

# BRAINSTORMING

**OBJECTIVE:** Use lateral and creative thinking to generate new, interesting, even radical ideas on a topic / situation / opportunity where one or more members would benefit from a new perspective.



## HOW:

- Target a specific topic: define the problem or opportunity in a clear statement
- Focus on Quantity: the greater the number of ideas the better. Challenge the group for more
- Ask the group to think and write ideas on their own first
- Begin sharing in order around the group for 1-2 rounds to ensure everyone contributes
- Next step is to open it up for unstructured participation – whomever thinks of something can add it, work in real time
- NO Criticism: focus on extending, adding to, contrasting ideas – no bad ideas. Suspend judgment, be creative and think out of the box
- Unusual and atypical thoughts are welcome. We want new perspectives to identify better solutions
- Combine and improve, associate ideas – find unusual combinations
- Capture all ideas – an efficient scribe with readable handwriting or type into laptop with projection

## TOOLS:

- An open mind
- Whiteboard, flipchart, any method to capture in a way visible to the whole group
- Round table or circle, no head of the table
- Focused attention with encouraging approach

## MODERATOR GUIDE

**Total Time:** 10-15 minutes

**Intention:** Generate Ideas

### FRAME - DEFINE

- 2 min Clear statement – specific topic
- 1-5 min Each write ideas, orderly contribution

### OPEN IT UP

- 10 min Group generates ideas, randomly, building without evaluation

**WHY:** Groups of 8-10 are an ideal size to brainstorm ideas. With divergent background and experiences, create a safe place to share, blend and extend the diverse range of knowledge and experiences in the room.

## MODERATOR ROLE:

- Introduce and facilitate the session
- Appoint a timekeeper – set ground rules
- Watch that everyone is participating, invite or make space for those who aren't as quick or outspoken
- Listen for and remove assumed constraints, eg. no limit on budget, no limit on people, time, etc.
- Encourage people to stand or change position in the room if the idea flow slows or stalls, keep the energy and ideas flowing
- Listen for interesting ideas, encourage those, help people express an idea that gets stuck
- Track progress, motivate or restart the creative process when required

## GROUND RULES:

- No idea is too crazy, outrageous or far fetched
- Quantity over quality
- NO verbal or non-verbal criticism can be displayed or members won't share openly
- Brief clarification is okay but should be focused. Try to discourage questions - the member will narrow down solutions themselves later.
- Full attention and participation – this works best when everyone is fully engaged
- Agreement to these simple rules in advance
- No 'googling' or use of electronics