

# Brainstorming



## Definition

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The open, uninhibited generation of ideas by a group.

## Utility

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Our purpose in Brainstorming is to generate a wide variety of ideas, to ensure that everyone on the team becomes involved, to assure that nothing is overlooked, and to provide an atmosphere in which creativity can flourish, and we can break out of conventional thought. Any time group input is required. Problem selection, identifying cause and effect, group consensus efforts, and many others are good examples of the use of Brainstorming.

## Construction

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1. Facilitator announces and records the question or topic to Brainstorm.
2. Facilitator provides rules if none have been determined previously.  
Rules—No criticism (verbal or nonverbal); take turns—each person should have equal, ample opportunity to express ideas; quantity is important—the more the better; Piggy-back, hitch-hike, or reverse ideas if you like.
3. Members of the group take turns generating ideas. The facilitator makes sure this happens. Members have the right to pass at any point if they have no ideas. Each person may give one idea per person per turn.
4. Facilitator records the ideas as closely as possible to what was said and verifies the idea with contributor.

### Twists:

- If your group is reluctant to participate because of pressure (real or perceived) within the group, consider asking participants to record ideas on like slips of paper and submit to the facilitator, who will then record all ideas, separating ideas from personalities. (Also called Silent Brainstorming or Brain writing.)
- If you have people who pass more than they participate, perhaps they need more time to think before they speak. Consider giving Brainstorm topics out in advance of the team meeting so they can "prepare."
- Always give groups feedback on what was done with the material they generated during Brainstorming, or you may find that participation diminishes.

**Worksheet #179** *Brainstorming Template*

**Activity Worksheet**

Name: \_\_\_\_\_

Date: \_\_\_\_\_

**Brainstorming rules**

1. No criticism allowed—No yeas, boos, and so on
2. Equal opportunity to express thoughts
3. Quantity is better than having the perfect answer
4. Take-offs from what other people say are encouraged

Brainstorming ideas below

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