# 13 RULES FOR EFFECTIVE BRAINSTORMING

**1 GET THE RIGHT NUMBER OF STORMERS**
5–7 participants is the optimal number—everyone has a voice, and every voice is needed.

**2 DON'T FILL THE ROOM WITH THE SAME PERSON**
Find a diverse group of perspectives and experiences to yield more and better ideas.

**3 NO POP QUIZZES**
Give brainstorm participants at least 2 days' notice and tell then what they'll be solving.

**4 VALUE TIME**
Tell your brainstormers how long the session will be (1.5-2) hours is good) and stick to it.

**5 INPUT FOR OUTPUT**
Immerse your brainstormers in the world of the problem with an input exercise.

**6 HAVE SOMETHING UP YOUR SLEEVE**
Surprise your brainstormers with something as simple as snacks or as elaborate as décor.

**7 START THE FIRE WITH A CREATIVE MATCH**
Get brainstormers limbered up conceptually with a creative exercise to start the session.

**8 BRING IN THE PLAY**
Keep the energy high by being playful and strategically inserting games into the session.

**9 LEAVE THE JUDGE AT THE DOOR**
Stay focused on divergent thinking by allowing all ideas to be shared and valued.

**10 IF YOU UNROLL IT, THEY WILL DRAW**
Line the brainstorming table with paper so everyone can document their own ideas.

**11 BE THE COACH**
When ideas are hard to come by, alter the problem slightly to get the team solving again.

**12 CAPTURE RESIDUAL IDEAS**
Create and communicate a way to capture ideas that stormers develop after the session.

**13 CHANNEL YOUR INNER BACKSLAPPER**
Don't forget to thank and encourage the people who gave you their heart, soul, and ideas.