

Facilitator's tools

Brainstorming

Brainstorming is a technique used to generate ideas which allow people to be creative in their approach to problem solving. During the process there are no boundaries to ideas and the objective is to create as many possible solutions as possible.

The process involves everyone in the group, generates energy and as no idea is a bad idea allows gives team members the permission to put forward ideas without fear of being criticised.

How to use Brainstorming – the process:

1. Tell the team that you will be using brainstorming during the session.
 - Establish the ground rules:-
 - Everyone's ideas are a valued contribution to the discussion
 - There are no bad ideas
 - Everyone is involved
 - Ideas can be built upon
 - Think in new and different ways
 - Keep the discussions going
 - No evaluation at idea generation stage
 - No arguing
2. Establish the topic to be discussed and allow a few minutes quiet time for people to think about possible solutions
3. Ask team members to let their ideas flow – either going round the group systematically or team members can offer suggestions ideas as they think about them.
4. Note ideas on a flip chart as they are produced without discussing.
5. When people run out of ideas allow time to think about ideas that have been listed and see if any more ideas are generated
6. Discuss the ideas which have been generated in more detail combining similar ideas and making sure each idea has been fully explored.
7. Ask team members to vote on all the ideas generated to establish which are good and which are poor.

Force field analysis (Kurt Lewin)

This is a systematic way method of looking at forces which act upon a situation and is a useful tool to help identify the pros and cons and will allow problems to be surfaced. By using force field analysis with a group it can help develop an understanding of what is helping and hindering them and can help in the process of identifying what they need to do to succeed.

How to use Force Field Analysis

1. Identify the subject for discussion
2. Help the group define the goal – this helps establish ownership of the process and outcome
3. Write the goal at the top of a flip chart and then draw a line down the centre.
4. Head on side of the page with 'Forces that help' or 'Pros' on the other side of the page write 'Forces that hinder' or 'Cons'
5. Ask group for their ideas to fill each side of the force field. Ask team members to vote on which of the barriers are immediate priorities to resolve.
6. Address priority barriers.

Gap analysis

Gap analysis is a useful tool to help a team establish their current situation and establish a future desired state. Gap analysis helps explore what is missing and what needs to be done to bridge the gap which has been identified.

How to use Gap Analysis

1. Work with the team to identify the future desired state (use any process that will help identify how the group wants to be in the future)
2. Write the detail on a sheet of flip chart paper and put on the right-hand side of a wall / large table etc.
3. Discuss with the group the present situation in terms of what has come out of the discussion about the future. E.g. Future state – the team will support each other when working to tight deadlines – Current state – people work on their individual projects and don't realise when colleagues are under pressure. Write these points on another flipchart and post this on the left hand side of the wall / large table etc.
4. Focus on the Gaps – ask team members to work in pairs to discuss (a) what are the gaps between where the present state and the desired future state (b) What are the barriers (c) What's missing?
5. Ask the pairs to share their ideas on the 'gaps' and post these on a flipchart between the two original flipcharts
6. Once the whole group reach agreement on the identified gaps divide the gaps evenly between the groups and ask them to solve the problem.
7. Reconvene the team to hear recommendations and action plans
8. Get approval from the team on identified plans and develop a means to follow-up on action plans.

SWOT analysis

What is a SWOT Analysis?

A SWOT is a tool which can help assess a team's current strengths and weaknesses and can help identify external factors which are opportunities and threats to team development and success. This is a simple system which can provide clarity into the potential within the team and the problems which may limit performance. A SWOT analysis can be conducted individually or by the team.

How to use a SWOT analysis

1. Head four sheets of flipchart paper with each of the four heading of Strengths Weaknesses, Opportunities and Threats
2. Explain to the team that as a group they are going to look at each of these areas in turn and that strengths and weaknesses are internal factors whilst opportunities and threats are external to the team
3. Once each section has been completed and consensus reached divide into four smaller groups and allocate each with one of the flip charts. Ask the smaller groups to identify how the team can improve on each of these areas.
4. Re-convene the whole team and discuss the results of the discussions.
5. Develop an action plan with the group to agree how they will take the actions forward and how they will monitor progress.

SWOT Analysis

Internal factors - Present	<p>Strengths List the positive attributes of the team. What do they do well? What advantages do you have over other teams?</p>	<p>Weaknesses List factors which are areas the team might improve. Might include – lack of expertise, lack of direction, team members not working together</p>
External factors - Future	<p>Opportunities How could the team perform better? What benefits would there be to performing in a different way? These opportunities could be external to your team</p>	<p>Threats Identify factors which are threats to team success? What could be the worst thing which could happen?</p>

Root cause analysis - The Five Whys

This is a simple way to identify the root cause of a problem and can be used in many situations including team building.

Like a child who keeps asking 'but why?' the process of the five whys is simply asking why something happens until we get an answer that seems to be the root of the problem.

How to use The Five Whys

1. On a flip chart write down the issue which seems to be causing the team a problem giving a complete description on which the team agree. Do not try to find the cause or an answer at this stage.
2. Ask **Why** the problem exists and write the answer down.
3. If the answer at stage 2 doesn't identify the cause of the problem repeat stage 2.
4. Keep repeating stage 2 & 3 until the root cause of the problem has been identified – asking **Why** five times should result in the root cause, however it may not take as many repeats of stages 2 & 3 to get to the cause.