

Rules of Brainstorming

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Rule 1: Postpone and withhold your judgment of ideas

Do not pass judgment on ideas until the completion of the brainstorming session. Do not suggest that an idea won't work or that it has negative side-effects. All ideas are potentially good so don't judge them until afterwards. At this stage, avoid discussing the ideas at all, as this will inevitably involve either criticizing or complimenting them.

Ideas should be put forward both as solutions and also as a basis to spark off solutions. Even seemingly foolish ideas can spark off better ones. Therefore do not judge the ideas until after the brainstorming process. Note down all ideas. There is no such thing as a bad idea.

The evaluation of ideas takes up valuable brain power which should be devoted to the creation of ideas. Maximize your brainstorming session by only spending time generating new ideas.

Rule 2: Encourage wild and exaggerated ideas

It's much easier to tame a wild idea than it is to think of an immediately valid one in the first place. The 'wilder' the idea the better. Shout out bizarre and unworkable ideas to see what they spark off. No idea is too ridiculous. State any outlandish ideas. Exaggerate ideas to the extreme.

Use creative thinking techniques and tools to start your thinking from a fresh direction. Use specialist software such as [Brainstorming Toolbox](http://www.brainstorming.co.uk/toolbox/brainstormingtoolbox.html) (<http://www.brainstorming.co.uk/toolbox/brainstormingtoolbox.html>) to stimulate new ideas more easily.

Rule 3: Quantity counts at this stage, not quality

Go for quantity of ideas at this point; narrow down the list later. All activities should be geared towards extracting as many ideas as possible in a given period.

The more creative ideas a person or a group has to choose from, the better. If the number of ideas at the end of the session is very large, there is a greater chance of finding a really good idea.

Keep each idea short, do not describe it in detail - just capture its essence. Brief clarifications can be requested. Think fast, reflect later.

Rule 4: Build on the ideas put forward by others

Build and expand on the ideas of others. Try and add extra thoughts to each idea. Use other people's ideas as inspiration for your own. Creative people are also good listeners. Combine several of the suggested ideas to explore new possibilities.

It's just as valuable to be able to adapt and improve other people's ideas as it is to generate the initial idea that sets off new trains of thought.

Rule 5: Every person and every idea has equal worth

Every person has a valid viewpoint and a unique perspective on the situation and solution. We want to know yours. In a brainstorming session you can always put forward ideas purely to spark off other people and not just as a final solution. Please participate, even if you need to write your ideas on a piece of paper and hand it out. Encourage participation from everyone.

Each idea presented belongs to the group, not to the person who said it. It is the group's responsibility and an indication of its ability to brainstorm if all participants feel able to contribute freely and confidently.

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