

## 3 Think Tank Workshop Options



### 1. Goals

*Get together, reflect and solve open questions.  
Find new ways, become aware of new influences and aspects.  
Learn, discover and have fun.*



### 2. Principles

1. Keep up a high tempo and play with dramaturgy
2. Change the context, setting and methods
3. Involve new people who understand nothing about the subject
4. Prepare 3 main questions for the process
5. Visualise the topic, main questions and results
6. Separate clearly between creative and structural phases in the process
7. When it is over, it is over.



### 3. Options for Think tank workshops

**40'**

#### 40 Minutes-Approach 1: Problem, reasons, solutions

Time frame: 40 minutes  
Participants: 5-7 persons

#### Program for Approach 1

##### 1. Welcome to this meeting! (2 minutes)

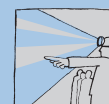
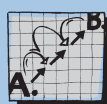
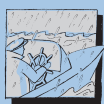
Thank you all for coming. We are here to solve a problem in 30 minutes.  
First Mr. / Ms Wonder describes the problem in 5 minutes. There are 5 minutes for questions and answers. Then we look at the reasons why and observe the underlying patterns and forces involved. We then brainstorm and collect possible solutions. In the last 5 minutes we prioritise the solutions according to what we believe works best.

Who can keep time for us? Thank you, Mr. Hayek.  
Please ring the bell when time is up.

I will write down all the comments being made on this flipchart.

##### 2. The Problem (2,5 minutes)

Mr / Ms Wonder – please describe the situation and the problem in 5 minutes.



# 40'

### 3. Questions of Clarifications (2,5 minutes)

Thank you. We now have 2,5 minutes for questions of clarification. We first collect all the questions.

After 2,5 minutes: OK, Mr. Wonder please answer 3 questions of these. You have 2,5 minutes

### 4. Reasons, and underlying patterns (5-7 minutes)

Why it did not work YET. Let us brainstorm 5-7 minutes. I note your inputs.

### 5. Solutions – how can we make this work? (12 minutes)

Again, brainstorm for 12 minutes – bring all possible and impossible solutions onto the table, starting NOW!

### 6. Prioritise the solutions (5 minutes)

Thank you, now everybody gets 3 points to choose three solutions you believe make most sense in this context and write in the next 5 minutes behind the solution, why you choose/prefer this option.

### 7. Thank you and close (2 minutes)

Questions of clarification anyone?

Can you work with this solution Mr. / Ms Wonder?

Who makes the photoprotocol? Mr. Kodak, thank you.

Until when do we receive it? Today, at 16h.

Great! Thank you all very much for your input and creative efforts and see you next....

# 20'

### 20-Minutes-Approach: Central question, solutions

Time frame: 20 minutes

Participants: 5-7 persons

#### Program for Approach 2

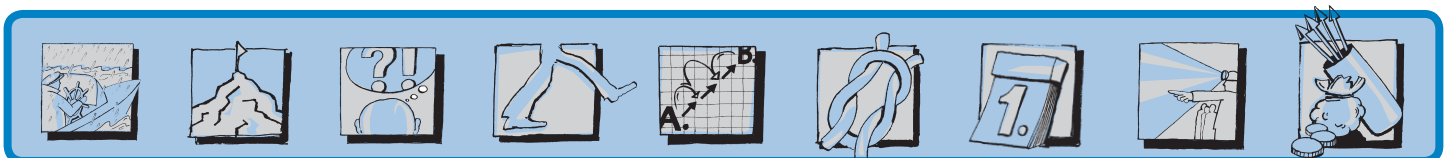
#### 1. Prepare and present a central question for the brainstorming (1 minute)

Formulate the problem into a solution oriented question i.e. how can we best reach our financial goal for this year?

#### 2. Clarify the question (2 minutes)

Does everybody understand the question?

#### 3. Brainstorm (12 minutes)



# 20'

Then let's brainstorm for 12 minutes.

### Brainstorm-Rules:

- Have crazy ideas, think unorthodox and wild!
- Build on each other's ideas!
- Keep up the speed in the brainstorming!
- Enjoy each idea – see its potential, avoid critics by all means!

### 4. Prioritise the ideas (5 minutes)

Each participant marks 3 ideas which he likes most and finds most suitable for this context and writes next to the solution 3 key words, why s/he sees it that way.  
Thank you!

# 60'

### The 60-Minute-Approach: Negative Brainstorming

Time frame: 60 minutes  
Participants: 5-7 persons

This approach is very helpful, when there are a lot of obstacles and resistance in the situation and when the involved persons can hardly imagine that the situation improves at all.

### Program for Approach 3

#### 1. Desired outcome (positive formulation) (4 minutes)

Formulate a positive question i.e. How can we improve the relationship with the press?

#### 2. Worst case (negative formulation) (5 minutes)

Formulate 2-5 questions to reach the total opposite of the desired outcome. Then choose the one that is most central, appealing or horrifying to the participants  
i.e. How can we most effectively destroy our links to the press - within the next 2 weeks?

#### 3. Brainstorm on the worst case question (18 minutes)

Apply the brainstorming rules. And be as negative and destructive as you can. No mercy!

#### 4. Transform each aspect (20 minutes)

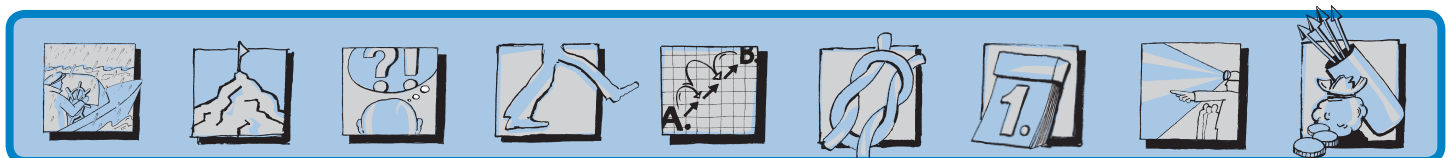
Brainstorm 2-3 ideas or solutions to each negative aspect, idea or strategy/solution. What can we learn from each of these points? What does this aspect teach us to be aware of? List the newly gained aspects. Apply the brainstorming rules.

#### 5. Prioritise the positive ideas and solutions (8 minutes)

Which 3 ideas or solutions are central here – and why?

#### 6. Summarise, thank you and close (5 minutes)

This method is very effective when a group got stuck and can not imagine solutions anymore. Suddenly the group will shift and be constructive again.



Sometimes it is very important to let the group shortly reflect on the shift that they have experienced in the going from stuck to worst case to pro-active again.



#### 4. Methodology

##### Larger groups and group size

These creativity and idea development ideas can easily be applied in larger groups also. Then split the groups in small groups no larger than 8 persons.

Groups larger than 8 persons usually do not use the individuals creative force (they have to queue – because they want to let each other finish with the talking...)

Groups smaller than 5 persons often lose energy too quickly, unless they all jump out of the box and can exhaust themselves in brainstorming. 5 persons is usually a nice critical mass, that you do not always have to speak and still results come up.



#### 5. Focus Facilitation

Facilitators in brainstorming rounds have to be able to write fast. If you have larger groups, get a second co-facilitator to help you with the documentation of the brainstorming results. Be tough on the brainstorming rules. Stay uplifting. And note every idea.

When in doubt, engage a professional facilitator for the session. This way you can focus on the content as well. Make a clear briefing, so the facilitator understands the desired outcome and where the participants currently are.

##### Preparation with questions

Make sure you understand what the problem is and let the person present it, who owns the problem. Prepare with him/her which questions can really help to get out of the current situation.

##### Create a creative and inspiring environment

Change the setting, make it inspiring, beautiful and uplifting, so it is easy to get ideas. Also you can play with the contrary – choose such an ugly place, that everybody really wants to change the place (go to the parking lot down in the third basement floor).

Change methods and settings – create diversity and new impulses, this way you keep the persons alert, lively and interested in the creative process.

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