Most rational   **Most delightful**   **Darling**   **Long shot**

Four Categories Method

Why

At some point in your ideation sessions, you'll have reached a critical mass of ideas, and it will become unproductive to attempt to keep pushing for more. This is referred to as the 'convergent stage' where ideas are evaluated, compared, ranked, clustered and even ditched in an attempt to pull together a few *great* ideas to *act on*. Right now, the aim is spotting potential winners, or combinations of winning attributes, from a number of ideas.

What

The Four Categories method entails dividing ideas according to their relative abstractness, ranging from the most rational choice to the 'long shot'. The four categories are: the rational choice, the most likely to delight, the darling, and the long shot. This method ensures that the team covers all grounds, from the most practical to the ideas with the most potential to deliver innovative solutions.

Best practice: How

- Ideation participants decide upon one or two ideas for each of these categories: the rational choice, the most likely to delight, the darling, and the long shot.

- If you're a relatively small team you simply discuss the pros and cons of the chosen ideas.

- If you're a large team you can mix this method with Post-it Voting (also known as Dot Voting):

Post-it Voting

- Write all of the ideas which the participants have chosen on individual Post-its.

- Then you give all participants a number of votes (around three to four should do) to choose and write down their personal favourite ideas.

- Participants vote by using stickers or simply using a marker to make a dot on the ideas they like. This process allows every member to have an equal say in the shortlisted ideas.

- You can also use variations in colour in order to let participants vote on which ideas they like the most or which they dislike the most.