



INNOVATION

BRAINSTORM GUIDELINES

- 1) Initially, work alone.** Ideas come from anywhere and everywhere. The best idea in the world may be in the mind of someone who has never had an idea before, so it's important that everyone contribute.
- 2) Write ideas on a Post-it note—one idea per note.** Every idea must be captured, either by someone responsible for recording ideas, or by each person writing ideas on "sticky" notes or any other note-capturing medium.
- 3) State your idea to the rest of the team.** All ideas should be specific and actionable, not general (e.g., "improve communication"); each idea should include a noun and a verb, such as "distribute weekly newsletter."
- 4) Number all ideas.** IDEO, the award-winning design firm, believes numbering stimulates the flow of ideas. A good and fluid brainstorming session is one in which about 100 ideas are generated in an hour.
- 5) Display all your ideas on a flip chart. Strive for quantity, not quality.** Keep your pen moving—just generate ideas. Avoid stories, discussions, and elaborations on how the idea could be carried out or how great it might be.
- 6) Avoid judging ideas. There are neither bad nor good ideas.** During the idea-generation process, avoid evaluating ideas. Do not discuss the merits of an idea or express approval or disapproval. Groans, frowns, or even positive expressions such as "great idea!" are NOT allowed. Remember to keep the ideas flowing, and strive for quantity instead of quality—the judging process will come later.
- 7) Build off of others' ideas.** Make them bigger, smaller, a different color, and turn them inside out. (For example, say "Yes, and ..." or "Yes, and we could distribute it by e-mail or in payroll envelopes.")
- 8) Freewheeling is welcome.** During the idea-generation process, do not discuss or critique ideas—share and build.