Results helper

SÜPERB Meetings™ Programme

|  |  |
| --- | --- |
| My name |  |
| Date |  |
| My manager |  |

IVT V1.0

My measurable results

# Claire

| My measurable success results | | | | |
| --- | --- | --- | --- | --- |
| It’s now the | | 30th | of | May |
| Because of my SÜPERB Meetings™ actions I am now seeing: | | | | |
| 1 | My meetings finish on time | | | |
| 2 | A lot more engagement from my participants | | | |
| 3 | More informed decisions | | | |
| What I am saying to myself is: | | | | |
| 1 | I’m so glad I stuck with this programme even when it was tough | | | |
| 2 | I’m using my meetings’ skills successfully in other parts of my work | | | |
| What I am hearing others around me say is: | | | | |
| 1 | I’m hearing great things about your meetings | | | |
| 2 | Your meetings are being talked about by the senior team | | | |
| What I’m feeling now is: | | | | |
| 1 | Super confident | | | |
| 2 | Glad I am making a better difference | | | |
| 3 | Excited about the future | | | |

SÜPERB Meetings™ summary

|  |  |  |
| --- | --- | --- |
| S | Set everyone up for success | 1. Clarify everyone’s expectations and the forum’s “big purpose” 2. Consider having a “jargon buster” 3. Ensure rules and roles are understood by all 4. No excuses - have a quality agenda 5. Brief your minute taker 6. Make sure every participant has a role at every meeting 7. Lobby people beforehand as necessary |
| Ü | Über starts | 1. Start on time regardless 2. Make eye contact with everyone within seconds 3. Make sure all participants speak within the first two minutes 4. Walk through the agenda, highlighting each item’s needs and priority 5. Remind participants of one important rule and role at every meeting |
| P | Purposeful through the agenda | 1. Position each item constructively 2. Remind people of each agenda item’s active verb; “decide”, “share”, etc. 3. Use your rules and roles to manage people and time 4. Use the agenda timings as a guide not a straight-jacket 5. Vary your approach to each agenda item 6. Use simple facilitation tools and techniques |
| E | End as well as you started | 1. Have actions confirmed before the meeting finishes 2. Celebrate success and feedback factually on what could be better 3. Give a pointer to the next meeting such as its main agenda item 4. After the meeting - pick up on any participant behavioural issues 5. Arrange minutes, in an appropriate format, within 48 hours |
| R | Review process and performance | 1. As chair, review your personal performance and have development actions 2. Encourage participants to review their performance and contribution 3. Periodically use some agenda time to review process and outcomes |
| B | Beware staleness | 1. Have variety in your meetings for freshness as well as rituals for stability 2. Actively expand your library of facilitation tools and techniques 3. Experiment with different meeting approaches to help engagement |

Do we need a meeting?

Are you looking to collaborate?

Yes

No



Are you lonely?

Send an email.

Get back to work Jerry.

Yes

Yeah…

No

No

Do you have a company update to share?

Do you have new info about the project?

Yes

Yes

No

No

Can it be summarized in an email?



Have that meeting!

Do you have a clear agenda?

Write one.

Is it related to your job?

Have you invited relevant people to attend?

Purge your invite list and start again.

Yes

Yes

Nope!

No



End

<https://www.fundera.com/blog/does-this-need-a-meeting>

Meeting purpose

|  |  |
| --- | --- |
| If you don’t know where you are going any road will take you there.  George Harrison  Musician | Harrison, George - Any Road - Amazon.com Music |

It’s good practice to always have your meeting purpose ‘front and centre’ in your agenda. It:

1. Confirms to participants that should attend
2. Keeps you and the participants focused
3. Gives you a way to assess your success

## Helper

It’s easy when you start with. “The purpose of this meeting is to . . .”

## Examples

|  |  |
| --- | --- |
| Situation | Meeting purpose |
| One-off problem-solving meeting | The purpose of this meeting is to confirm the precise problem with stationery orders, generate options to solve it, make a decision and action plan immediate next steps including our success criteria. |
| Regular voluntary sports committee | The purpose of this meeting is to review club finance, facilities use and share updates on each of our teams. |
| Weekly team meeting | The purpose of this meeting is to update everyone on our last week’s results, share company updates and discuss the October staffing plan. |
| Regular client meeting | The purpose of this meeting is to review deliverables agreed last month and plan the coming month’s actions. |
| Special event planning meeting | The purpose of this meeting is to produce a resourced action plan for the company open day on Saturday 6 June. |
| Quarterly marketing meeting | The purpose of this meeting is to analyse the website and social media data for the last quarter and action plan the next. |
| Team managers annual staff appraisal results | The purpose of this meeting is to calibrate staff appraisal ratings across all teams before proposing our recommendations to senior management. |

Jargon buster

|  |  |
| --- | --- |
| I was in a forum for six months before I know what was going on. So many TLAs and insider language but I didn’t want to seem stupid and ask.  1,000s of meeting participants | Harrison, George - Any Road - Amazon.com Music |

See what we did there? TLA stands for Three Letter Acronyms. Insider language is buzzwords and jargon particular the group sector or organisation.

The example here is simply to show how easy they are to do.

Make it a participant’s role to make one, publish it and keep it updated.

## Jargon buster example

|  |  |
| --- | --- |
| Term | Explanation |
| AOCB | Any other competent business |
| CPD | Continuing Professional development |
| En Bloc | All together |
| etc | Used at the end of a list to indicate that further, similar items are included |
| Ex gratia | (of payment) given as a favour or from a sense of moral obligation rather than because of any legal requirement. |
| Leverage | How a situation or environment can be manipulated or controlled. Leverage should remain a noun, as in “to apply leverage,” not as a pseudo-verb, as in “we are leveraging our assets.” |
| Low hanging fruit | The most easily achieved of a set of tasks, measures goals, etc |
| Sunk cost | Money already spent which can’t be recovered |
| TLA | Three letter acronyms |

Meeting roles

# Chair

The chair provides a focal point to manage the meeting processes, time and resources – including participants. Chairing a meeting consists of three main areas:

1. Planning and preparation
2. Control and direction
3. Agreement of the record.

## Planning and preparation

1. Decide on the meeting purpose, what needs to be achieved?
2. Consult the participants and minute taker then decide the agenda. The chair has the final decision.
3. Pick attendees who can make decisions, have the information, background.
4. Appoint a skilled minute taker. Or rotate the role.
5. Consider a pre-meeting with the minute taker to:
   1. Decide how you will organise the meeting, item by item.
   2. Decide on a logical flow and whether each item is a discussion, report, review or decision. Decide how much time you need/can allow for each item.
   3. Decide on the type of record needed: verbatim, summary or action point minutes
   4. Clarify why any proposed visitors, who they are, their contribution and when they’ll attend
   5. Agree to summarise after each item, especially decisions and actions agreed. (This makes sure the participants and the minute taker are clear about what happened at the meeting.) Establish how the minute taker will ask for a summary or clarification during the meeting.
   6. Decide on times for refreshment and comfort breaks. Ensure the minute taker gets a break too and doesn’t get asked to serve refreshments or take on administrative tasks during breaks
   7. Discuss any jargon and technical language or points so the minute taker understands the meeting and guide them on how to develop their knowledge of the topics discussed.
6. Ensure the minute taker issues all attendees with agenda, minutes and papers in plenty of time for them to prepare for the meeting.
7. Prepare your own contribution, including an introduction to the meeting.
8. Make sure your minute taker has made appropriate arrangements at the venue. Such as drinks, log-ins, parking spaces and so on.

## Control and direction of the meeting

1. Start on time and manage the time throughout the meeting.
2. Introduce the minute taker and participants.
3. Introduce the meeting, its purpose and objectives.
4. Approve and sign the previous minutes.
5. Introduce each item, its objective and how you’ll manage it (the process).
6. Manage any discussions using techniques such as brainstorming before discussing pros and cons and coming to conclusion.
7. Invite contributions, encourage the shy and control the chatty. Keep contributions on track
   1. Behave assertively
   2. Listen actively
   3. Carefully direct the wafflers and irrelevancies.
8. Summarise after each item so everyone’s clear about what happened.
9. Guide the meeting rather than impose your own opinions.
10. Set ground rules for managing a lack of consensus or disagreement or disagreeable behaviour.
11. Close the meeting and thank everyone.

## Agreement of the record

1. Check the draft copy of the minutes and return to the minute taker.
2. Chase actions or agree with minute taker who will do what.
3. Start the process all over again!

# Participant

## Prepare

* Understand the purpose
* Prepare your own involvement
* Anticipate other solutions

## Be punctual

* Arrive on time
* Bring all necessary documentation
* Support keeping meeting to time

## Contribute

* Best thinking and experience
* Briefly to the point
* At the appropriate time

## Speak

* In a friendly and open manner
* In an unbiased, non-judgemental way
* Without interrupting or talking over others

## Listen

* To the whole discussion
* Respect other people's ideas
* Allow others time to speak, write down key points
* Ask them to summarise if necessary

## Accept

* The chair's discipline
* The democratic decision
* Any special duties or assignments allocated

# Minute taker

The following are for more formal meetings. The point, regardless of meeting type, is that you as chair and the minute taker are a team. You should work together as one.

1. Let participants know the date, time and place of the meeting.
2. Send the agenda, a brief covering their responsibilities on specific items on the agenda and any support materials for discussion.
3. Prepare charts, plans, graphs, diagrams or other visual aids which may be needed.
4. Make necessary administrative arrangements:
   1. Book a room. Or on line conferenceing invites
   2. Ensure attendees know the venue and have a map if necessary
   3. Arrange a seating plan, place cards
   4. Ensure that spare paper and pens are available
   5. Arrange equipment for visual aids
   6. Arrange refreshments, meals, accommodation and transport
   7. For large meetings prepare a form so attendees may complete their name, designation and organisation or department.
5. Brief the chair on all items on the agenda if necessary.
6. Prepare a timetable for the agenda.
7. Record the minutes.
8. Clarify during the meeting if unsure.
9. Write up draft minutes with chair (a good tip is within 48 hours for optimum recall).
10. Distribute minutes.
11. Chase actions if you have agreed with the chair you will do this.
12. File and keep safe minutes, agendas and papers.

Participant charter (Example)

# As participants we commit to:

## Prepare

* Understand each meeting’s purpose
* Organise for our own involvement
* Anticipate other solutions to things

## Are punctual

* Arrive in good time ready to start (including setting up our tech)
* Bring all necessary documentation
* Support keeping the meeting to time

## Contribute

* Our best thinking and experiences
* Briefly and to the point
* At the appropriate time

## Speak

* In a friendly and open manner
* In an unbiased, non-judgemental way
* Without interrupting or talking over others

## Listen

* To the whole discussion
* Respect other people's ideas
* Allow others time to speak, write down key points especially our actions
* Ask people to summarise if necessary

## Accept

* The chair's discipline that’s been agreed with us
* The decision arrived at using a communicated process
* Any special duties or assignments to help the group’s success

Minute taking examples

# Table plan notes

For simple one item meetings:

**Night Out**

**Planning**

**Me**

**Avail Budget**

**02/04**

**Arthur Millar**

**Themes**

**Costs**

**28/03**

**Jean Hay**

**Menues**

**Venues**

**03/03**

**Alex Jones**

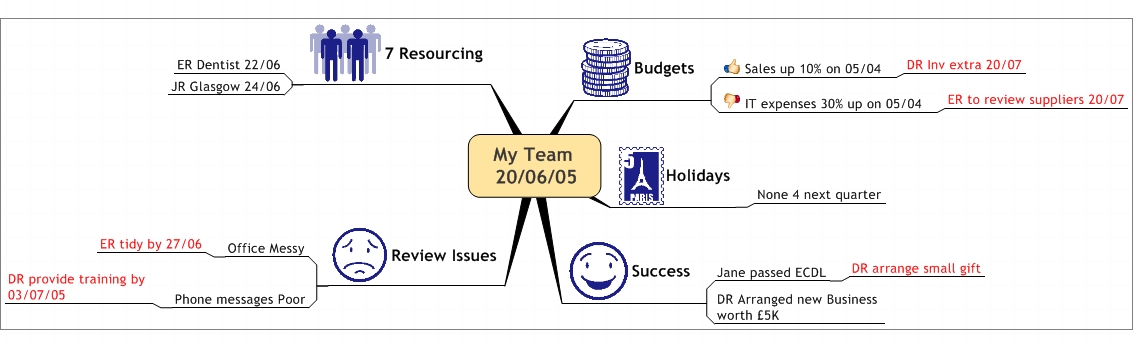
**Chair**

**Get dates**

**28/2**

# Mind map

For different meetings types though needs practice:



# Minute book

The most common way to professionally capture notes. Notice the minute taker’s personal shorthand like clr for colour and chge for change.

|  |  |  |
| --- | --- | --- |
| Who | Item | Action/By When |
| DR  EM  DR | **Case study graphic**  Comments rec’d on graphic V3  Suggested chge to blue bkgrd  Too tough for vis impaired | AB arrange for 1,000 clr A3 prints 4 a 12 Dec delivery |

# Actions list

| Who | What | By When |
| --- | --- | --- |
| AB | Delivery 1,000 colour A3 prints | 12 December 2020 |
| DR | Speak with EM about 3 more parking spaces | 14 December 2020 |
| KC | Send off training invoice for £1,500 plus VAT | 19 December 2020 |
| JR | Update all Outlook appointment category colours so that they are the same for everyone. | 30 December 2020 |

## Download

You have a simple actions list spreadsheet in the website additional materials area.

Lobbying Note

Questions to help you.

## General lobbying

|  |  |
| --- | --- |
| Agenda item |  |
| Why do I need lobbying for this meeting/this agenda item? |  |
| Who do I need to lobby? |  |
| What exactly do I need from them? |  |
| My actions |  |
| Knowing them the way I do, what’s my best approach |  |
| How will I behave in the meeting with them |  |

## Lobby to get support

|  |  |
| --- | --- |
| Agenda item |  |
| Key influencer |  |
| Position relating to the item?  (For, against, neutral) |  |
| Where I need him/her to be?  (For, against, neutral) |  |
| Preferences and work styles  (such as DiSC) |  |
| My approach |  |
| Lobbying beforehand |  |
| My behaviour during the meeting |  |

End

Weekly Meeting - Agenda

**Friday 11 October**

**9.30am to 11.30am - Meeting Room C**

**ACME Ltd, Admin Team (eight people)**

Host: Stan Doffish, Team Leader, 01441 222 5555. Minute taker: Diana Phirst

|  |  |
| --- | --- |
| Meeting Objectives: | To update everyone on the business, celebrate our successes, make decisions on the intranet and plan our resourcing for November. |

|  |  |  |
| --- | --- | --- |
| **Agenda Item** | **Lead Person** | **Time** |
| **Welcome and Introductory Remarks**   * Any last minute vital items * Volunteers to brief absentees * Update on last week’s actions | Stan Doffish | 9.30 |
| **Business Update**   * Update on “The ABC Account” over the 3-months * See attached ABC Account Summary Report * Discussion on impact on our team | Ken Niving | 9.40 |
| **Recent Successes**   * Sharing feedback on excellent service delivery and examples of ‘think smart’ | Duncan Disorderleigh | 10.00 |
| **Company Intranet**   * Decide on our team’s top three suggestions to improve IT so that Duncan can report them to the IT Director | Duncan Disorderleigh | 10.10 |
| **November Resourcing**   * Presentation of November team staffing plans * Bring your Schedules/Diaries | Enid Zazlap | 10.55 |
| **Ray Ovhope**   * Introduction of Ray | Bjorn Dajoak | 11.05 |
| **Summary**   * Confirmation of meeting actions | Alice Tikband | 11.10 |
| **Meeting Process Review**   * What did we do well? * What would make it better next time? | Will Ting | 11.13 |
| **Meeting Close** | Stan Doffish | 11.30 |

Preparations: Read ABC Account Summary Report

Next meeting: Friday 18 October: Meeting Room B 9.30am

Host: Ken Niving Minute taker: Enid Zazlap

20 Meeting Ice-breakers

Ideas for helping your participants make the transition from what’s on their mind to your agenda:

1. ‘One thing on your mind as you were coming here’?
2. If you had supreme power for the day and could pass any law what would it be?
3. A quotation or saying that means a lot to you?
4. What’s a random fact you remember?
5. Ideal guest you would have for dinner (alive, dead, real, fictional, etc.)?
6. If you received a windfall of £50,000, what would you spend it on?
7. You are to decide on a new national day (like national pancake day). What would you call it?
8. Who would play you in the movie of your life?
9. Do you believe in “Luck” and if so why?
10. How many tennis balls could we fit in this room?1
11. Favourite movie of all time?
12. A small that reminds you of good times as a child?
13. A talent that you’d love to have?
14. Most recent big learning you had or CPD activity undertaken?
15. The last time you had a good belly laugh?
16. Your nickname at school (or something else about school days)?
17. Holiday destination still on your to do list?
18. What is your signature dish as cook?
19. A joke that you always remember (and you can share)?
20. Connect to something topical in the news?

Note 1: You could use this if your meeting was going to ask people to think logically

You can get rough figure by:

Example:

Multiplying together the room’s length (3 metres), width (3 metres) and height (2 metres)

Then dividing it by the size (volume) of a tennis ball. A round tennis ball is 6.7cm wide. It’s rough volume is therefore 6.7 x 6.7 x6.7cm. (I know it’s a ball not a cube). In metres it’s 0.0003 m3

So, 18 divided by 0.0003

Gives 60,000

Question types

Improve participation with varied questions

### Opening question: Point the people in the right direction

* Thought provoking, specific and start with how, when, where, what or who to avoid a ‘yes’ or ‘no’ reply.

Example

“What are the main things we need to get right when choosing a Christmas night out venue?”

### Overhead question: Engage the whole group

* Not embarrassing anyone by asking them questions when they are not ready or not able to answer

Example

“What specifically did you all learn from last year’s event that we should consider?”

### Direct question: to someone specific

* To bring in a person with special knowledge, quieter people

Example

“Debbie, what should we be considering from a production point of view?”

### Re-directed question: to bring in someone else

* Avoids moving back and forth between certain people.

Example

“I’m going to bring in Craig here. How might you respond to that challenge posed by Martha?”

### Relay question: passing it back to the whole group

* Avoids the meeting leader answering all questions.

Example

“This is one for the whole group. What’s your response to what you have just heard there?”

### Reverse question: Have the person answer it themselves

* Encourages them to think again.

Example

“Alex. I’m going to come back to you on that one. If you were to decide, what would you do to address that challenge?”

# Safe meeting tools

|  |  |
| --- | --- |
| No matter how many mistakes you make or how slow you progress, you’re still way ahead of everyone wo isn’t trying.  Tony Robbins  Business coach | Tony Robbins - Wikipedia |

All a SÜPERB Meetings™ hero needs to do is to decide to make use of simple tools and techniques to help progress an agenda item.

With a flipchart or A3 paper you can have groups explore a topic, proposal or idea with:

* Pros and cons
* Advantages and disadvantages
* PMI (see separate note)
* SWOT (Strengths, Weaknesses, Opportunities and Threats)
* PEST (Political Economic Sociological Technological)
* PESTLE (PEST plus Legal and Environmental)

On the next pages are other tools to help your participants think and explore a topic. After that there are two decision making tools

Meeting tools starter pack

# PMI

|  |  |
| --- | --- |
| Creativity involves breaking out of established patterns in order to look at things in a different way  Edward deBono  Physician | Image result for edward debono |

## What

The PMI technique helps improve your thinking. It helps keep you out of the intelligence trap.

The intelligence trap is when you get trapped in one point of view. You make your mind up based on your first opinion. Once you form your initial opinion, you use your thinking to support your position, rather than to explore the subject to broaden your thinking.

It’s easy to use in meetings. Creator Edward De Bono asks you to find an issue’s Plus points, Minus points and Interesting points before you form an opinion. The result is a more balanced decision.

De Bono’s counsel

“Many highly intelligent people are caught in the intelligence trap: they take a position on a subject and then they use their thinking skill solely to support that position. The more able they are to support the position, the less do they see any need actually to explore the subject: so they become trapped into one point of view.

The PMI formula forces a scan. Once a perception has been broadened in this way, the thinker cannot unthink what is now in front of them.”

## Summary of steps

Here is a summary of the steps to use the PMI Technique:

* Step 1. Consider the plus points of the situation
* Step 2. Consider the minus points of the situation
* Step 3. Consider the interesting points of the situation
* Step 4. Make your decision.

## Step 1. Consider the plus points

Simply go through all of the positive things you can think of. Don’t critique yourself along the way, simply dump out all the positive points that you can think of.

## Step 2. Consider the minus points

Now go through all of the negative things you can think of. Again, don’t critique yourself. Simply dump out all the negative points you can think of.

## Step 3. Consider the interesting points

And now go through all the interesting points that you can think of. Rather than positive or negative, they are simply points of interest that you should direct your attention to.

## Step 4. Make your decision

Now you are ready to make your decision. You can now choose more effectively because you’ve scanned and organised three important pieces of information:

1. The plusses
2. The minuses
3. And the interesting.

The key to remember in all this is it’s not about simply counting up the positive or negatives. Some items may be trivial while others may be incredibly significant. Instead, the process of structuring your thinking helps you see the full forest and to see the forest for the trees.

## Variations

Upsides, down sides and interesting

Positive, negative and interesting

End

# Brainwriting

|  |  |
| --- | --- |
| [But out of limitations comes creativity.](http://www.brainyquote.com/quotes/quotes/t/tonyrobbin147782.html" \o "view quote)  Debbie Allen  Actress | Image result for debbie allen |

## What the tool is

This is very fast, relatively quiet and very democratic method of brainstorming.

## When to use it

* It is particularly useful for collecting ideas from people who are reluctant to offer ideas in a group session or when you need to solve several problems in parallel.
* Use it, too, to prevent senior or loud participants dominating a session – this way everyone gets a say, and in silence.

## What you need

Sheets of A4 paper printed with the following headings and a table with as many ‘cells’ as there are people working on the problems or as many as you can fit on a sheet of A4 paper, still leaving space to write in each cell.

|  |  |  |
| --- | --- | --- |
| Problem: |  | |
| Owner: |  | |
| Possible solutions | |  |
|  | |  |
|  | |  |
|  | |  |

## How to use it

Small group, multiple problems

1. Distribute a brainwriting sheet to each participant.
2. Ask each participant to write their problem and name at the top of the sheet.
3. Rotate the sheets so that every participant has a chance to add one or more possible solutions or the seeds of solutions. Note that if a participant has no ideas about a particular problem, they can simply pass the sheet on to the next person.
4. Continue to rotate the sheets until all ideas are exhausted.
5. Finally, give each sheet back to the appropriate problem owner.
6. The problem owner takes the sheets away to assimilate the suggestions and implement whichever seem the most sound.

Large group, shared problem

1. Distribute a brainwriting sheet to each participant.
2. Ask each participant to write the shared problem and owner’s name at the top of the sheet.
3. Ask each person to write a single idea/solution, complete a row of ideas/solutions or write as many ideas/solutions as they can think of.
4. Pass each sheet to the next person in the group who adds further ideas/solutions of ‘their own and those triggered by others’ ideas already on the sheet.
5. When everyone has written something on a sheet, or passed it on if they have no further ideas, give the sheets back to the problem owner.
6. The problem owner takes the sheets away to assimilate the suggestions and implement whichever seem most sound.

## Variants

The same technique can be adapted to large groups with multiple problems and small groups with a single problem.

## Points to watch out for

Ask everyone to write as clearly as possible – the problem owner needs to be able to read the solutions!

On occasions, someone will query another’s idea, declaiming it as silly. Encourage participants to work in silence.

Source: The Smart solutions book by David Cotton

# Random word technique

|  |  |
| --- | --- |
| You can’t use up creativity. The more you use, the more you have  Maya Angelou  Entrepreneur | Related image |

## What the tool is

The Random word technique allows us to make free associations between something apparently unrelated to the presenting problem and the problem itself, giving creative insights not accessible using more linear problem-solving methods.

## When to use it

* When you need to look beyond the obvious for a solution.

## What you need

* Paper and pen or flipchart and marker pens.

## How to use it

State the problem to be solved. Select a random book, random page and random line number. Find the first noun on the chosen line and write it on a flipchart. Ask the group to call out anything they associate with the chosen word – it does not matter how outlandish their suggestions are – in fact, the more creative, the better. Write each word or phrase on the flipchart as it is called out. There should be no discussion at this point.

When no further ideas are forthcoming, restate the original problem and ask the group to freely associate the brainstormed ideas with the original problem. They can combine the ideas to form new associations with the original problem.

For example:

A restaurant owner is concerned that, because of the location of her restaurant, she is not attracting the volume of the trade she needs. Although the restaurant is in the centre of a major city, it is on a side-street off a main shopping street from which it is not visible. She wants as many ideas as possible of how to attract more people to the restaurant.

After selecting a random book, page and line, the first noun on the line is hammer. The group’s suggestions include:

Hammer

heavy

nails

construction

repeated action

metal

wood

destruction

The group now starts to associate the ideas freely with the original problem. Ideas include:

* Heavy metal and other themed music nights to attract the different audiences (heavy and metal).
* Children are given pizza bases and a variety of toppings and encouraged to decorate the pizzas themselves, which are then cooked and served (construction).
* Greek-themed evenings with Greek food, music and plate smashing (destructive).
* Loyalty cards offering a free meal after each six purchased (repeated action).
* Beautician offering manicures/pedicures before lunch (nails).

## Points to watch out for

Participants may, at first, try to make logical links between the random work associations and the original problem. Help them to understand that the power of the technique comes from free association and combining ideas to make new associations.

## Reference

de Bono, E. (2009) Lateral Thinking: A Textbook of Creativity. London: Penguin.

Source: The Smart solutions book by David Cotton

# Lotus blossom

|  |  |
| --- | --- |
| I’m not afraid of problem-solving. There is always a way.  Hanneli Mustaparta  Fashion blogger/Photographer | Image result for hanneli mustaparta |

## What the tool is

The Lotus Blossom technique, invented in Japan by Yasuo Matsumura, combines brainstorming and mind-mapping to create an extensive graphic that explores many aspects of a problem in a way that combines structure with creativity. It is not only elegant but can reveal complex relationships and depth that do not necessarily emerge from more standard brainstorming techniques.

## When to use it

* When standard brainstorming techniques would not give depth of solution.
* When you want to explore relationships between components of a problem.

## What you need

* Flipchart paper and marker pens.

## How to use it

1. Draw a 3x3 grid in the centre of the page. This is grid 1, which represents the central problem to be solved or the issue to be explored. In the centre of the grid, write a word or phrase at summarises the problem to be explored:

|  |  |  |
| --- | --- | --- |
|  |  |  |
|  | Core idea |  |
|  |  |  |

Each of the cells around the centre will represent a sub-topic of the main idea.

1. Brainstorm solutions, related concepts or ideas, and write a keyword description of each in the boxes surrounding the problem in the central grid. You may struggle at first to suggest eight related ideas, but persevere – the greater the detail, the richer the solution and the greater the number of associations you will see between ideas. For our purpose, we have simply lettered the subtopics A-H:

|  |  |  |
| --- | --- | --- |
| A | B | C |
| H | Core idea | D |
| G | F | E |

1. Around the central grid, draw 8 more 3x3 grids – grids A to H (3 above, 3 below, 1 to each side). Each of these grids will be used to further break down the subtopics, A-H.

|  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |
| --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- |
| 1 | 2 | 3 |  | 1 | 2 | 3 |  | 1 | 2 | 3 |
| 8 | A | 4 |  | 8 | B | 4 |  | 8 | C | 4 |
| 7 | 6 | 5 |  | 7 | 6 | 5 |  | 7 | 6 | 5 |
|  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |
| 1 | 2 | 3 |  | A | B | C |  | 1 | 2 | 3 |
| 8 | H | 4 |  | H | Core idea | D |  | 8 | D | 4 |
| 7 | 6 | 5 |  | G | F | E |  | 7 | 6 | 5 |
|  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |
| 1 | 2 | 3 |  | 1 | 2 | 3 |  | 1 | 2 | 3 |
| 8 | G | 4 |  | 8 | F | 4 |  | 8 | E | 4 |
| 7 | 6 | 5 |  | 7 | 6 | 5 |  | 7 | 6 | 5 |

1. Take each of the words that you wrote in the central grid (in our case, A-H) and put those words in the centre of the surrounding grids. The diagram will show you how this would look.
2. For each of the eight grids brainstorm ideas related to its central them and write them in the boxes surrounding the central idea. In our diagram, we have simply numbered them 1-8 for each grid. In reality, you would have eight sub-sub topics per grid.
3. When you have finished, you will have 64 ideas to help solve the original problem. They will vary in usefulness and importance and you may find that just one or two suggest the best solution. However, by looking at the problem broadly, you may start to identify the ripple effects of a solution across other aspects of your operations or organisation.

The problem – we want to improve our customer service at a call centre which is central to our operations.

In the central grid, we write Call centre and the brainstorm ideas related to the call centre.

|  |  |  |
| --- | --- | --- |
| Monitor repeat contact | Customer feedback | Sharing information |
| Proactive not reactive | **Call centre customer service** | Faster response times |
| Incentives | Customer contact preferences | Staff training |

Each of these ideas now becomes the central idea in boxes A-H. Now we need to brainstorm ideas in each of the grids.

Let us look at box C. In the centre, we write **Sharing information***.* The concept here is that the better the information sharing among call centre staff, the less duplication of effort and the better they can offer a quick and consistent service to callers.

Brainstorming Sharing information yields the following ideas . . .

|  |  |  |
| --- | --- | --- |
| Share clever solutions | Train each other | Use intranet |
| Share best practice | **Sharing information** | Publish FAQs |
| Email tips to super-users | Create customer web forum | Create staff manual |

Repeat the process for each major idea in the central grid. Now you have a wealth of ideas to help focus your management effort in the call centre improvement.

## Variants

* To complete the 8 grids requires you to think of 64 ideas, which may, at first seem daunting. In reality, it is not unusual to generate 64 ideas in a brainstorming session, and the Lotus Blossom technique gives a structure to the thinking that is lacking in more traditional brainstorming – you are finding only eight new ideas under eight headings!
* If you are working with a group of people, break it into smaller groups, with everyone involved in the plenary discussion about the eight main areas, then each group working on one or two of the subtopics. You might consider printing nine separate blank grids to one core topic and one each for the subtopics. Distribute the blank girds to smaller groups. Working on a 9x9 grid may seem less daunting that working on the full nine-grid model. When each subgroup has finished, put the pieces together and fix them to a wall so everyone can see the completed picture. One word of warning here: when everyone works on the grid together, they start to see and make connections whilst constructing the overall set of grids. If the smaller groups work in isolation from each other, it may reduce the number of creative connections and the end result may not be as effective.
* Consider using something other than squares in the grids. In line with the name Lotus Blossom, some people create a flower, writing the topic at the centre and subtopics on the surrounding petals.

Subtopic

Subtopic

Subtopic

Subtopic

Subtopic

Subtopic

Subtopic

Subtopic

## Points to watch for

The better the ideas generated in the central grid, the better the overall solution will be. Spend a little time getting the first grid right, and the rest should flow relating easily from there.

Source: The Smart solutions book by David Cotton

# Morphological Forced Connections

|  |  |
| --- | --- |
| [Your assumptions are your windows on the world. Scrub them off every once in a while, or the light won’t come in.](http://www.brainyquote.com/quotes/quotes/t/tonyrobbin147782.html)  Alan Alda  Actor/Director |  |

## What

This is an approach to combining lists of attributes and “forcing connections” between them in order to trigger new thinking. It was called a “foolproof inventions-finding scheme” by its authors, Koberg and Bagnall in the Universal Traveller.

## When

Use to discover new ways of doing things, particularly when simple listings are blocked by assumptions about the way things should be done. The method works well in groups, with facilitator as the scribe.

## How

### Step 1

List in a row the main attributes and/or characteristics of the method or device currently in use.

### Step 2

Below each attribute, list as many alternatives as you can think of without evaluating or blocking wilder ideas.

### Step 3

Consider several different “forced connections” across the columns. Join them up. (If in a group, hand over the pen to the participants).

### Step 4

Follow through by generating new ideas, or by closing down on unlikely runners.

#### Examples

**Subject**: Invent a new kind of brick

|  |  |  |  |  |  |
| --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- |
| Attributes | Rectangular | Red | Heavy | Size | Rough |
| Alternatives | Spherical | Blue | Heavier | Bigger | Smooth |
|  | Conical | Yellow | Lighter | Smaller | Bumpy |
|  | Cubic | Multi-coloured | Very Light |  | Shiny |
|  | Convex | White |  |  | Ridged |

**Invention**: A new paving material – multi-coloured cobble stones

**Subject**: How to attract more people to apply for clerical jobs in central London

|  |  |  |  |  |  |
| --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- |
| Attributes | Advertising | Target Population | Pay offered | Benefits Offered/required | Hours Required |
| Current Methods | In the Standard | School Leavers | Average for Mkt | London Allowance | Full Time |
| Alternatives | TV | Mature women | Higher | Free travel | Match School Hours |
|  | Radio |  | Lower |  | Evenings |
|  | Schools | 2nd Jobbers | Perf Related | Offer Accommodation | Weekends |
|  | Betting Shops | 6th year Pupils | Goods/services | Exotic Holidays | Part Time |
|  | Buses | OAPs | Cash | Crèche | Job Share |
|  | Discos | Students |  | Clothes | Nights |

**Interim conclusion:** Need to explore possibilities of attracting different groups of people by offering flexible working hours and attractive benefits. Gather more information before closing down options.

# Decision tool: Paired comparison

|  |  |
| --- | --- |
| We all carry a responsibility to do what we can when it will make a difference.  Michael Useem  Author |  |

Paired Comparison Analysis helps you to work out the importance of a number of options relative to each other. It is particularly useful where you do not have objective data to base this on.

This makes it easy to choose the most important problem to solve, or select the solution that will give you the greatest advantage. Paired Comparison Analysis helps you to set priorities where there are conflicting demands on your resources.

It is also an ideal tool for comparing "apples with oranges" - completely different options such as whether to invest in marketing, a new IT system or a new piece of machinery. These decisions are usually much harder than comparing three possible new IT systems, for example.

How to use the tool

You can use this to compare each option with each other option, one-by-one. For each comparison, you will decide which of the two options is most important, and then assign a score to show how much more important it is.

Follow these steps to use the technique:

1. List the options you will compare. Assign a letter to each option.
2. Mark the options as row and column headings on the worksheet.
3. Note that the cells on the table where you will be comparing an option with itself have been blocked out - there will never be a difference in these cells!
4. The cells on the table where you will be duplicating a comparison are also blocked out.
5. Within the remaining cells compare the option in the row with the one in the column. For each cell, decide which of the two options is more important. Write down the letter of the more important option in the cell and score the difference in importance from 0 (no difference) to 3 (major difference).
6. Finally, consolidate the results by adding up the total of all the values for each of the options. You may want to convert these values into a percentage of the total score.

Example:

As a simple example, an entrepreneur is looking at ways in which she can expand her business. She has limited resources, but also has the options she lists below:

* Expand into overseas markets
* Expand in home markets
* Improve customer satisfaction
* Improve quality

Firstly, you draw up a table:

|  |  |  |  |  |
| --- | --- | --- | --- | --- |
|  | Overseas  Market (A) | Home  Market (B) | Customer Satisfaction (C) | Quality  (D) |
| Overseas  Market (A) |  |  |  |  |
| Home  Market (B) |  |  |  |  |
| Customer Satisfaction (C) |  |  |  |  |
| Quality  (D) |  |  |  |  |

Then you compare options, write the letter of the most important option and score the difference in importance. For example, see below

|  |  |  |  |  |
| --- | --- | --- | --- | --- |
|  | Overseas  Market (A) | Home  Market (B) | Customer Satisfaction (C) | Quality  (D) |
| Overseas  Market (A) |  |  |  |  |
| Home  Market (B) | A, 2 |  |  |  |
| Customer Satisfaction (C) | C, 1 | C, 1 |  |  |
| Quality  (D) | A, 1 | B, 1 | C, 2 |  |

Finally, you add up the A, B, C and D values and convert each into a percentage of the total. You get the following values:

A=3 (37.5%)

B=1 (12.5%)

C=4 (50%)

D=0

Here it is most important to improve customer satisfaction (C) and then to tackle export markets (A). Quality is not a high priority – maybe it is already good.

Key points

Paired Comparison Analysis is a good way of weighing up the relative importance of different courses of action. It is useful where priorities are not clear or are of competing importance. The tool provides a framework for comparing each course of action against all others and helps to show the difference in importance between factors.

End

# Decision tool: Weighted criteria

|  |  |
| --- | --- |
| Erroneous assumptions can be disastrous.  Peter Drucker  Management Thinker |  |

## Introduction

How to decide among a lot of options? You can improve your decision making by adding criteria and weight. This helps you prioritize effectively. The key is making the criteria explicit. And it’s tougher to describe here than it is to actually do!

It works well for group decision making because:

* You create a shared set of criteria.
* When people know what’s valued, it’s easier to understand and weigh in on the decisions.

It’s also a good way to find out mismatches on expectations. For example, if one person thinks the colour of the room is the most important, but another thinks the size of the room is more important, you can have a conversation around the usage scenarios and trade-offs and share perspectives.

Another beauty of using criteria and weight is that it helps make the issue less subjective, so you can have a less defensive, and more objective evaluation of the options.

To make this easier to follow, here is an example to illustrate the approach.

Summary of steps

If you need to make an important decision, the following steps can help:

1. Identify the criteria
2. Rate the criteria.
3. Rate your options against the criteria and multiply by the weightings.

### Step 1: Identify the criteria

In this step, identify the key factors that matter. For example, hiring a new leader, the group identified the following criteria:

* Microsoft capability
* Sector experience
* Coaching ability
* Execution focus
* Customer-connection
* Technical competence
* Business competence
* Political competence

The goals were to:

1. Help make a better decision
2. Avoid simple pitfalls
3. Create a more objective frame for discussion, dialogue, or debate.

### Step 2: Rate the criteria

The next step is to identify the weighting of each criteria. We stuck to a scale of 1-3 helps keep it simple. In this case, 1 is less important and 3 is more important, since we will multiply by these numbers in the next step.

|  |  |
| --- | --- |
| Criteria | Rating |
| Microsoft capability | 2 |
| Sector experience | 3 |
| Coaching capability | 3 |
| Execution focus | 3 |
| Customer-connection | 3 |
| Technical competence | 2 |
| Business competence | 2 |
| Political competence | 2 |

### Step 3: Rate your options against the criteria and multiply by the weightings

In this step, you rate your options against the criteria, and then multiply by the weightings:

|  |  |  |  |
| --- | --- | --- | --- |
| Criteria | Candidate A | Candidate B | Candidate C |
| Microsoft capability | 9 | 5 | 0 |
| Sector experience | 10 | 0 | 0 |
| Coaching capability | 8 | 5 | 5 |
| Execution focus | 10 | 5 | 5 |
| Customer-connection | 9 | 5 | 5 |
| Technical competence | 9 | 5 | 5 |
| Business competence | 8 | 5 | 5 |
| Political competence | 5 | 5 | 5 |

When you score against your criteria, you can have an objective discussion around the criteria.

#### Multiply by the weightings

Here is the result of multiplying the candidate scores against the weightings.

|  |  |  |  |  |
| --- | --- | --- | --- | --- |
| Criteria | Rating | Candidate A | Candidate B | Candidate C |
| Microsoft capability | 2 | 18 | 10 | 0 |
| Sector experience | 3 | 30 | 0 | 0 |
| Coaching capability | 3 | 24 | 15 | 15 |
| Execution focus | 3 | 30 | 15 | 15 |
| Customer-connection | 3 | 27 | 15 | 15 |
| Technical competence | 2 | 18 | 10 | 10 |
| Business competence | 2 | 16 | 10 | 10 |
| Political competence | 2 | 10 | 10 | 10 |
| Score | – | 173 | 85 | 75 |

For example, Candidate A is gets an 18 in Microsoft capability (9 x 2, where 9 is the candidate’s score and 2 is the weighting of the criteria). As you can see, the numbers helped highlight some key differences between the candidates. It’s not so much that you can turn your decisions into numbers, since it’s rarely that black and white. Instead, it’s really that you expose your thinking, get clarity on your values, and have more meaningful dialogues.

Thanks to J D Meier

Review process and performance

|  |  |
| --- | --- |
| Life can only be understood backwards; but it must be lived forwards  Søren Kierkegaard  Philosopher and Theologian | Soren.jpg |

# Review prompts

## After chairing a meeting

It’s great to keep a simple note for yourself of your chairing. After each meeting simply ask yourself:

1. What went well
2. What could be better
3. My actions
4. And how did I get on

## Casual questions to ask participants

It’s best to engage individual participants in casual conversation. Really easy questions like:

* How are you finding the meetings?
* What do you like about them?
* What are your thoughts about your input?
* What might help you in the meetings?

Meeting survey

|  |  |
| --- | --- |
| Surveys show that surveys never lie.  Natalie Angier  Writer | Quote by Natalie Angier: “I'm an Atheist. I don't believe in God, Gods,  G...” |

The only way to know that you are on your way to heroic meeting chair status is to ask. Here is a sample meetings questionnaire for you to adapt and use with your participants. It’s designed to be quick and informative.

# Sample meeting participant survey

|  |  |
| --- | --- |
| Meeting name |  |
| Survey date |  |

## 1-minute survey instructions

This snapshot survey is to help everyone work out to what extent you have consistently fulfilling meetings.

The intention is for you to repeat the survey periodically. This is to help notice any changes.

You will see that the survey is confidential. (Optional)

A colleague will process the results which means that your manager will not see your survey. (Optional)

## This meeting . . .

1 Has a quality agenda (one that helps me prepare).

|  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |
| --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- |
| 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 | 6 | 7 | 8 | 9 | 10 |
| o | o | o | o | o | o | o | o | o | o |
| Never | | | | | Always | | | | |

2. If I could make an excuse to not attend.

|  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |
| --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- |
| 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 | 6 | 7 | 8 | 9 | 10 |
| o | o | o | o | o | o | o | o | o | o |
| I would | | | | | I wouldn’t | | | | |

## At the meeting . . .

3. We consistently start and end on time.

|  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |
| --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- |
| 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 | 6 | 7 | 8 | 9 | 10 |
| o | o | o | o | o | o | o | o | o | o |
| You’re joking! | | | | | We do | | | | |

4. I am able to make my best possible contributions.

|  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |
| --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- |
| 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 | | 6 | 7 | 8 | 9 | 10 |
| o | o | o | o | o | | o | o | o | o | o |
| Strongly disagree | | | | |  | | Strongly agree | | | |

5. My fulfilment level.

|  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |
| --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- |
| 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 | 6 | 7 | 8 | 9 | 10 |
| o | o | o | o | o | o | o | o | o | o |
| Longing for it to end | | | | | Totally fulfilled | | | | |

## After the meeting

6. I get accurate actions (who, what, by when).

|  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |
| --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- |
| 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 | 6 | 7 | 8 | 9 | 10 |
| o | o | o | o | o | o | o | o | o | o |
| Nope | | | | | Yip | | | | |

7. People are held accountable for their agreed actions.

|  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |
| --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- |
| 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 | 6 | 7 | 8 | 9 | 10 |
| o | o | o | o | o | o | o | o | o | o |
| Nope | | | | Yes | | | | | |

8. People are challenged about their behaviour.

|  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |
| --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- |
| 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 | 6 | 7 | 8 | 9 | 10 |
| o | o | o | o | o | o | o | o | o | o |
| Strongly disagree | | | | Strongly agree | | | | | |

One thing about our meetings

|  |  |
| --- | --- |
| That’s done well | That we could improve |
|  |  |

Overall.

|  |  |
| --- | --- |
| Taking all the aspects of this meeting together, from a quality agenda, starting and ending on time, controlled chairing, participation from all, the right mix of variety and rituals I’d give our meeting the following score our of 100 (where 100 is the top) |  |

My Results Diary

# Example entry

|  |  |
| --- | --- |
| Week beginning | 12 Never 2020 |

## What did you action?

|  | My actions this week were | Comments |
| --- | --- | --- |
| 1 | I spoke with the team in advance about improving our team meeting agenda | It worked well |
| 2 | I produced a new team meeting agenda and used some time to explain to the team the reasons behind each change | The team were pretty quiet – probably waiting to see how it worked in practice. |
| 3 | At the end of the meeting, I asked for feedback on the agenda | I got some comments that it was more helpful |

## What were the results? (such finishing on time)

|  | My results | Comments |
| --- | --- | --- |
| 1 | We finished on time which is a first | Usually, we overrun by 15 minutes. |
| 2 | I think we had better discussions. | A clearer agenda helped this |
| 3 | There wasn’t much feedback at the end. Less than I wanted. | I should have been clearer at the start that I would want their feedback at the end. |

## What has that meant

For example, what did you do with the time you saved?

|  | It’s meant that . . . | Comments |
| --- | --- | --- |
| 1 | Finishing on time meant the team had 105 minutes difference from the usual | We could go back to work on time with a better feeling.  I made two quick calls to customers with the time I saved |
| 2 | The team know I will keep improving our meetings so that we are more productive | It’s going to be easier to do my next changes which are a meetings charter and a jargon buster |
| 3 |  |  |

# Results entry

|  |  |
| --- | --- |
| Week beginning |  |

## What did you action?

|  | My actions this week were | Comments |
| --- | --- | --- |
| 1 |  |  |
| 2 |  |  |
| 3 |  |  |

## What were the results? (such finishing on time)

|  | My results | Comments |
| --- | --- | --- |
| 1 |  |  |
| 2 |  |  |
| 3 |  |  |

## What has that meant

For example, what did you do with the time you saved?

|  | It’s meant that . . . | Comments |
| --- | --- | --- |
| 1 |  |  |
| 2 |  |  |
| 3 |  |  |

# Results entry

|  |  |
| --- | --- |
| Week beginning |  |

## What did you action?

|  | My actions this week were | Comments |
| --- | --- | --- |
| 1 |  |  |
| 2 |  |  |
| 3 |  |  |

## What were the results? (such finishing on time)

|  | My results | Comments |
| --- | --- | --- |
| 1 |  |  |
| 2 |  |  |
| 3 |  |  |

## What has that meant

For example, what did you do with the time you saved?

|  | It’s meant that . . . | Comments |
| --- | --- | --- |
| 1 |  |  |
| 2 |  |  |
| 3 |  |  |

# Results entry

## Last one. Copy and pastes more for yourself

|  |  |
| --- | --- |
| Week beginning |  |

## What did you action?

|  | My actions this week were | Comments |
| --- | --- | --- |
| 1 |  |  |
| 2 |  |  |
| 3 |  |  |

## What were the results? (such finishing on time)

|  | My results | Comments |
| --- | --- | --- |
| 1 |  |  |
| 2 |  |  |
| 3 |  |  |

## What has that meant

For example, what did you do with the time you saved?

|  | It’s meant that . . . | Comments |
| --- | --- | --- |
| 1 |  |  |
| 2 |  |  |
| 3 |  |  |

# After three months

|  |  |
| --- | --- |
| Success is only meaningful and enjoyable when it feels like your own  Michelle Obama | Michelle Obama - Wikipedia |

## Confidence

How would you rate your confidence to run consistently effective and fulfilling meetings? Score 1 to 10 where ten is high.

|  |  |
| --- | --- |
| Before the programme |  |
| Now |  |

## Finishing on time more often

I know it’s tough, but let’s estimate how much time as a meeting group you have saved by finishing on time or early over the last three months.

|  |  |
| --- | --- |
| Time saving |  |

## Main things I achieved with my SUPERB Meetings™ actions

|  | Please be specific with your examples |
| --- | --- |
| 1 |  |
| 2 |  |
| 3 |  |
| 4 |  |
| 5 |  |
| 6 |  |
| 7 |  |
| 8 |  |
| 9 |  |
| 10 |  |

End