


# The little known art of doing brainstorming properly

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# Definitions

☛ **Brainstorming** is "a conference technique by which a group attempts to find a solution for a specific problem by amassing all the ideas spontaneously by its members" (Alex Osborn)

**Brainstorming** is a process designed to obtain the maximum number of ideas relating to a specific area of interest.

**Brainstorming** is a technique that maximizes the ability to generate new ideas.




• **Brainstorming** is where a group of people put social inhibitions and rules aside with the aim of generating new ideas and solutions.


**Brainstorming** is a time dedicated to generating a large number of ideas regardless of their initial worth.

**Brainstorming** is a part of **problem solving** which involves the creation of new ideas by suspending judgment.


**Brainstorming** is the free association of different ideas to form new ideas and concepts.


- Brainstorming is a way of generating radical ideas. During the brainstorming process there is no criticism of ideas, as free rein is given to people's creativity. Criticism and judgment cramp creativity.
  - Individual brainstorming is best for generating many ideas, but tends to be less effective at developing them. Group brainstorming tends to develop fewer ideas, but takes each idea further. Group brainstorming needs formal rules for it to work smoothly.
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# The rules of brainstorming

- ☞ Have a facilitator
  - ☞ Have a scribe (or 2)
  - ☞ Speak out loud
  - ☞ Use a whiteboard, butcher's paper
  - ☞ Everyone participate
  - ☞ Create high energy, keep it moving
  - ☞ No discussion of ideas
  - ☞ Piggy-back ideas
  - ☞ Stand up
  - ☞ Keep it short
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# To run a group brainstorming session effectively:

- ☛ Define the problem you want solved clearly, and lay out any criteria to be met.
  - ☛ Keep the session focused on the problem
  - ☛ Ensure that no one criticizes or evaluates ideas during the session. Criticism introduces an element of risk for group members when putting forward an idea. This stifles creativity and cripples the free running nature of a good brainstorming session.
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- Encourage an enthusiastic, uncritical attitude among members of the group. Try to get everyone to contribute and develop ideas, including the quietest members of the group
  - Let people have fun brainstorming. Encourage them to come up with as many ideas as possible, from solidly practical ones to wildly impractical ones. Welcome creativity.
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- ☞ Brainstorm as widely as possible anything at all vaguely related to the concept you are thinking about
  - ☞ Don't be self-conscious. It is your responsibility to be disinhibited
  - ☞ Ensure that no train of thought is followed for too long
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# Once you've brainstormed, sort and categorise

- ☞ Use categories and criteria to funnel the ideas that have been generated
- ☞ How to identify criteria
- ☞ 2 possible strategies, depending on whether you are generating new ideas or solving a specific problem
  - If generating new ideas you might like to cluster like ideas and see what categories arise
  - If solving a specific problem you may already have a number of categories or even a matrix against which to list or cluster your ideas

# Keep an open mind

- ☛ At this stage, do not discard any ideas
  - ☛ Then work through the list generated, giving each idea serious consideration in order to determine whether or not it is a possible way forward
  - ☛ Organise your ideas into do-ability: i.e. those that could happen immediately, mid term and long term
  - ☛ Also categorise ideas according to urgency: i.e. those that need to happen immediately, mid term or even long term
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Now you can move to  
planning and strategising

☞ Good luck!