

Decision-making
technique:
brainstorming essay
sample



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On any given day within any organization there are decisions to be made. These may be as mundane as where to go for lunch or what new product to put out on the market. There are several decision-making tools and techniques that a person or group can put to use with brainstorming being one of them.

Brainstorming is “ a tool for generating as many ideas or solutions as possible to a problem or an issue” (Simon para 1). Brainstorming does not determine the solution that needs to be implemented rather it allows the showing of all possible solutions. This gives the group or team the opportunity to ensure that every viable, random solution imaginable has been taken into account. This technique will generate radical ideas, which could lead to solid results. In order to determine the best solution to a problem, it is important to consider all possible outcomes.

There are a few requirements needed in order to use brainstorming as an effective decision making tool (Bartle). First, there must be a problem to solve. If there is no real problem or if the issue is already clear-cut, there may not be a need to brainstorm. Therefore, the brainstorming activities would be useless.

There is also a necessity to be able to work as a team. When brainstorming activities begin for an organization, it is important that the group generates the ability and the want to work as a team, to make a decision. At my company, Kwikmed, this is a real problem. We hold meetings to talk about current issues, but we can never seem to get involved as a team. It always seems that the most aggressive speaker person gets their way and to date,

it has typically led to the wrong course of action when attempting to solve our problems. It seems that whenever we implemented a solution, it created two new issues. Its always one step forward and two steps back.

The most important requirement of a brainstorming session is a facilitator. A facilitator is important because a designated person will be selected to draw out the different suggestions made by the group without imposing his or her opinions. A facilitator's only focus is to keep track of the ideas and to maintain order during the brainstorming session. This seems like an excellent approach, yet we have never used a facilitator at my company before. This would put an end to the aggressor approach that we are currently taking. I would like to mention the idea to my boss and will bring it up during our next staff meeting to see how well it is received.

According to Interpersonal skills in Organizations, the MGT250 text at the University of Phoenix, there are 7 basic guidelines for brainstorming:

1. Articulate the theme or the question
2. Set a time limit
3. Record the ideas for everyone to see
4. Quantity is important (generate as many ideas as possible)
5. Everyone should actively participate
6. All ideas are good ideas
7. Piggyback or build on ideas of others

These rules are set in place to ensure that all ideas are heard and that inhibitions are released. In order to stimulate creativity and innovative solutions, it is important not to criticize or judge ideas, as those actions will hinder and potentially stop the creative process. Only when the brainstorming session is finished should ideas be evaluated and picked apart. At Kwikmed, our meetings could not be further away from this approach. We are not even surpassing Step 1 listed above. We argue over and over as to whether issues are even valid. We are unable to even articulate the problems in most cases. This is probably why we are not able to come to effective conclusions very well. For example, we repeatedly received customer complaints about issues that were arising when customers were using their AOL accounts. Our customer service department consistently brought up this issue in our staff meetings.

The IT and management executives were constantly dismissing the customer's claims right away and we were never able to expand on the idea. One day, months later when our marketing department received a complaint concerning AOL emails, the IT department looked into the situation and found that it had been broken for over four months. " How come nobody told us about this? " they asked. All we could do was roll our eyes. We had been stressing the customer concerns with AOL repeatedly and were dismissed. It took my company the loss of customers to even get anyone to acknowledge this as being a problem.

We then needed to start down the path of brainstorming on the issue. Once the problem was articulated, we still made the mistake of not following the outlined steps mentioned above. Our IT staff simply implemented what they

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thought was the solution. And yet again, it did not work. It is now six months later and we still do not have a viable solution. We need to follow these techniques and plan together to form a more solid course of action. Our customer service representatives can tell the customers “ we are working on it” forever.

There are three types of brainstorming according to Interpersonal skills in Organizations: round robin, nominal group technique, and Post-It note.

The brainstorming process can be very hectic and almost anarchic. Round robin is a form of brainstorming where a group sets a predetermined order and goes around the room one at a time looking for ideas. This gives each member of the team an opportunity to be heard, and will eliminate the problem of domination from any member. It can inhibit the team by possibly eliminating the opportunity for spontaneity and creativity. Using this form of brainstorming can result in fewer ideas, and can make individuals feel disconnected from the team.

The nominal group technique to brainstorming is an open brainstorming technique that is a variation which reduces any status differences in a group allowing everyone to speak up and have no fear of reprimand. This method also uses the round robin structure, but once the facilitator organizes the ideas, the group votes them upon anonymously. The only setback this technique can be too mechanical and can constrain ideas.

The third form of brainstorming, Post-It note, can create “ three times the ideas of traditional brainstorming” (Rohe). Ideas are written down on Post-It notes and then organized into themes rather than using a whiteboard or a <https://assignbuster.com/decision-making-technique-brainstorming-essay-sample/>

flip chart. This is a good way to get all ideas into categories and assure that ideas are not being repeated.

There are many sites online that will give various formats for a general brainstorming session. The one that stood out for me was www.jpbc.com. This company has a “ Brainstorming Services” section which offers many services including brainstorming facilitation, brainstorm outsourcing, brainstorm retreats and several articles on the subject. Their article The Step by Step Guide to Brainstorming includes seven steps to effectively hold a brainstorming session.

Step one: Define your problem.

Step two: Give yourselves a time limit

Step three: Everyone must shout out solutions to the problem while one person writes them out. There must be absolutely no criticizing of ideas.

Step four: Once your time is up, select the five ideas, which you like best. Make sure everyone involved in the brainstorming session is in agreement.

Step five: Write down about five criteria for judging which ideas best solve your problem.

Step six: Give each idea a score of 0 to 5 points depending on how well it meets each criterion, and then add up the scores.

Step seven: The idea with the highest score will best solve your problem. But you should keep a record of all of your best ideas and their scores in case your best idea turns out not to be workable.

This may seem like a rosy picture for a perfect answer, but it is not. As with all techniques, there are problems and times when this method should or should not be used. First, if there is not ample time or if there are not ample resources for a group session there will not be ample ideas. Typically there needs to be more than two or three people for the best possible outcome. Brainstorming will not work as well on an individual level. There will not be the opportunity for diverse answers and additional insight from other's own personal lives. Secondly, the group involved needs to lose their inhibitions. If brainstorming participants are inhibited they might not feel comfortable making suggestions or blurting out answers for fear of embarrassment.

Many people can feel uncomfortable in a brainstorming environment, and it is important for the facilitator to give encouragement to all participants. If there is a feel of relaxation and acceptance then there will a much greater chance to hear creative ideas. Thirdly and finally, it is important that only one person to facilitate and everyone else in the group contribute equally. If there are one or two people who are dominating the conversation there will be a slanted view when looking over all the possibilities and the group might not come to an effective conclusion. My company needs to adopt the above techniques in order to quickly and properly respond to the problems we face.

Brainstorming is a great way to create, discuss and hopefully exhaust all options to solving problems. Companies that invest the time to hold properly

administered brainstorming sessions should see a solid return on their investment. The ingenuity that comes out of these meeting will not only show in the quality of the product or services being sold, but shine a positive light throughout the entire organization itself.

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