

Tips For Leading A Brainstorming Session

- 1. Location Matters**– Find a comfortable quiet room that won't be used for anything else as you brainstorm. Caffeine is a plus, as is food, comfy chairs, or anything you can think of that will help the people on your team to be playful.
- 2. Keep Each Session Short** – 5- 10 minutes for each question is perfect! The tight time frame will also keep the session fast paced and exciting.
- 3. Try Smaller Groups** – Try splitting up into smaller groups of 3-5 and brainstorm answers with each group and share your lists with the other groups.
- 4. Use Reverse Brainstorming** – Try having each person come up with a list of answers by themselves first. Then have them share their lists with the whole group. This might help break up the format and you might end up with a much more diverse list!
- 5. Be Neutral** – Consciously or subconsciously, others will cue off your lead. You want everyone in the room to feel heard, to have permission to speak their piece, and to defer judgment during the brainstorm. Pro tip: don't attach people's names to ideas.
- 6. Postpone Criticism** – Criticism is the creativity killer. Evaluating ideas too early will kill the formation of any new ideas. It's up to the facilitator to hold people to this, and to keep the meeting moving in a positive creative direction.
- 7. Make The Group Prioritize**– Generating a huge list of is fun and exciting but it can sometimes be too much. If the list is too big have them narrow it down to the most important 2-3 answers.
- 8. Make It Visual**– As the facilitator it's your job to gather and write down the ideas being generated. Use something that is BIG and Visual. Maybe a whiteboard or maybe giant wall sticky notes.
- 9. Make It Memorable** – Once you've written it down it needs to be saved and shared with the group. The easiest way it to have someone take a picture and email it to the group.
- 10. Schedule A Follow Up** – You're not going to make any decisions during a brainstorming session. It's the first step in an ongoing process. Let the brilliance of your team soak in for a few days before you bring them together to make any decisions.