



BRAINSTORMING

Does your organization feel stuck? Are the same few people always talking during meetings? Does your group repeat the same events or ideas year after year?

Brainstorming can help your organization bring in new energy, hear from more members, and come up with better ideas together. It gives everyone a chance to share creative solutions, suggest new approaches, and think beyond what the group has always done.

The goal is simple: get as many ideas on the table as possible before deciding what works best. Before you begin, make sure everyone understands the process, and choose one person to guide the conversation so the group stays focused and productive.

SET THE STAGE

Brainstorming works best when it is organized and everyone has a chance to contribute. Consider the following ideas:

- Set aside 10 to 20 minutes for the activity, depending on the complexity of the topic and the size of your group.
- Aim for 3 to 15 participants. Larger groups can split into smaller teams and brainstorm at the same time.
- Arrange seating so participants can easily see and interact with one another.
- Focus on one challenge, goal, or question at a time. Choose a topic that everyone can contribute to.
- Clearly display the topic or objective where everyone can see it throughout the session.
- Give participants a few minutes to think independently and write down ideas before sharing with the group.
- Capture every idea that is shared and make the list visible to all participants.
- Record ideas using brief notes, keywords, or short phrases rather than full statements.
- Keep the focus on the ideas themselves rather than who suggested them. This encourages participation and helps everyone evaluate ideas fairly.



BRAINSTORMING GUIDELINES

- Save discussion and evaluation for later. During brainstorming, focus on generating ideas.
- Avoid judging, criticizing, or dismissing suggestions while ideas are being shared.
- Similar or repeated ideas are welcome. They can help identify themes and priorities.
- Encourage participation by sharing ideas freely rather than waiting to be called on.
- Focus on generating as many ideas as possible. More ideas create more opportunities for creative solutions.
- Build on what others suggest. One idea can spark an even stronger one.
- Think creatively and do not be afraid to share unconventional ideas. Sometimes the most unexpected suggestions lead to the best outcomes.
- Do not rush to fill every silence. A few moments of reflection often lead to thoughtful contributions.

USING YOUR BRAINSTORMING RESULTS

- If multiple groups participated, combine or display all idea lists so everyone can review them.
- Look for common themes and organize related ideas into categories.
- Review the ideas as a group and identify which ones have the greatest potential.
- Prioritize the strongest ideas based on your organization's goals, resources, and timeline.
- Select ideas to move forward with, either for immediate action or for further development by a committee or leadership team.
- Follow through whenever possible. Members are more likely to stay engaged when they see their ideas considered, developed, and put into action.

