

# Brainstorming

<b>Number of people:</b>	Most effective 5-15
<b>Minimum time:</b>	5-10 minutes
<b>Materials:</b>	Flip chart, newsprint, felt-tip pens, tape

## Purpose

Brainstorming is a method used to generate an idea list from a group in a short period of time. It is designed to encourage participation by all members. This method usually produces creative, new ideas useful in solving the problem or issue at hand.

Goal: Produce a quantity of ideas.

## Process

1. Choose recorder to write ideas generated on newsprint;
2. Set time limit or maximum number of items before you begin;
3. Present topic clearly. Write on newsprint so all members can see. Give available background information;
4. Ask people to offer ideas as rapidly as they can. They may ask for clarification, if the idea is not understood by the group;

*Rule: No idea can be judged, discussed or rejected.*

1. Make sure group members understand that ideas will be evaluated after brainstorming is finished;
2. Write down on newsprint all ideas presented. Write word for word if possible;
3. Move rapidly from one idea to another;
4. To encourage group participation, take only one idea from each person. This is especially important if one or two people are dominating the idea sharing;
5. Evaluate ideas, prioritize and return to brainstorming if more ideas are needed; and
6. Proceed with the decision-making task.

*Comments:* Brainstorming with a group releases many ideas in a way that seems to spark other thoughts. The non-judgmental gathering of ideas breaks down barriers among people and avoids blocks such as "We've tried that before ... .. It didn't work," etc.