Brainstorming

- First articulated by Alex Osborne in the 1930's
- Provides a structured method for spawning creative thinking and quickly generating a number of ideas
- Ideally it sets off a chain reaction of creative thinking
- Its key to both suppress restrictive attitudes & unleash creative thinking
- Group similar ideas and evaluate each group

Steps to Brainstorming

1. Defer Judgment
2. Build on the Ideas of Others
3. Engage in One Conversation at a Time
4. Stay Focused
5. Encourage Wild Ideas
6. Look for Quantity not Quality
7. Draw It

Defer Judgement

- Maintain a open mind.
- Typically, this rule is the hardest to follow, primarily because of our preconceived notions and our cultural values usually steer us to make a quick judgment.
- Judging or prejudging can block our own creativity, but certainly dampens the spirit and overall creativity of the group.

Build on the Ideas of Others

- Take an idea, quickly find its merit and take it to the next level.
- Part of the benefit of a brainstorming session, is to keep the “creative juices” flowing in the group.
- Building on the ideas of others keeps the ideas coming, and can inspire others in the group.

Engage in One Conversation at a Time

- Maintain one conversation to preserve the group dynamic.
- This gives everyone the time to be heard, and discourages frustration.
- Ideally, as the session, progresses team members begin “chomping at the bit” to share their “good ideas.”
- The moderator must maintain order.
**Stay Focused**
- This too can be a tough rule to follow, after all, the goal is too inspire creativity.
- However, unbounded creativity is an anathema to accomplishment.
- Don’t hold back ideas, just try to turn it into something germane.
- Just be aware.

**Encourage Wild Ideas**
- No idea is
  - Too radical,
  - Too improbable,
  - Too impractical,
  - Too dangerous, or
  - Too primitive.
- Wild ideas are essential to brainstorming, they inspire creativity, and open new avenues of thinking.

**Look for Quantity not Quality**
- Brainstorming’s goal is to develop a multitude of ideas, some will be good ideas other won’t be.
- It may take a bad idea to “spark” a good one.

**Draw It**
- If an idea can be drawn, draw it.
- “A picture is worth a thousand words.”

**Moderator/Facilitator**
- As with technical session of professional meeting, a moderator is used to “facilitate” a brainstorming session.
- Brainstorming session don’t just happen, there must be someone to lead the session.
- The moderator is not a judge, and is best operates as impartial observer/recorder/time manager.

**Guidelines to Moderating a Brainstorming Session**
1. Preparation
2. Problem Statement
3. Specify “Ground Rules” and Maintain Focus
4. Make Sure Everyone is Heard
5. Record the Event
**Prepare**

- "Always be prepared."
- Set the mood. If a session feels like a waste of time, it will be. If participant don't feel, or realize their time is being used, good things are possible.
- The session should be fun, or at least enjoyable to it participants.
- Keep the energy level of the session high, by keeping your energy up.

**Problem Statement**

- Start with the problem statement.
- Complexity can be a mood killer.
- Break complex problem statement, into simpler "sub" statements or broaden the statement to eliminate unnecessary complexity.

**Specify the "Ground Rules" and Maintain Focus**

- Make sure everyone knows the rules, like "Defer Judgment" and "Keep Focused."
- Maintain a positive attitude, and turn negatives into positives.
- Maintain the overall team focus.

**Make Sure Everyone is Heard**

- For Brainstorming to work effectively, participation is key.
- The moderator is to be a positive influence on the session, encouraging participation, and discouraging breaks in decorum or order.

**Record the Session**

- The moderator/recorder must record the ideas and simultaneously interpret those ideas.
- Quickly capture the words and spirit of the ideas.
- Again sketch diagrams where you can.
- Number to each idea and ensure that it is reflected in the session notes and sketches.

**Example**

- The population will continue to grow in Florida. This places a growing demand for water and commodities, and at the same time will increases the stresses on the environment.
- How can Florida move more towards sustainability?