

Ideation Techniques

1. Journalling
2. Future Pull
3. Brainwalking
4. Confusion Tolerance
5. The Worst Idea Possible
6. Collaging

JOURNALLING

What Is It?

Journaling is an individual exercise that let's participants empty their thoughts and ideas. Take a pen and paper and write everything that is on your mind for 20 minutes without stopping. Write in your mother tongue and don't mind about spelling, grammar, quality, content, style etc. Note that nobody's supposed to read it afterwards.

Purpose: empty your brain, create room for new ideas, reality check.

Variations: focus on a specific topic.

To Facilitate:

Step 1: Pass out a few A4 papers to each participant.

Step 2: Instruct each participant to write in their mother tongue and not to mind about spelling, grammar, quality, content, style etc.

Step 3: If someone stops encourage them to keep going.

FUTURE PULL

What Is It?

Based on your key problem(s) create a desirable future scenario for your case. Don't worry about what's rational, logical or what's possible. Be as unreasonable as possible. You'll need a flip chart paper and post-its to get started.

Example: JetWays

"when people think of flying, they think of jetways first. One of the reasons is that we offer the best middle seats in the world. Our passengers consider them to be the best seats on the plane. They are so good that customers actually compete for them. They signify prestige. When people choose to fly us, they always feel they've made the best choice. In fact, people often fly our planes just for the pleasure of it, even if they have nowhere to go. JetWays middle seats offer business and pleasure travelers an experience like no other."

Purpose:

A desirable future statement that can pull you towards a solution.

Variations: cover story vision

To Facilitate:

Step 1: Come up with 100 vision statements in 10 minutes.

Step 2: Cluster and combine in 5-10 minutes.

Step 3: Choose the best statements to create a shared vision.

Step 4: Write the vision on the flip chart paper with a permanent marker.

BRAINWALKING

What Is It?

Brainwalking is a standing exercise where each participant grab a sheet of flip chart paper and put it on the wall. Individually, they write down an idea that they would like the group to consider. Then, each participant walk around in silence and 1) build-on the other ideas or 2) trigger entirely new ideas. Feel free to visualize as a supplement to the text.

Purpose: Energy, lots of ideas, collaboration, participation from the whole group.

Variations:

A variation of the basic brainwalking technique is, on one of the passes, to have each participant write down a silly - or just plain terrible idea - as a way to get more out of the box thinking.

To Facilitate:

Step 1: Pass out one flip chart paper to each participant.

Step 2: Instruct each participant to write legibly on the paper.

Step 3: Have each participant write down one idea for the group to consider.

Step 4: Have everyone walk around and build on each others ideas or create new ones.

Step 5: Continue passing around until each idea sheet has six (or more) ideas on it.

Step 6: Have the original owner circle one or more best ideas.

Step 7: Have each participant read the best idea(s) from his/her paper to the group as a whole.

CONFUSION TOLERANCE

What is it?

This exercise uses writing to get as many ideas as possible. Don't aim for the solution and push for quantity, not quality. Start by giving one team member a piece of paper. When the exercise begins the person with the paper starts by writing down one idea. The paper is passed around. Remember to number the ideas so you can keep track of how far you are. The goal is to get 100 ideas in 10 minutes.

Purpose: quantity over quality, lots of ideas, participation from the whole group, reaching for the remote associations.

Variations:

How to facilitate:

Step 1: Give one team member a few pieces of stipled A4 paper.

Step 2: Each team member write down an idea, say it out loud and pass the paper to the left.

Step 3: Continue passing the paper untill you reach a 100 ideas or the time is up.

Step 4: Circle the best ideas.

GET THE WORST IDEA POSSIBLE

What Is It?

The Worst Idea, is a creative technique in which the facilitator asks participants to come up with the worst possible idea they can. Record the ideas on a flip chart.

Purpose:

Reducing performance anxiety, having a lot of fun, unlikely perspectives.

To Facilitate:

Step 1: The facilitator begins by simply asking the group for the worst possible ideas.

Step 2: The facilitator should offer examples of really bad ideas as a way to stimulate the group.

Step 3: After 15 minutes when a sufficient number of worst ideas have been recorded on flip charts, the facilitator picks one of the most interesting/awful ideas - - and tries to help the group turn it into a good or great idea by using one of two prompts.

Prompt #1: -As bad as this idea is, is there something of value in it that could turn it into a good idea?

Prompt #2: -This idea is really bad. If we did exactly the reverse, or opposite of this idea, could we create a valuable new idea?||

Step 4: Facilitator encourages any builds from the group.

COLLAGE

What Is It?

The Collage exercise uses words, phrases and visuals (taken from magazines) relevant to the problem being worked on.

Purpose: developing ideas into full-blown concepts.

To Facilitate:

Step 1: Pass out a wide variety of visually-oriented magazines.

Step 2: Pass out scissors and glue sticks to all participants.

Step 3: Have each participant/team cut out words, phrases, or images that contribute ideas in some way to the problem being worked on.

Note: The facilitator should encourage participants not to be overly analytical in this exercise. The prompt: Select those words, and pictures that your intuition or gut is telling you are relevant.

Step 4: Now begin pasting. Choose one of the best ideas and place it in the center of the page. Relate the other images and words to this key theme. Feel free to add your own handwritten phrases, words, or drawings. Try to tell a story (beginning, middle and end) with your collage.

Step 5: After allowing sufficient time to build the collage (20 minutes), have each participant/team present their collage in front of the group as a whole.

Step 6: Encourage the group as a whole to build on any ideas that are triggered by the collage presentations.