

# Brain drain

Number of people:	Any size group
Minimum time:	Five minutes
Materials:	Flip chart, newsprint, felt tip pen, paper, pens

## Purpose

Brain drain is an effective method for helping groups learn how to use their own resources in a very short time. Brain drain promotes controlled competition among groups. This competition encourages individuals to stretch beyond their usual way of thinking and come up with more creative ideas.

## Process

Select one goal or problem statement.

Write it clearly so that everyone can read it. Check to make sure that everyone understands the question or statement.

Break into small groups (no more than seven per group).

Provide groups with papers/pens, and ask each group to select a recorder.

Set a time limit.

**STOP. Find out which group has the most ideas.**

Give each group one more minute (don't repeat your ideas) to continue finding new ideas. Groups are encouraged to beat their record.

**STOP. Find out which group now has the most ideas.**

Give each group one more minute.

**STOP. Find out which group has the most ideas.**

Now add up all the ideas from all the groups. Ask each group to report on its ideas. e.g., "In three minutes the total group has arrived at \_\_\_\_\_ ideas." Give positive reinforcement to the total group for finding so many creative ideas.

A group leader can use this technique to help a group solve problems and create alternative ideas for solutions.

The next step is to sift through the ideas to find which, individually or combined, are feasible alternatives.