
- fosters camaraderie and strengthen team spirit
- fosters sense of ownership: Group members are actively participating in brains storming process and feel being part of the project
- Involves all group members; It is important to produce each participants own idea on particular problem, it dose not criticize or evaluates so it encourages member to produce idea that are taken into account
- permits to cooperate between persons very different
- gives rise to deeper reflections on substantive or very complex issues.
- provides input to other tools: brainstorming results are also used in other tools, databases, standardization etc. Generated ideas can be used elsewhere.
- is inexpensive and easy to prepare, implement, understand , so anybody needs to be a highly qualified expert or highly paid consultant to use it

CONS



The main pitfalls includes:

- Time consuming The brainstorming process can take time. It could be hours, or even days before a solution is reached.
- Utopian Ideas: sometimes the ideas suggested are unworkable.
- risk of creating too many ideas that go in all directions and ultimately it will be difficult to analyze them and choose the most appropriate
- Wiseacres : Colleagues may refuse to consider others' ideas or out voice others. It promotes fights and arguments.
- Facilitator required : Brainstorming requires a leader or facilitator who will take control of the session and ensure it reaches a satisfactory conclusion.

CONS



Moreover :

- This method doesn't give enough tools to analyses and classify the ideas
- It's not always effective. Brainstorming is dependent on several factors, and it becomes ineffective if one or two of these factors are not present.
 - For instance, if one or more of the brainstorming participants have poor communication skills, they'll find it hard to express their ideas or listen to what other people have to say. This can then derail the discussions and make it difficult for the group to produce good ideas. Similarly, if brainstorming is done in an organization that has an authoritarian structure, it would basically be useless since everyone just waits for their boss to dictate what they'd talk about.
- It's not always the right choice for everybody. Some people panic at the thought of speaking in front of a group, but they can come up with excellent ideas when in one-on-one meetings. For these people, brainstorming isn't the right choice

TIPS



The most important thing is to create a brainstorming environment that is supportive and encouraging because you want to allow all participants to use their creativity as fully as possible.

- Brainstorming is meant to be a form of creativity that places an emphasis on freedom, but you still need to have some basic structure in place for your brainstorming sessions.
- The key is to have asked the right question or to have posed the problem in a way that at least some of the results of the brainstorming session are usable.

Moreover:

- Write down clearly what you are brainstorming. Using a 'How Might We' (HMW) question is a great way to frame a brainstorm
- be visual: use coloured markers to write on Post-its and put them on the wall—or sketch your idea.
- Have playful rules: Critiquing or debating ideas can quickly sap the energy of a session.
- Creative spaces don't judge. They let the ideas flow, so that people can build on each other and foster great ideas
- Invest energy into a short period of time, such as 15 or 30 minutes of high engagement. Get in front of a whiteboard or around a table, but take an active posture of standing or sitting upright.



- Aim for as many new ideas as possible. The more ideas, the better.
- Encourage weird, wacky, and wild ideas. There's no bad idea. Do not criticize the opinions of others and do not hesitate to put forward your ideas, even if they do not seem very good to you. Someone else might find something you haven't seen and be able to exploit your idea. No idea is too big or too crazy. It is always better to reduce a plan that is unrealistic than to try to enlarge something.
- No idea is definitive at this point. The best ideas come when people work together to contribute, improve and refine a first concept. As long as that is not the case, all opinions must be taken into consideration.
- Approach creative ideation with these elements in mind, and you will help maintain a certain orientation without preventing ideas from popping up.
- Listen to each other and elaborate on each other's ideas. Don't get obsessed with your own ideas. You're here to ideate together. When all team members have presented their ideas, you can select the best ideas, which you can continue to build and elaborate on in other ideation sessions. There are various methods you can use such as "Post-it Voting", "Four Categories", "Bingo Selection", "Six Thinking Hats", and "Now Wow How Matrix".

To go further:

<https://public-media.interaction-design.org/pdf/Brainstorm.pdf>

SOURCE

RESOURCE



- <https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Brainstorming>
- <http://www.free-management-ebooks.com/dl/debk/dlth-5brainstorming.htm>
- <https://fr.semrush.com/blog/brainstorming/>
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- <https://www.masterclass.com/articles/how-to-brainstorm-story-ideas#7-tips-for-brainstorming-book-ideas>
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- <https://lucidspark.com/blog/benefits-of-group-brainstorming>
- <https://klaxoon.com/communaute/brainstorming-testez-la-methode-des-6-chapeaux>
- <https://www.adviz.ca/strat-mark/conseils/idees-activites-et-brainstorming-en-equipe/>

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