



Braindump – Individual Brainstorm

What

Brainstorming (group sessions) has three siblings which you should get to know: **Braindumping** (individual sessions), **Brainwriting** (a mix of individual and group sessions) and **Brainwalking** (another mix of individual and group sessions).

Should Your Team Brainstorm as a Group or as Individuals?

Best practice:

Switching between the two modes of individual and collective ideation sessions can be seamless—and highly productive. Alex Osborn's 1950s classic *Applied Imagination* gave advice that is still relevant: Creativity comes from a blend of individual and collective ideation.

It's often a good idea to do individual ideation sessions like braindumping, brainwriting and brainwalking before *and* after brainstorming group sessions. We recommend that you mix the methods: Brainstorming, Brainwriting, Brainwalking, and Braindumping.

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Why

One of the best ways to progress to more advanced levels of ideation is to start by getting everything that's currently clogging the neural pathways out in the open and freeing up some cognitive space for other synapses, connections, and mixtures to get through. David Allen, author of the world famous "*Getting Things Done*" methodology, swears by the braindump as a means to free up mental energy and allow freethinking. Holding onto your own thoughts, unfinished tasks, or unexplored ideas creates mental blockages and prevents freethinking. Furthermore, Braindump is an amazing technique to help quiet employees get a voice.

Best practice: How

- If you were the facilitator, you'll brief ideation participants upfront on the problem statement, goals and important insights from previous research and findings.
- Then ask all participants to write down their ideas as they come.
- It's important that each participant does this individually – and silently.
- Provide participants with sheets of paper, idea cards or traditional Post-it notes. Sticky notes are great, because they allow people to write their ideas down individually – one idea per note.
- Give participants between 3 and 10 minutes to get ideas they have been thinking of off their chests.
- After reaching the time limit of approximately 3-10 minutes, each participant will say a few words about his or her ideas and stick them on a board or wall. You should avoid initial discussions about notes when team members are presenting them. Ideas that come out of early braindump sessions should be shared verbally with the entire team in order to spark new streams of thinking or combinations of ideas.
- While sticking the ideas up and presenting them, the group will also group duplicates together.

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- When all team members have presented their ideas, you can select the best ideas, which you can continue to build and elaborate on in other ideation sessions. There are various methods you can use such as “Post-it Voting”, “Four Categories”, “Bingo Selection”, “Six Thinking Hats”, and “Now Wow How Matrix”.

