

Basic Tool

BRAINSTORM

An informal way of solving problems by generating quantity over quality information. The brainstorming method engages people in lateral thinking and encourages to come up with thoughts and ideas, even the most craziest. Brainstorming method constitutes a first step in the creative process by collecting creative ideas that will be structured and prioritized in the future stages of the development process.

PEOPLE 5 - 10	PREP. TIME Few Hours	TIME 1h30	DIFFICULTY LEVEL ● ○ ○
-------------------------	--------------------------------	---------------------	----------------------------------



USE THIS METHOD / TECHNIQUE TO

- Identify and describe problems.
- Define circumstances of problems.
- Activate solutions to get a problem solved.

THIS IS WHY YOU NEED IT

Brainstorming method will help you to get a structured collection of ideas and to prioritize ideas and efforts in a unambiguous way.

MATERIALS

- White board
- Markers
- Sticky notes
- Timer

WHO SHOULD BE INVOLVED

Depending of the purpose of your brainstorming output:

- Stakeholders
- Project team members
- Target users

RELATED METHODS

- Mindmap
- Card sorting
- Site architecture

We present two main techniques of conducting a Brainstorm with your team:

AOKI method is a structured brainstorming method. All participants can sprout ideas, then summarize their own ideas individually to the group and afterwards discuss and cluster them together.

KJ method (or Affinity Diagram) consists in emphasizing on the ideas being relevant, verifiable and important.



Aoki method

Assign a moderator and organize a 10 people group. For choosing the right people that will come out with the most interesting ideas, you need to remind that:

- Too big group can lead to difficulties of ideas expression and explanation
- Maintaining balance in personalities and competences in your group of people will bring complementarity and relevance to your ideas
- Some people might be leader of an idea or an opinion. Be careful that this person is not presenting a risk of prevent other people to express their own ideas. If this can happens, you can have discussion with that person in order to prevent this problem.

STEP 1 - Welcoming (5-10 min.)

Take the time to welcome people by introducing the aim of the brainstorming and the team members so everyone feels comfortable and aligned on the objective.

STEP 2 - Sprouting ideas (15 min.)

People are sprouting and listing ideas in an individual way for 15 minutes on sticky notes.

STEP 3 - Summarize ideas (20 min.)

Each person present their own ideas to the group.

STEP 4 - Short break (5 min.)

A short break of 5 minutes will help your team to stay focus and be efficient in the last part of the brainstorming which is being the most structuring stage.

STEP 5 - Cluster ideas (30 min.)

The moderator leads the discussion, organizes the ideas by mapping them out and clustering them in common main topics. You can do that exercise on a white board but also on a large sheet.



KJ method

Assign a moderator and organize a 10 people group. For choosing the right people that will come out with the most interesting ideas, you need to remind that :

Too big group can lead to difficulties of ideas expression and explanation

Maintaining balance in personalities and competences in your group of people will bring complementarity and relevance to your ideas

Some people might be leader of an idea or an opinion. Be careful that this person is not presenting a risk of prevent other people to express their own ideas. If this can happens, you can have discussion with that person in order to prevent this problem.

STEP 1 - Welcoming (5-10 min.)

Take the time to welcome people by introducing the aim of the brainstorming and the team members so everyone feels comfortable and aligned on the objective.

STEP 2 - Card making (10 min.)

Everyone write all relevant facts and information on individual cards. Remember that you read to stay focus on relevant and feasible ideas.

STEP 3 - Cards grouping (20 min.)

Cards are shuffled and read to the group. Similar ideas are grouped and a title is given to the groups of cards. If you have more than 10 groups, repeat this iterative process at higher levels.

STEP 4 - Short break (5 min.)

A short break of 5 minutes will help your team to stay focus and be efficient in the last part of the brainstorming which is being the most structuring stage.

STEP 5 - Cards redistribution (20 min.)

Cards are recollected and distributed to the group. One card is read out and all contributors look through the cards in their own hands to find any that seem to go with the one read out to build a group. A name is then selected for the set.

STEP 6 - Chart making (10 min.)

At this stage, you have less than 10 groups of cards containing sub-groups and sub-sub groups. Arrange them carefully on a large sheet or a board to appreciate the global picture.

STEP 7 - Chart explanation (10 min.)

Express now what the chart means to you by writing notes. Explaining the structure of the problem and the groups of cards will help you to identify the main ideas for the solution.

Basic Tool BRAINSTORM



How to use the template?

Print the template in a large sheet and pin it on a white board while you are in ideas clustering phase. This will help you to structure groups and sub-groups of ideas.