Brainwalk

What

Brainstorming (group sessions) has three siblings which you should get to know: **Braindumping (individual sessions), Brainwriting (a mix of individual and group sessions)** and **Brainwalking (another mix of individual and group sessions)**.

Should Your Team Brainstorm as a Group or as Individuals?

Best practice:

Switching between the two modes of individual and collective ideation sessions can be seamless—and highly productive. Alex Osborn's 1950s classic *Applied Imagination* gave advice that is still relevant: Creativity comes from a blend of individual and collective ideation.

It's often a good idea to do individual ideation sessions like braindumping, brainwriting and brainwalking before *and* after brainstorming group sessions. We recommend that you mix the methods: Brainstorming, Brainwriting, Brainwalking, and Braindumping.

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What

Brainwalking is very similar to brainwriting with one small but highly impactful difference. Instead of passing idea cards or notes from one participant to another, participants have to get up from their seats and move to another spot around the brainstorming table or even to another table altogether. Bryan Mattimore came up with this technique; he's a specialist in the art of ideation and facilitation. Mattimore has many years and thousands of sessions of experience conducting ideation sessions. In his book *Idea Stormers*, he describes brainwalking as the: 'single best technique to use to begin an ideation session'.

Why

Brainwalking gets people out of their seats, gets them moving, keeps energy levels up and mixes things up enough so that the group as a whole does not get stuck delving too long down the same one-way street, without a quick exit or U turn available. Brainstorming works best when it is easy to flip or to start from scratch.

Best practice: How

•   If you are the facilitator, you'll brief ideation participants upfront on the problem statement, goals and important user insights from previous research and findings.

•   Encourage participants to jot down ideas on their idea cards for 3-5 minutes.

•   Then they should move on to the next seat or table to continue writing down their ideas on the other participant's idea card.

•   Ideally, participants move to another seat or table 3-10 times depending on the problem statement and goals.

•   This all happens silently and without any interference or communication.

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- Encourage participants to push themselves for more ideas at least a couple of times, in the few minutes they have, in order to maximize the output and variation.

- You should stoke the session with encouragement and provide questions or statements which push participants to think outside of their comfort zones.

- The cycle can be repeated multiple times and can be applied to chunks of the problem being addressed, depending on the need.

- After ending the cycle, each participant will briefly verbally present the thoughts on the idea card he/she ends up with by the end of the cycle to the rest of the team—in order to spark new streams of thinking or combinations of ideas. If you were the facilitator, you would often be taking notes on a white board.

- When all team members have presented their idea cards, you can select the best ideas which you can continue to build and elaborate on in other ideation sessions. There are various methods you can use such as "Post-it Voting", "Four Categories", "Bingo Selection"and "Now Wow How Matrix".

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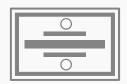
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