

# From Impossible to Possible

## WHAT IS FROM IMPOSSIBLE TO POSSIBLE?

Some of the best ideas come from shattering norms and creating new paradigms. Detailing what can't happen allows us to think about what actually can be done. Start by listing the things that would never happen in your industry or company (e.g., offer products for free). In the second part of the exercise, you'll try to uncover ways to make these impossibles, possible. Make it happen!

### WHY THIS TOOL?

This exercise is best used when participants feel there are many barriers to innovation. It's a surefire way to get a variety of key issues out on the table, and get participants to think constructively about how to solve them.

### FACILITATION GUIDE



#### SUGGESTED AUDIENCE

- Relevant for all levels of staff and senior leadership



#### SET-UP

- This exercise should be done in teams of three to four people, ideally with an even number of teams (for swapping worksheets).
- To spur conversation and jumpstart the exercise, you can choose to pre-fill one to two IMPOSSIBLES on the worksheet to get the conversation started.
- *Variation: Exercise can be done individually.*



#### RECOMMENDED TIMING *(Varies based on participants)*

|  |          |
|--|----------|
| <b>Step 1.</b> Introduction:           | 5 mins.  |
| <b>Step 2.</b> Impossibles Brainstorm: | 10 mins. |
| <b>Step 3.</b> Swap:                   | 10 mins. |
| <b>Step 4.</b> Possibles Brainstorm:   | 15 mins. |
| <b>Step 5.</b> Group Discussion:       | 20 mins. |

**60 mins.**



#### SUGGESTED MATERIALS

- **Worksheets**  
Enough for each participant + a few extra
- **Colored whiteboard markers/pens**  
Separating by color helps organize thoughts
- **Whiteboard or flip charts**  
Write down all group ideas; no idea is a bad idea

## FACILITATION GUIDE (Cont'd.)

### HOW IT WORKS:

#### STEP 1. Introduction.

- **Designate Teams.** Once all attendees are in the room, split them into their assigned teams.
- **Assign a Team Leader.** Ask each team to assign a “team leader” who will write the team’s thoughts on the worksheet. It’s best to designate someone with the best handwriting as the team leader.
- **Hand Out Worksheet.** Give each team a worksheet for brainstorming.

#### STEP 2. Impossibles Brainstorm.

Give each group 10–15 minutes to brainstorm their list of *impossibles* on the worksheet. Brief participants clearly on what you mean by *impossibles*.

*Impossibles* can be seen from three different perspectives (it’s recommended that you focus on one impossibility during a session):

- **Industry Impossibilities:** What things will *never* happen in our industry?
- **Customer Impossibilities:** What would a customer say we would *never* do for them, but wish we would? Why?
- **Internal/company Impossibilities:** What would other groups in our company say we could *never* make happen?

#### STEP 3. Swap.

Once the *impossibles* section has been completed, have teams swap their worksheet with another team. If there are an uneven number of teams, simply rotate the worksheets clockwise among the tables so each team gets someone else’s *impossibles*. (Optional: Do not tell teams ahead of time that they will be giving up their list of *impossibles* to another team. This element of surprise could add a level of excitement.)

#### STEP 4. Possibles Brainstorm.

Using their inherited list of *impossibles*, teams are given 15 minutes to make the *impossible*, *possible*. Think about:

- What are all the things you ALWAYS have to do?
- What things annoy you about this process, product, service, etc.?

#### STEP 5. Group Discussion.

Ask each team to read out the *impossibles* they inherited, and then share how they made them *possible*. Use some of the Guiding Questions to facilitate discussion.



#### GUIDING QUESTIONS

- Was it difficult to come up with *impossible*? Why/why not?
- Did you have a hard time making your list of things *possible*? Why/Why not?
- Of everything you’ve heard from the brainstorm, which is your top choice to make *possible*?

# WORKSHEET

| <b>IMPOSSIBLE</b><br>What are your impossibles? | <b>POSSIBLE</b><br>Here's how we can make it happen. |
|---|--|
| 1.  |  |
| 2.  |  |
| 3.  |  |
| 4.  |  |
| 5.  |  |
| 6.  |  |