

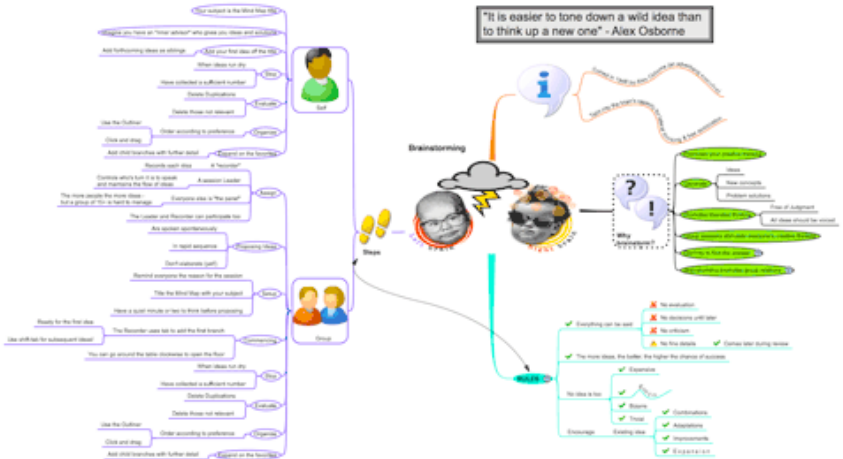


Hi Klaus,

This Mind Map (click to enlarge) not only demonstrates the use of adornments, attached graphic text, link lines and more, it has been designed to show you how to brainstorm effectively either by yourself or in a group situation. It tells you how Brainstorming works, why it is effective, what are the guidelines to follow and what to do with the results of your brainstorming session.

What is Brainstorming?

Brainstorming is a creativity technique in which ideas are generated in order to solve a problem. The main result of a brainstorm session is a solution to a problem or ideas leading in new directions. The solution can be an idea, which is a complete solution to the problem. It can be a list of ideas, leading to an approach to a subsequent solution of the problem. Or it can be a list of ideas resulting into a plan or method to find the final answer. Brainstorming was originated by Alex Osborn.



Brainstorming has many applications but it is most frequently used in:

- **New product development** - obtaining ideas for new products and making improvements to existing products
- **Advertising** - developing ideas for advertising campaigns
- **Problem solving** - issues, root causes, alternative solutions, impact analysis, evaluation
- **Process management** - finding ways of improving business and production processes
- **Project Management** - identifying client objectives, risks, deliverables, work packages, resources, roles and responsibilities, tasks, issues
- **Team building** - generates sharing and discussion of ideas while stimulating participants to think
- **Business planning** – develop and improve product ideas.

Brainstorming can be used as a supplement for:

- **Individual ideation:** by means of generating a maximum number of potentially usable ideas in a minimum of time.
- **A business conference:** stimulate creative thinking in a judicial and relatively unproductive atmosphere.
- **Creative training:** brainstorming improves the creative attitude towards solving problems and improves the creative ability in groups and individual.

Although the main purpose of brainstorming is to generate ideas, a group brainstorming session has more value in problem solving. For example:

- **Improve initiative:** During a brainstorm meeting, participants are encouraged to constantly throwing their ideas, to take initiative all the time. This initiative can last even after the session.
- **Improve creative thinking:** Participants are encouraged to look from a creative perspective to the problem and the power of association is used to create ideas.
- **Improve morale:** The participants work together as a team to find a solution to a problem and every participant is encouraged to take initiative. These two factors can improve the morale of the team and its members.
- **Overcome Writer's Block:** When you are stuck on what to write next in your essay writing, screenplay, novel writing, or trying to decide what to do for your school science fair, you can use the brainstorming techniques outlined here to start the flow of ideas.
- **Overcome Brain Injury Issues:** Using the Mind Map above you can create a template for organization and structured brainstorming of ideas which is particularly useful for people with brain injuries to become more effective and break through mental barriers.

- **Have more FUN:** Most of the participants like the interactive and creative atmosphere in which problems are solved and creativity is enhanced.

All these uses are supported by NovaMind, making it the ideal productivity software for your brainstorming activities and creative, radiant thinking needs.

Brainstorming Procedures

Brainstorming can be done either **individually** or in a **group**. In group brainstorming sessions, the participants are encouraged, and often expected, to share their ideas with one another as soon as they are generated. More complex problems or brainstorm sessions with a diversity of people are prepared by a chairman. The chairman is the leader and facilitator of the brainstorm session.

The key to brainstorming is not to interrupt the thought process. As ideas come to the mind, they are captured and stimulate the development of better ideas. A brainstorm session is thus best be conducted in a moderate size room, equipped with about a dozen chairs in the shape of a hollow square so that each participant is looking at the others in the group.

A computer running NovaMind is connected to a projector so everyone can see the ideas as they are captured. The room is free of telephones, clocks, or any other distractions.

In order to enhance creativity a brainstorm session has four basic rules:

1. Focus on quantity

This rule is a means of enhancing divergent production, aiming to facilitate problem solving through the maxim quantity breeds quality. The greater the number of ideas generated, the greater the chance of producing a radical and effective solution.

You can quickly add branches in NovaMind by using the Tab key and Shift-Tab key (Mac) or Enter key and Insert key (Windows), or by using the RapidFire mode where you can just type, and have NovaMind automatically add the branches for you.

2. Criticism is forbidden

In a group, it is often emphasized in brainstorming sessions that you should put criticism 'on hold'. When suspending judgment, you create a supportive atmosphere where participants feel free to generate unusual ideas.

3. Unusual ideas are welcome

By looking from another perspective, or by setting aside assumptions, some unusual ideas can be generated. These ideas will open new ways of working or thinking. It is easier to tame down an idea than to think up an idea.

If you get stuck, you can use the Branch Proposal System in NovaMind to point your thinking in new and unusual directions. If you haven't downloaded it yet, you can download it from our [downloads page](#).

4. Combine and improve ideas

The approach of combining and improving ideas will lead to better and more complete ideas than solely generation of new ideas and will cause a chain reaction of idea generation by using the power of association.

Homework Exercise

Set aside some dedicated time to brainstorm an issue that is at the forefront of your mind. Use the following guides to help you fully explore the issue:

- Record both what the issue is, and what it is not.
- What would be the consequences of not doing anything about the issue? What would be the consequences of the possible actions? What would happen next?
- What are the good things about the issue? The bad things? What are the interesting or unique things that are neither good or bad?
- What are all the possible solutions? If you had to think of one more solution, what is it?

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- what are all the possible solutions? if you had to think of one more solution, what is it?
- What are the significant factors in the environment of the issue that allow or cause the issue to exist?
- What are the significant outcomes that your solution needs to achieve to have resolved the issue?
- How could potential solutions be extended to make them lead to new and better ways of thinking or acting?
- How can you extend the solutions to bring benefit to more people?
- Which are the most practical solutions to implement?

What next?

Our next email will let you try some different configurations of boundary settings to achieve some fascinating and useful effects.

Gideon King, CEO
NovaMind Software
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