

Idea Generation



Top tips to help
you work with a
group to generate
ideas.




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- Try to encourage people to avoid “editing” their ideas by letting them know that there are no wrong answers, only ideas. Don't dismiss anything that is said even if it might not be what you were expecting. Often unexpected answers and quirky ideas can be good platforms for further discussions.
- If you're recording people's ideas, make sure you check that you have written them down correctly and that you understand what they mean. If it's not clear to you, chances are it's not clear to others.
- Try to avoid “groupthink”. This is where everyone thinks collectively as they are swayed by what others say. If this happens fewer original ideas emerge. You could try:
 1. Asking participants to do an individual, silent brainstorm before sharing their ideas. Give them a minute or two to write down their ideas by themselves in silence before sharing.
 2. Asking participants to write down some of their ideas on card or post it notes, and stick them up on a wall to share. Ask for one ideas per post it note/card. Once they have been put up on the wall then you can invite discussion.
- Make sure you are clear what you are asking people about. Ask a specific question at the start and write it down so that people will remember easily and refer to it. You can ask further questions to clarify and draw out ideas as the discussions progress.



- You can get small groups to brainstorm and then ask one person to feedback to the larger group. This is good to do if you are working with a very large group. You can ask each group to decide on their top three ideas to share. Once each group has shared their top 3, you can go back and ask for more. This gives everyone an opportunity to contribute so that the discussion can continue after all the more obvious answers have been offered.
- You don't have to brainstorm answers, you could brainstorm questions too. For example “What kind of questions might you ask a candidate at a job interview?”.
- Some alternatives to a standard brainstorm are:
 1. Perspectives – asking people to brainstorm as if they were “the client” or “a famous figure” to try to think about the topic from a different perspective.
 2. Rapid brainstorming – aims to get people's answers quickly so that they don't think too hard about the answers and “editing” what they say. Also useful if you don't have much time.
 3. Using a piece of magic white board or flip chart paper/butchers paper on the wall ask people to write on it all at once (if you have a small group you could try this with a flip chart).
 4. Reverse brainstorming – where you change the question you want the answer to into a negative. For example “what are the worst ways we can do....”. Then take the answers and try to reverse them back.

WHAT NEXT?

If you need some help with generating ideas with your team it might be time to bring in a facilitator. Facilitation enables everyone to engage, contribute and connect and to have productive conversations in a well managed and focused environment.

Using creative facilitation methods I can help your team members to work together in a creative, collaborative way to come up with some great ideas!



Helene is a hugely talented facilitator, and is open to all types of facilitation depending on what you are trying to achieve. We have used Helene to facilitate two sessions of over 40 people from the charity and tech sector to surface needs and support opportunities. Helene adapts to any group, any venue, and any amount of experimentation! She is just brilliant to work with and highly recommend!



Annie Legg, Co-Founder, The Dot Project.

If you'd like to find out more about how I can help your get in touch! I can design and facilitate a session to suit the needs of your team or group, whether face to face, online, or if you are up for it - outside!



Helene@jewellfacilitation.com



www.jewellfacilitation.com



07952777637

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