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Facilitation Focus

PROVIDING A RANGE OF TIPS, IDEAS AND STRATEGIES
FOR YOU TO USE OR PASS ON TO YOUR CLIENTS

Helping you achieve your business goals in 2019

*A company is only as good
as its people, their ability to
deliver, and the promises
they keep.*



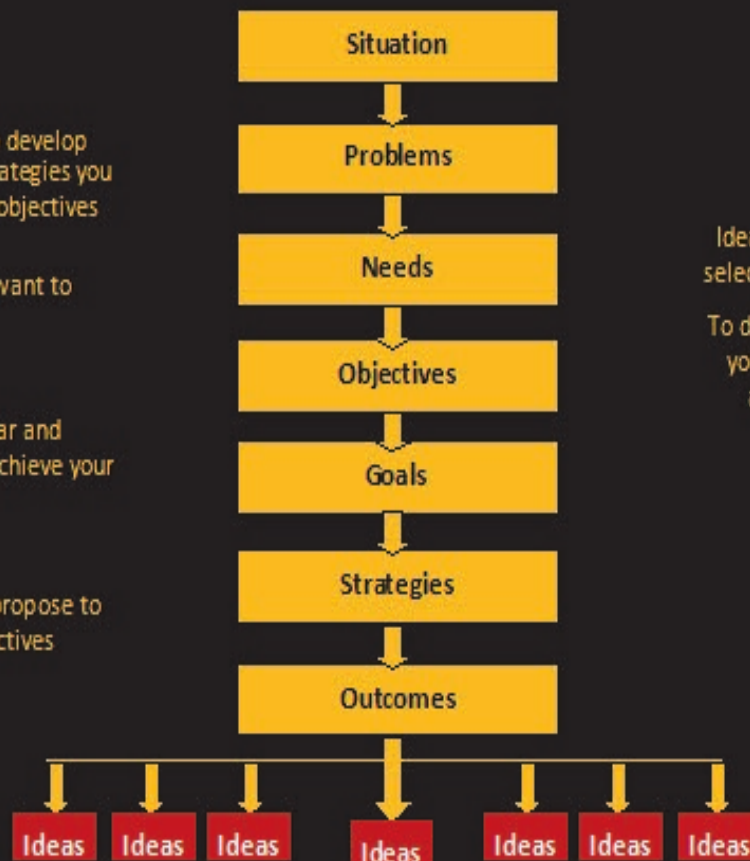
Techniques For Small Business to Develop Solutions Brainstorming Session: Flow of Ideas & Suggestions

The ideas you want to develop
should flow from the strategies you
identify to achieve the objectives

Goals are what you want to
achieve.

Objectives are a clear and
measurable process to achieve your
goals

Strategy is how you propose to
achieve the objectives



Ideas can be random, non-
selective and free-wheeling.
To develop ideas efficiently,
you need a strategy that
addresses identified
problems

Adapted from: "101 Ways to Generate Great Ideas" RV Foster



Brainstorming

Bringing Back Old Techniques For New Ideas



Although it doesn't appear to be used that much these days, a very dynamic and effective group creativity technique is Brainstorming - which is not much different to Mind Mapping! Although it was once widely practiced, only seldom is it utilised correctly for optimum benefit.

Even if you currently use brainstorming, review these rules to check your technique.

Preparation: Prior to the meeting, give each participant an overview of the subject to be brainstormed: The Problem Statement, background information etc. Send each participant a set of brainstorming rules.

Brainstorming Rules: The ideal group size is between 5 and 12 people. Ideally all are familiar with the procedure. A facilitator will lead the group, and a video should be taken of the process, which will record the ideas expressed. The entire group should participate in the idea-generating process.

Part One

Before working on the "real" situation, it is a good idea to begin with a warm-up exercise (*preferably something imaginative to help relax the group*). When you are ready to "get to work" the facilitator should state the problem and invite initial input.

The facilitator should:

1. Keep the atmosphere relaxed, fun and free-wheeling;
2. Encourage everyone to participate either with original



ideas or 'piggy back' on other people's input;

3. Focus initially on quantity, not quality of ideas. Some groups set a numerical goal, say 25 to 50 ideas and try to reach these ideas in the allotted time;
4. Urge participants to say anything that occurs to them, no matter how wild or 'far-fetched' those ideas may seem;
5. Allow around 20 - 25 minutes for the idea generation phase. If the group has been too conservative during this phase, the facilitator should encourage more lateral thinking by saying something like: "What are the wildest, most outrageous ideas we can come up with?" (Remember, you may find a brilliant idea that could be "teased" to fit reality;)
6. During the idea generation phase, no one should be allowed to judge, criticise or quell any of the ideas generated.
7. The facilitator should stay alert for non-productive comments such as, "We tried that last year" or "That would cost too much", "I don't think that would work", etc; and counter with, "This isn't the time for evaluation yet".

Break:

Before you begin part two of your brainstorming session, the group should be thanked for their participation in the idea generation phase.

Then the group needs to put closure to phase one and take a break before going on.

One creative twist that can be effective is to use two groups to look at the ideas generated, and then these two groups evaluate the ideas. Then switch lists so that both groups offer evaluation of all of the ideas.

Part Two:

The entire group should then reassemble to evaluate the input. As this happens, be sure that each member is familiar with the criteria essential for the evaluation.

For instance, if price, human resources, or timing is important, let everyone know.

Look at all the ideas and suggestions that have been generated for the value that they may contain, both as they have been originally stated and if they need to be altered at all.

See if you can scale down an outrageous idea to one which has practical dimensions.

Follow Up:

Regardless of the results of the session, all team members should be thanked for participating. (A short note may be appropriate).

If ideas were suggested that the group decides not to implement, your feedback should be in the form of a very positive response.

If a solution that came from the session is accepted, the entire group must receive full credit..

Brainstorming can be dynamic and has the added benefit of people working together to achieve a common goal.

TRY IT! ☒

What is Mind Mapping?

And How it Can Benefit You and Your Business

From helping you plan a major (or minor) project and outlining complex documents, to envisioning future scenarios and serving as a powerful information “dashboard,” mind maps can help you be more productive, creative and effective. Some of the ways that Mind Mapping is of huge benefit to business are:

- Conduct a SWOT analysis.
- Plan and manage a project.
- Capture ideas from a group meeting.
- Maintain an idea database.
- Creative problem solving.
- Formulate a plan for the launch of a new business or for an acquisition.
- Make better-informed business decisions.
- Business process improvement.
- Analyze and improve your company's business model.
- Brainstorm potential partnering opportunities.

Succinctly, a Mind Map is a graphical way to represent ideas and concepts. It is a visual thinking tool that helps structure information, which in turn helps you to better analyse, comprehend, recall and generate new ideas. Mind mapping is an extraordinary creative and logical means of making notes that literally “maps out” your ideas.

It is a highly effective way of formulating ideas and information by starting off in a graphic, but sometimes cryptic form, and developing your ideas from this

starting point.

One simple way to understand a Mind Map is by comparing it to a map of a city. *“The city centre represents the main idea; the main roads leading from the centre represent the key thoughts in your thinking process; the secondary roads or branches represent your secondary thoughts, and so on. Special images or shapes can represent landmarks of interest or particularly relevant ideas.”*

**www.mindmapping.co*

Using A Mind Map

Most young children use mind-mapping techniques easily as they naturally progress from labelling and describing their pictures. The older we are the more reliant we are on our much-used note-taking methods. The time and practice to gain confidence in mind-mapping are well worth the effort.

Many students already use some mind map techniques such as highlighting, numbered points and summary cards. These skills can be extended into more effective techniques. People may go through a stage of using both notes and mind maps until they become so successful with mind maps that they feel confident to rely on them alone.

A good idea is to start by brainstorming new topics, then doing mind map plans for assignments, then moving on to mind map revision summaries. Later, mind maps can be used to record lectures and to summarise readings.

Many businesses use mind-mapping

and brainstorming as an excellent method to stimulate free thinking. Group decisions can be made about the branch headings, keywords, and other points, but individuals should prepare their own mind maps to suit their own styles.

When to Use Mind Mapping:

Notes: Whenever information is being taken in or shared, mind mapping helps to organise it into a form that is easily assimilated by the brain and easily remembered.

Recall: Whenever information is being retrieved from memory, mind maps allows for ideas to be quickly noted as they occur, in an organised manner. There is no need to form sentences and write them down in full. They serve as quick and efficient means of review and so, keep recall at a high level.

Creativity: Whenever you want to encourage creativity, mind maps liberate the mind from linear thinking, allowing new ideas to flow more rapidly.

Problem Solving: Whenever you are confronted with a problem - professional or personal - mind maps help you see all the issues and how they relate to each other.

Planning: Whenever you are planning something, mind maps help you to get all the relevant information together in the one place, and organise it easily.

Presentation: Whenever I am speaking or presenting, I prepare a mind map on the topic and the flow. This really helps me to organise the ideas coherently.



Tackling the Most Common Success Roadblock for Startups



The chances of any startup failing are perilously high. Research shows that 60% of new businesses will disappear within the first three years and 90% within the first ten.

This research further finds lack of managerial experience is the most dangerous warning sign your startup might be doomed. Most companies are failing for reasons that are preventable.

One of the biggest yet least talked about challenges startups face is **accountability**.

It has been discovered that successful startups take a four-pronged approach to establishing a new business: process, culture, people, and accountability.

Unfortunately, accountability is the one aspect most businesses never talk about.

It falls by the wayside, but might be the most important aspect of turning your startup from a great idea into a successful company.

Tom O'Toole, the Beechworth Baker says 'I see the greatest problem in my business every time I look in the mirror.'

Unfortunately, for most business owners the problem is the same.

Mostly enthusiastic entrepreneurs develop projections, and sometimes it's impossible to tell how an untested innovation is going to fare. This problem in turn drives the system and leads to a problem called 'success theater.'

In success theater, entrepreneurs build a business model around unknown and highly unpredictable idea to make it seem like a great

idea. They will optimistically project growth while underestimating the costs, making the project look appealing to investors and financiers.

This promise can blow up in entrepreneurs' faces when their uncertain projections don't exactly pan out in investors or bank's favor.

How to fix the problem:

It's time to address your startup's accountability problem head-on. Here are a few fixes to consider:

Innovation accounting

It's time to use a different set of metrics to measure progress in new or unstable industries.

The old KPI's are tailored for well-established industries, so it doesn't make much sense to apply them to fledgling startups. Instead, find new metrics you can use to show stakeholders value without resorting to success theatre.

Build self-organized teams

It's important to build cross-functional teams that can pivot when strategies aren't working.

Develop a flat and team-based structure which helps to be more agile as a whole. With a flatter organization small, independent, and cross-functional teams can innovate more quickly.

It also makes it OK to fail since most

mistakes are much less expensive in this model.

Don't be afraid of innovation

By preserving the status quo we think we're making the safe choice, and the next thing you know you're out of work. Remember if you're not innovating, you are probably dying.

Rupert Murdoch was quoted as saying 'It's no longer the big beating the small, it's the fast beating the slow.' Our biggest advantage in the SME sector is that we are nimble and can change direction and markets virtually overnight.

This is why I love it.

SME's can come up with a new strategy and begin implementation today, whereas a corporate will take a proposal to a board meeting who will appoint a working party to come up with a White Paper for consideration.

By then the SME has had a chance to grab the new market position and exploit it. *How cool is that for us in small business?*

Companies from Blackberry to Kodak thought they were safe by sticking to the road most traveled, but this isn't the way to build an innovative company that can change with the times.

Understanding the accountability problem is the first step to fixing it for entrepreneurs. It's time to leave the success theater behind, and instead rethink the way you measure success.





Australasian Institute of
Business and Enterprise Facilitators

WHO ARE BUSINESS OR ENTERPRISE FACILITATORS?
Virtually any professional, qualified person or organisation involved in assisting entrepreneurs, organisations, or communities improve their Skills; Knowledge; Business; Staff; and/or Life.

Is Your Business Advisor Qualified, Accredited, Experienced and Officially Recognised as an Expert in their Field?



“Business Facilitation and Coaching has copped its fair share of flak in recent years, primarily because the industry has a reputation for attracting spruikers and touts.”

Denise McNabb Sydney Morning Herald

- Accountant
- Advisor
- Bookkeeper
- Coach
- Commercial Property Advisor
- Consultant
- Counsellor
- Dispute Resolution
- Financial Advisor
- H. R. Professional
- Industrial Psychologist
- Insurance Advisor
- Investment Advisor
- IT Consultant
- Lawyer
- Mentor
- Trainer
- Web Designer
- WHS Specialist

..... These are just a few of the qualified professionals and industries who, either directly or indirectly provide advice, facilitation and support to Australian Small and Medium business, organisations and communities.

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The business advice industry in Australia is self-regulated, and virtually anyone can call themselves a business or enterprise facilitator, advisor, coach, mentor or consultant.

The Australasian Institute of Business and Enterprise Facilitators (AIBEF) is the Peak Body for Business and Enterprise Facilitation and Facilitators in Australia and New Zealand, and was founded in 1997 as a result of the recommendations of the National Industry Task Force on Leadership and Management Skills. In their report, entitled **Enterprising Nation**, the taskforce recommended that: “.... a comprehensive accreditation process be established for small business trainers, educators, counsellors, mentors and advisers so as to upgrade the quality of small business advice.”

- All AIBEF members have **formally recognised credentials** (accreditation) that recognise their professional reputation and credibility as suitably accredited, skilled and ethical business and enterprise facilitator practitioners.
- AIBEF members are recognised through the use of the respected AIBEF **post-nominals** that convey member status as a professional to be trusted – someone to build a relationship with.
- AIBEF **membership includes many of the best respected enterprise facilitator professionals** involved with business and enterprise facilitation and related support services.
- The AIBEF represents the business and enterprise facilitator profession at **all levels of enterprise** – including private commercial businesses; not-for-profit organisations; government corporate entities and departments of state.

Look for the AIBEF Accreditation with your Advisor, and you know that you have an experienced Professional who is a qualified and recognised expert in their industry.

Welcome to “Facilitation Focus”

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In their report, entitled *Enterprising Nation*, the taskforce recommended that: “.... a comprehensive accreditation process be established for small business trainers, educators, counsellors, mentors and advisers so as to upgrade the quality of small business advice.”

It's a fact that, at the moment, the business advice industry in Australia is self-regulated, and virtually anyone can call themselves a business or enterprise facilitator, advisor, coach, mentor, trainer or consultant.

Check out Google for instance; there must be a dozen (or more) sites on “*How To Start Your Own Business Consulting Venture*”.

The AIBEF is the Peak Body for Business Mentors, Coaches and Trainers, and we, the AIBEF Committee, hope to continue the association's great work to further promote the professionalism and quality of our members, and to endeavour to act as a respected voice and advocate for the wider community.

The AIBEF represents a profession that is proud of its independence and confident of the service it provides, committed to continual improvement in the skills and knowledge of our members and Business and Enterprise Facilitators in general, who ably assist in the professional guidance and support of business, enterprise and community development.



Welcome to our Newsletter

Facilitation Focus is an opportunity for Business Facilitators, Coaches, Mentors, Trainers and Consultants to ask questions, offer answers, and become part of a group where we can all join in peer-to-peer discussions and conversations about challenges, experiences and outcomes. ***It is also worth noting that ‘Focus’ can be included in your Continuing Professional Development (CPD)***

Facilitation Focus is a publication for a rapidly changing world.

Almost daily, SME's are facing constant changes, and it is vital that the Business and Enterprise Facilitator is current with their expert advice and guidance.

Facilitation Focus has as its main aim to access to a professional network of peers through the AIBEF, and by gaining more insight into business and industry best practices, as well as increasing the focus on the important aspects of their own business, an AIBEF Focus member can accomplish amazing results.



Something To Say?

Letters and Article contributions from readers are most welcome

Please send your letters to info@aibef.org.au



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Virtually any professional, qualified person or organisation involved in assisting entrepreneurs, organisations, or communities to improve their Skills; Knowledge; Business; Staff; and/or Life.

The role of a Business and Enterprise Facilitator is to promote local economic growth by providing support to local entrepreneurs, groups or entire communities wishing to start or expand a small business enterprise or to assist to develop a concept where the community will benefit

The concept of Business and Enterprise Facilitation is a model of development that supports the creation of wealth from within a community by nurturing the resourcefulness of its people.

The Australasian Institute of Business and Enterprise Facilitators is an international not-for-profit institution that works with entrepreneurs, small groups and / or communities to establish sustainable, grassroots enterprise projects.

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