

KEY STAGES IN THE PROCESS OF BRAINSTORMING

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PROBLEM STATEMENT – It is important that participants in the problem-solving process clearly understand the problem they have agreed to solve and that it is solvable.

GATHER THE FACTS – Participants conduct research to find out everything they can about the problem. This often involves seeking information from the people who best understand the problem, regardless of their place in the organizational hierarchy.

IDEA GENERATION – During the process of idea generation, participants get on the “same side” against the problem and “brainstorm” every possible solution they can, regardless of how irrational it might appear to be. In fact, one seemingly farfetched solution often gives other participants permission to think more creatively. It is crucial that participants do not pass judgment on any solutions since this severely damages the openness and creativity of participants.

IDEA SELECTION – The first step in idea selection is for participants to develop the specific criteria necessary to assess the viability of the ideas they have generated. They then use this criteria to select the best idea to solve the problem.

BENEFITS AND CONCERNS – Participants identify the benefits of this idea which will enable them to “sell it” to all interested parties. They also identify any concerns they have about this idea or the impact of implementing it.

WORK CRITICAL CONCERNS – Participants identify what they can do to resolve the concerns they have identified about the idea they have developed. For instance, they might develop a plan to respond to any resistance they encounter in the implementation of their idea.

NEXT STEPS – Participants identify the specific steps that they need to take to effectively implement their idea and who is responsible for each step.

IDEA IMPLEMENTATION – Participants implement their plan for idea implementation and use this same process to resolve any problems they encounter.

Please note that:

- 1) Highly effective brainstorming is a finely tuned skill that needs to be practiced regularly to achieve the maximum results;
- 2) It helps to number the solutions so that you can easily refer to them during the selection phase;

- 3) A good brainstorming facilitator can keep the momentum going by knowing which solutions to build on;
- 4) It is important to write down (or draw) the solutions developed so that all participants can see them;
- 5) An effective brainstorming session can increase synergy within the work culture and energize participants to continue to think creatively long after it is finished.