



PROJECT MANAGEMENT ARTICLES • 2 MINUTES

Affinity Diagram – Kawakita Jiro or KJ Method

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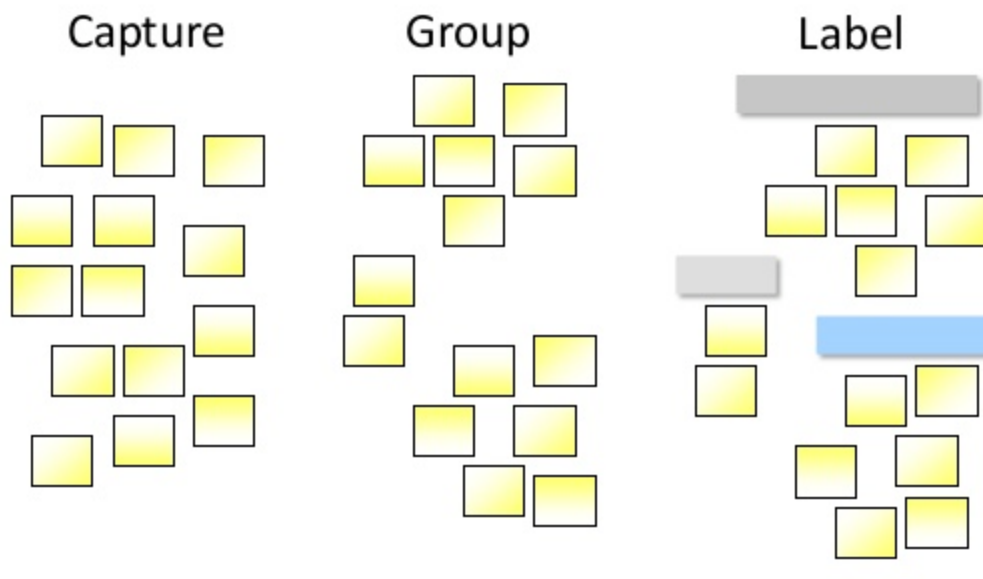
Published January 29, 2017

Updated December 1, 2022

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An affinity diagram organizes ideas, problems, and solutions into related groups after a brainstorm. It helps categorize and organize a large number of fragmented uncertain information into logical cohesive groups. The goal is to create a limited number of groups. This results in better idea selection or a problem that is better understood.



Typical Uses

Quality managers, project managers, marketing professionals, and anyone who uses brainstorming to generate ideas can use an affinity diagram to distill a large number of ideas to a refined set of related categories. Affinity diagrams are also known as the Kawakita Jiro or KJ method.

How to Conduct Affinity Session

1. Present the topic or define the problem clearly
2. Give the team index cards or sticky-notes
3. Ask them to write an idea or issue per card
4. Call out the ideas or issues and hang them on the wall
5. Lead the team to silently sort the ideas or issues into categories
6. Lead them labeling each group of cards
7. Eliminate duplicate ideas
8. Add arrows between items and groups to show significant relationships

Further Information

- The ideas shouldn't be discussed until the final affinity diagram is complete
- Record the actual spoken words when data is verbal (during interviews or observations)
- The best results tend to be achieved when the exercise is implemented by a cross-functional team

Best Practices

- **Identify the purpose.** Begin by deciding what issue or aspect of your business you wish to focus on with your diagram. Place it at the top of the page.
- **Determine groupings.** Decide on a logical set of related categories.
- **Determine contributing factors.** Make a list of ideas and issues generated by the brainstorm.
- **Organize.** Place each factor or idea beneath a category. Try combining duplicate issues to simplify.
- **Analyze and share.** Step back and look at the diagram. Analyze with various other coworkers or team members and it should be able to help you make a decision or see things more clearly.

About SmartDraw

SmartDraw allows you to create an Affinity Diagram. This tool is the world's most popular business graphics software and the first program that makes it possible for ordinary computer users to create presentation-quality business graphics in minutes. Each year more than two million people install and use SmartDraw and the company counts more than half of the members of the Fortune 500 as loyal customers. Founded in 1994, SmartDraw.com is privately-held and based in San Diego, CA.

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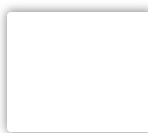
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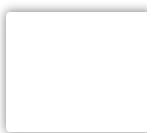
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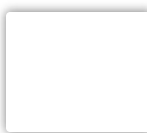
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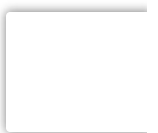
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