

LEARNERS NOTES | 2018-19

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Explore | Expand | Enrich

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INTRODUCTION

Emotional intelligence can be simply defined as the ability to think, process and express the emotions and handling situations without emotional outbursts. Brainstorming is defined as a creativity technique by which efforts are made to find a conclusion for a specific problem by gathering a list of ideas spontaneously.



IMPORTANT

Brainstorming is a lateral thinking process by which we develop ideas or thoughts that may seem crazy or shocking at first but then those ideas are changed and improved to original and useful ideas. This provides more advantages than normal thinking process by providing more solutions, be it feasible or not.

INDIVIDUAL BRAINSTORMING

WHAT IS INDIVIDUAL BRAINSTORMING?

Individual brainstorming is a fairly simple process but it requires skilled facilitation and careful planning for optimal outcomes. Individuals, of course, can brainstorm at any time and in any location. The main idea behind brainstorming is to acquire new ideas. An individual brainstorming session can be more useful to some people.



HOW DOES IT HELP?

Individual brainstorming can help some people in the following ways.

- **More Creative:** When you brainstorm on your own, you don't have to worry about other people's egos or opinions, and you can be freer and more creative.
- **No Hesitation:** You might find that an idea you'd hesitate to bring up in a group develops into something special when you explore it on your own.
- **No Distraction:** The possibility of getting distracted is less in Individual Brainstorming.



HOW TO CONDUCT AN EFFECTIVE INDIVIDUAL BRAINSTORMING SESSION?

Following steps can help to conduct an effective individual brainstorming session.

1. Focus on the quantity of ideas.
2. Write everything that strikes your mind.
3. Define a problem
4. Define a solution.
5. At last reach to a conclusion

This method of brainstorming can help a person to acquire more ideas than normal method of thinking.

There may be advantages to individual brainstorming but every process face some limitations that give rise to newer methods. Let us see the other type of brainstorming.

GROUP BRAINSTORMING

WHAT IS GROUP BRAINSTORMING?

Group brainstorming is defined as the process for generating creative ideas and solutions through intensive and freewheeling group discussion. Every participant is encouraged to think aloud and suggest as many ideas as possible, no matter seemingly how outlandish or bizarre.



IMPORTANT

HOW DOES IT HELP?

Some of the benefits of group brainstorming are as listed below.

- It is suitable for solving complex problems.
- It has a benefit of shared experience and expertise.
- Crazy and unusual suggestion from nowhere can be a solution to the problem

CONDUCTING AN EFFECTIVE GROUP BRAINSTORMING SESSION

Following these steps can help to conduct an effective group brainstorming session.

1. Encourage others' participation.
2. Ask clarifying questions.
3. Do not evaluate others.
4. Withhold criticism.
5. Encourage wild ideas.



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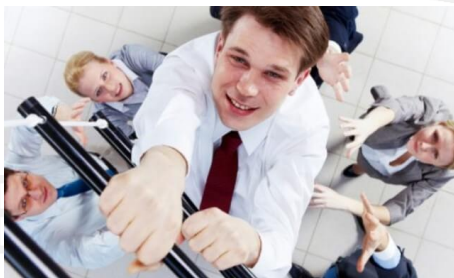
By following these steps, any group can come up with more ideas when compared to a single man's works.

Two different types of brainstorming help in collecting the ideas and solutions but still they face a few drawbacks. These drawbacks can be minimized or eliminated by the use of few techniques. Read along to find these techniques.

STEPLADDER TECHNIQUE

WHAT IS STEPLADDER TECHNIQUE?

It is a step-by-step process to adding new ideas and opinions to solving problems or tasks. This is a simple technique that assists the entry process of different members into a decision making group.



HOW DOES IT HELP?

It gives a broader variety of ideas, and helps prevent people from hiding within group, and gives no room for bully among team members in the choice of idea to be agreed

upon. The stepladder technique gives **quiet team members a boost.**

HOW TO USE STEPLADDER TECHNIQUE?

Given below is the step-by-step process to be followed in Stepladder technique.

- 1. Present Task:** Before getting together as a group, present the task or problem to all members. Give everyone sufficient time to think about what needs to be done and to form their own opinions on how to best accomplish the task or solve the problem.
- 2. Core Group:** Form a core group of two members. Have them discuss the problem.
- 3. Increment Member:** Add a third group member to the core group. The third member presents ideas to the first two members before hearing the ideas that have already been discussed. After all three members have laid out their solutions and ideas, discuss all the options together.
- 4. Loop The Process:** Repeat the same process by adding a fourth member, and so on, to the group. Allow time for discussion after each additional member has presented his or her ideas.
- 5. Conclude Brain writing:** Reach a final decision only after all members have been brought in and presented their ideas.

By following these steps, you can use stepladder technique for the purpose of brainstorming.

REQUIREMENTS FOR STEPLADDER TECHNIQUE

The technique has 4 requirements as follows.

- 1. Time to Think:** Each member is given sufficient time to think about the task before entering the core group.
- 2. Core Group:** The new member must make a preliminary solution presentation before hearing the core group's ideas.
- 3. Idea Discussion:** Sufficient time is allotted to discuss the problem as each person is added.



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4. Idea finalization: The final decision occurs only after the entire group is formed. So these steps make it difficult for a member to "hide" in the group.

Stepladder technique helps in giving equal opportunity to everyone in a group and brings out the shy people to speak. Sometimes, there are introverts who would never speak no matter what happens. What method can be applied to the group with these types of people?

BRAIN WRITING

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WHAT IS BRAIN WRITING?

Brain writing is the silent, written generation of ideas in a group. It is a technique for being receptive to everyone's ideas. It gives everyone equal opportunity to participate and enables all group members to think without any 'blocking'.

HOW DOES IT HELP?

Brain writing can be helpful in the following situations:

Large Audience: You have too large a group for effective brainstorming. You could conduct Brain writing at a conference of 500 people simply by leaving a large card on each seat, asking a question, and then having each audience member pass a card to someone else, and then repeat three times for a minute of writing.

Time Constraint: Your time is limited.

Lack of Moderator: You don't have an experienced moderator. Brainstorming, contrary to what many blog posts claim, is difficult to do well. Brain writing, in contrast, requires that you be able to ask a question, read a clock and collect answers.

Overpowering Individuals: You are worried about loud or forceful individuals influencing others, as they might in traditional brainstorming. You have quiet people in your group who are intimidated by traditional brainstorming.



IMPORTANT

During these situations brain writing can be helpful more than normal brainstorming.

TYPES OF BRAIN WRITING

There are 3 types of brain writing as given below.

- **Interactive Brain Writing:** The problem statement is explained and each participant gives an idea in a paper. The paper is passed on in a round, dropped into central pool and then is pinned up for suggestions.
- **Brain Writing 6-3-5:** Once the problem statement is explained, each participant gives three ideas in a round, passes it to the adjacent person. The ideas are developed or new ideas are added. This continues to 6 rounds with each round for five minutes. Six rounds, 3 ideas in 5 minutes gives the name “635”.
- **Idea Cards:** In this method, each person writes a new idea in a sticky note and puts it up on display for all participants. The other participants can develop on those ideas if they don't get any new ideas.

These are the three types of brain writing that can be used to obtain ideas from a group.



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CRAWFORD'S SLIP WRITING APPROACH

WHAT IS CRAWFORD'S SLIP WRITING APPROACH?

Crawford's Slip Writing Approach is a systematic method for obtaining written information, ideas, and suggestions from individuals in a group setting. It is a qualitative information gathering technique aimed at handling a large amount of inputs from large number of people.

HOW DOES IT HELP?

Here are the advantages of using Crawford's method to obtain ideas in a brainstorming session.

- It helps people to get involved and feel that their contributions are valued.
- It is suitable for sensitive topics since participants' input is anonymous.
- The participants can think freely without any interruption.
- This approach has the ability to aggregate large volumes of information in a very short time.
- It also encourages team building.

STEPS TO BE FOLLOWED IN CRAWFORD'S SLIP WRITING APPROACH

Given below are the steps to be followed to conduct a brainstorming session using Crawford's Slip writing approach.

1. Identify the session participants who are aware of the issue at hand. Even though complete subject-matter expertise is not essential but those participating in any type of risk information gathering effort should have at least a superficial awareness of the concerns and issues in the project.

2. Outline the question team will explore. The key to an effective session begins with clearly defining the question explored. Participants need to be aware of the reason for their involvement. Because the process is designed to draw on their insights, they clearly need to know what insights they will be expected to share.

3. Schedule a meeting that all participants can attend. Brief the participants about the problem and clarify the questions of the participants if necessary. It is important that all the participants have a sound knowledge of the problem at hand.

4. Provide each participant with ten sticky notes/slips of paper and one pen. The exact size of the slips to be used and the number of slips appropriate to the method, these decisions rest largely in the hands of the project manager. The number of slips will determine the volume of the outcome.

5. Explain the process and cycle through it iteratively. The facilitator will then walk

participants through the process. Each participant should have one response per slip. The participants will write down their thoughts, set that slip aside, and prepare to write another idea on the next slip. The number of cycles will determine how much information is generated.

6. Evaluate your answers. It is sometimes useful for participants to rate their answers. One can use the High/ Medium /Low rating scale. Instruct participants to place – on each sticky note – a rating for probability in the upper left corner and a rating for impact in the upper right corner.

7. Gather and/or sort the data. Once sufficient cycles have been completed, the facilitator may simply gather the data and terminate the session. Facilitator can stick the answers on the wall and ask participants to arrange these responses into categories. Do this until all notes are on the wall. Any note that duplicates another note is placed over the existing note.

8. Review all the Risks. The group then reviews all the risks in the category to ensure that a high risk has not been overlooked. The highest risks go on a risk register and the others are put on a watch list. For some of the higher risks, the group may decide to perform a further quantitative risk analysis. All of the risks on the risk register are assigned risk owners and the risk owners develop risk response plans.

Therefore, by following these steps, one can achieve the expected result from the brainstorming session.

WHEN TO USE CRAWFORD'S SLIP WRITING APPROACH?

These are the following few situations where Crawford's Slip writing approach can be used.

- When you want to get ideas from a large group of people.
- When you do not have time or ability to discuss ideas, and just want to collect people's thoughts.
- When you want to engage an audience, giving them a sense of involvement.

- When you want to encourage people to voice their ideas.
- To enhance creative thinking to thrive in an open and supportive environment.



In these given situations, Crawford's Slip writing method can help a lot to collect ideas from a large group of people.

A process to think for solutions always start from the top. What if the process was reversed? Read along to find the reverse process.

REVERSE BRAINSTORMING

WHAT IS REVERSE BRAINSTORMING?

In order to reach creative output, the process itself needs to be creative and innovative. Reverse brainstorming tries to solve the problem in a reversed way to the flow we already now. The method can **influence the human mind** to create better **ideas and solutions**. Instead of asking how to solve the problem, reverse brainstorming focuses on the idea of what **causes** the **problem** or how to **achieve** an **opposite result** of what is expected. This method helps the team to understand the problem and highlight the ideas that can be used to solve it among other ideas discussed during the meeting.

HOW DOES IT HELP?

These are the few situations where reverse brainstorming can be helpful.

- This method can be used to provide a different perspective of the same problem.

- It is useful when there is a team with members of low morale, serious cynicism or open hostility.
- This method can help in bringing out the ideas which may never come in a normal brainstorming method.

Hence, reverse brainstorming can be used in different scenarios and can still be helpful in acquiring new ideas.

HOW TO CONDUCT A REVERSE BRAINSTORMING SESSION?

Reverse brainstorming session works in a way to achieve the target through five main steps. The team goes through each step and discusses it as a group. These steps include the following:

- 1. Problem:** Clearly identify the problem that needs to be solved by the end of the group meeting
- 2. Reverse:** Reverse the expected process. For example ask the stakeholders questions such as “how can we make the problem worse?” instead of “How can we solve it?”
- 3. Collect:** Collect all the reversed solutions. All the ideas are acceptable without no criticism
- 4. Reverse:** After reaching the cases that make the problem worse, flip these cases to reach the best fixes for the problem.
- 5. Evaluate:** Judge and evaluates the results to reach one best solution.

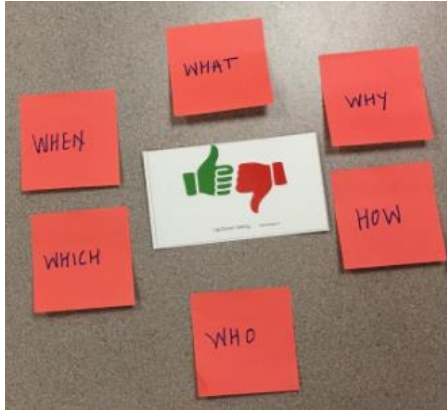
Following these steps can help in finding the exact opposite result which eventually can help in finding the needed result while backtracking.

Brainstorming, being a creative and innovative method of arriving at solutions, can be used creatively. Reverse brainstorming is one such example. Some other examples of brainstorming techniques are as explained.

STARBURST METHOD

WHAT IS STARBURST METHOD?

Star bursting is a twist on brainstorming that encourage team members to ask questions rather than providing instant answers. It is a simple process mainly used to **evaluate ideas based on answering**.



HOW DOES IT HELP?

Following are the advantages of using starburst method of brainstorming.

- Star bursting method tends to provide a focused, systematic and comprehensive flow of guided thought that is restricted with specific steps and questions to answer.
- Star bursting takes less time to reach the targeted results because all the general criteria are set in place beforehand.

Starburst method, unlike other brainstorming methods can help reach solutions differently as mentioned.

HOW TO USE STAR BURSTING METHOD?

As name suggests, it starts with a star and expands from there. In the **centre** of the star is **the product, service, or concept** to be discussed. Each of the **6 points** of the **star** is labelled with **basic questions: who, what, where, why, when, and how**.

The process of star bursting method is simple. The aim is to fill the six points of the stars with questions related to the problem statement or the topic. These questions are later answered and the

solution is derived from the answers acquired by answering the questions.

CHARETTE PROCEDURE

WHAT IS CHARETTE PROCEDURE?

The Charette procedure is one of the oldest methods used to organize thinking about more than one idea. The larger group of people are divided into small groups. Each group is assigned one topic to brainstorm and collect ideas and feedback. These generated ideas are moved to another group to build on top of, they contribute to the topic with more analysis and brainstorming.



HOW DOES IT HELP?

Charette procedure can be helpful in following situations.

- **Different Topics:** When there are more than one topic being discussed during the session, Charette procedure can be used.
- **More Audience:** When a large number of people (15-25) are involved in the discussion
- **Time Constraint:** The time to discuss each topic is limited
- **Developing Existing Ideas:** Charette procedure can be used to build upon existing ideas is needed.

These are a few situations where Charette procedure can be helpful.



IMPORTANT

STEPS FOR CHARETTE PROCEDURE

Given are the steps to be followed in Charette procedure of Brainstorming.

- **Group Formation:** Divide participants into smaller groups and ask them to choose a topic for their group.
- **Moderator:** Assign one person and allocate specific time limit to record the ideas of all groups. After one group has recorded their ideas, moderator must record the other groups' ideas.
- **Building upon Ideas:** Make sure the ideas of all groups are recorded and if necessary the groups can build upon the ideas of previous groups.
- **Prioritization:** At the end, ask the groups to prioritize the ideas based on their significance.

By following these steps, Charette procedure can be used to acquire ideas in a brainstorming session.

Charette procedure, being one of the oldest methods of brainstorming, helps when there is more than one topic to be discussed. When there are a small group of people, there are other methods of brainstorming that can be used too. Moving forward, let us look into Round robin brainstorming.

ROUND ROBIN BRAINSTORMING

WHAT IS ROUND ROBIN BRAINSTORMING?

The "Round robin" option is a technique for generating and developing ideas in a group brainstorming setting. It relies on an iterative process building off consecutive contributions by each participants, conducted in either written or verbal variations. This method can be mostly used where the number of people are small as it is easy to make a circle around the members for ideas.

TIPS FOR USING ROUND ROBIN BRAINSTORMING

Given below are some topics that can be followed during conducting a round robin session of brainstorming for better results.

- Round robin brainstorming can be adapted to larger groups by dividing the total body of participants into smaller individual groups, and having each sub-group develop a single idea.
- In the written variation of sessions, participant contribution can also be anonymised by collecting cards from the entire group at the same time, shuffling them, and reading them out one by one.



These tips may help in conducting an effective session of round robin goal setting.

HOW TO CONDUCT A ROUND ROBIN BRAINSTORMING?

The basic structure of a Round robin session is as given below.

- 1. Theme:** The session begins with a central theme, question, or issue which the facilitator identifies for discussion.
- 2. Arrangement:** Arranged in a circle, participants begin by considering the question. One participant is selected to lead off the process by offering a single thought or reaction, either out-loud or on a piece of paper/index card. In a verbal format, the rest of the participants remain quiet during his or her answer.
- 3. Addition of points:** Once this first participant is finished contributing, the participant sitting directly to his or her right contributes an additional point, idea, or thought.

4. Recurring Process: Working clockwise around the circle, each participant either speaks or writes a single idea - ideally one which has not yet been mentioned - until a full circle has been completed or the time reserved for the exercise has passed.

5. Recording the ideas: During this period, the facilitator records insights and central points raised. The session then concludes with a group discussion.

Having read about these many types and techniques of brainstorming, they can help in many situations, be it when you are alone or with a group of friends. You will feel easier to arrive at solutions for problems at hand.

MAKE SURE YOU REVISE

- ✓ Brainstorming
- ✓ Advantages of Individual & Group Brainstorming
- ✓ Crawford's slip writing approach
- ✓ Process of Starburst method
- ✓ What is Charette procedure?
- ✓ Stepladder technique
- ✓ Brain writing – types
- ✓ Advantages of brain writing



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