

### 1. Number of members and constitution of group

A minimum of 6 and a maximum of 12 people may participate in a brainstorming session. Less than 6 results in argument, more than 12 means that not everyone gets heard. It is recommended that people from different disciplines (specialists, generalists, the client, and outsiders unconnected to the problem) are included.

### 2. Duration

The session should last at least 3 hours (or a minimum of 1 hour for smaller projects).

### 3. Use of time

The facilitator must plan out the 3 hour session, blocking out periods of time to the various areas that have to be covered, and ensuring that the group sticks to the plan.

### 4. Pre-session requirement

Facilitator must initiate brainstorming 1-2 days before the actual session by circulating a memo with:

- Location, time and date of the session
- The subject of the session
- A definition of the end result or product that is wanted
- Any deadlines for end product or idea
- Names of the participants and their special assigned tasks
- Supporting background information
- Explanation of rules for session

Recommended that participants be encouraged to brainstorm alone for about an hour prior to the session, so that they can bring their own full crop of written ideas to the meeting. This is very productive in and of itself. Otherwise, in raw brainstorming sessions, ideas noted on the board or flip chart can lead or steer participants in a particular direction, losing track of possible alternatives

### 5. Facilitator's requirements during session

- Be able to stand in front of group and communicate objectives clearly.
- Keep the group's energy high and raise it if it fades
- Control dominating participants and encourage shy members to join in too
- Keep group on track and focused on productive objectives
- Put aside personal ideas and views in favor of the group's ideas and input
- Use different techniques to draw ideas from group
- Keep meeting on schedule
- Spot opportunities that come up and are not picked up or developed by group
- Make sure the scribe is capturing all ideas in writing
- Squash all side-conversations with "Just one meeting, please!"
- Act as policeman for the golden rule (see below)

### 6. Seating Arrangement (Face-to-Face)

Best to seat the group a circular fashion or around a rectangular 'meetings room' desk is fine, so that everyone can see each other. The facilitator and scribe should sit on the side with the board/flip chart behind them

### 7. The Golden Rule: Defer Judgement.

All ideas are made welcome. Participants must agree not to laugh at or belittle any idea raised during a brain storm session.

### 8. Quantity, not quality

As a ancilliary point to the Golden Rule above, aim at quantity of ideas rather than quality. To this end, employ Caesar's military strategy he called celeritas - speed! High tempo fast generation of ideas helps keep the internal judge at bay and ensures that the golden rule is obeyed.

### 9. Encourage Active listening

Participants bring greater attention and awareness to the task and will get more information if they commit to "Active Listening" to those who are presenting ideas at. See 12 rules of "Effective Listening".

### 10. Keep the Meeting on Track

The facilitator must prevent the group from veering off into unproductive areas and remain focused on the task at hand. He must guard against participants making judgements and watch out for "veiled warfare" among the more dominant members.

### 11. Keep the group energized

If the meeting gets mired and sleepy, take a few minutes to get everyone to stretch and move around. Get some refreshments to keep blood sugar levels stable. Blast out mental cobwebs with some creativity games, some energising music, a funny video or some jokes. Then re-start the session.

### 12. Summarise - agree - allocate

As the brainstorm session draws to a close, summarize what has been covered and where you are, obtain the participant's agreement on that and allocate tasks from the list of quality ideas that you have harvested from the session.

