

## Team Brainstorming

WHY? To solve problems by creatively identifying solutions.

HOW? It could work a number of ways, and how you go about it may very well depend on the amount of team time available.

As a general template, I would break it down this way:

- 1) A week in advance of a brainstorming meeting, request that members of the team send in their issues and concerns, privately to you (the project manager / facilitator).
- 2) Organize the issues submitted. First, separate out the issues that need to be handled privately, and begin working them privately. Second, organize the other (public) issues by grouping similar items. Look for additional ways to organize the issues (project phase? functional area?).
- 3) Present the organized issues list at the team meeting, and thank the team for submitting them.
- 4) Next, do the brainstorming:
  - + Remind team of the goal and rules of brainstorming.
  - + Announce the time available for the exercise.
  - + Facilitate the session, being sure to cover all the issues and engage all the participants.
  - + Summarize next steps.
- 5) After the meeting, summarize the ideas (countermeasures) in some meeting notes to feed back to the team. Depending on the breadth and depth we're talking about, a second team meeting might be desired to prioritize the actions and get team commitment to achieve them. Or you may want to simply do this yourself, off-line, and review it at the next team meeting -- taking minor comments, making minor changes in real time, and gathering commitments to go forward with the action steps.
- 6) Any major actions/tasks and resource requirements coming out of this whole exercise should be added to the project schedule, and shared with project sponsors.
- 7) After some time, like a month or two, it may be healthy for the team to revisit the action list from the brainstorming, and share their successes or roadblocks in making positive change happen. This might lead to revisions in the action plan or escalation to higher management to remove roadblocks.

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