
Brainstorming

Is your group stumped for new ideas? A brainstorming session may be needed!

SET THE STAGE

1. Set a time limit for your brainstorming session. Usually 10-20 minutes is sufficient, depending upon the size of your group and the complexity of the issue.
2. The best group size is 3-15 people. If you have more, break into smaller groups and brainstorm simultaneously. After you finish, come back together and merge your ideas.
3. Determine the question or issue upon which you are brainstorming. Focus on only one issue at a time.
4. All responses should be recorded on a chalkboard or on big sheets of newsprint so everyone can see them. Record only key phrases and words - do not attempt to write the suggestions word for word.

THE RULES

Explain the following to the group before you start:

1. Brainstorming is not a discussion. It is simply “throwing out” ideas.
2. Do not evaluate the ideas while brainstorming.
3. Be spontaneous - no hand raising necessary, just call out ideas.
4. “Repeats” are OK.
5. Quantity counts (the more the better).
6. Build on each other’s ideas - “hitch-hiking” or “piggy-backing” is encouraged.
7. Moments of silence are OK - often the best ideas come out of them.
8. Be outrageous, silliness is OK.

SIFT AND SORT

1. If there are “repeats” cross them off the list.
2. Group related ideas together.
3. Decide which ideas are promising or feasible, and cross out those that are not.
4. Rank the ideas in the order that they are promising/feasible.
5. Select the ideas you want to work on and get started.