

BRAINSTORMING FOR ENTREPRENEURSHIP

Creativity is an essential attributes of any successful entrepreneur. With creativity, the entrepreneur has different understanding of a situation due to varied form of ideas being generated.

Creativity can be unlocked and creative innovative ideas generated using any of the techniques below:

Brainstorming

This is probably the most well-known and widely used techniques for both creative problem solving and idea generation. Brainstorming can generate ideas about a problem within a limited time frame through the spontaneous contribution of participants.

An effective approach to brainstorming is to starts with a problem statement that is neither too broad nor too narrow. Once the problem statement is clear, a minimum of six and a maximum of twelve individuals are selected to participate.

As a guiding rule, no group member should be recognized as expert in the field of the problem. Every idea, no matter how illogical must be recorded and analyzed.

Reverse Brainstorming

This is a group method for obtaining new ideas while focusing on the negatives. In reverse brainstorming criticism is allowed as against the brainstorming approach.

The technique is based on finding fault by asking the question “in how many ways can this idea fail”. With the fact that it focuses on the negative aspects of a product or service, the group’s morale must be maintained in the right direction.

This approach can be effectively used before other creative techniques to stimulate innovative thinking.

This method produces some worthwhile results as it is easier for an individual to be critical about an idea than to come up with a new idea.

Brainwriting

This is a form of written brainstorming. Brainwriting differs from the classical brainstorming by giving participants more time to think than in brainstorming session, where ideas are expressed spontaneously.

It is a silent, written generation of ideas by a group of people. The participants write their ideas on a special card, which circulates within the group (usually six members).

Each group member generates and writes down three ideas during a five-minute period. The card is passed on to the adjacent person, who writes down three new ideas and so on, until each form has passed all participants.

A moderator or group leader monitor the time intervals and can reduce or increase the time given to participants with respect to the needs of the group.

A variation of this idea-generation method is that participants are located at their respective work-place, separated by distance and the card are rotated by e-mail, in this case the interval can be longer.

What I am looking for?

It's the first question an entrepreneur or a company manager need to ask to start new business.

The process started with an idea on one side of the whiteboard, that can be matched with an item on the other side. Those matches represent startup opportunities.

It is highly unlikely that you will come up with a great startup idea in a single brainstorming session. More likely is that this list will sit in your mind over a period of time, and cause you to keep thinking. Then at some unpredictable moment in time, your mind may recognize the breakthrough idea.

Validating and Scoring your different Ideas

For some thoughts on how you might want to validate or score your different ideas, try the following starting points:

- Are well suited to this particular opportunity. Do you have some unique elements that makes you uniquely well suited to tackle this opportunity?
- Is there strong enough customer motivation to get the customer to buy and use your product?
- Market size: are there enough customers that have this strong motivation to make a big company?
- Competition: are there entrenched competitors who would be hard to dislodge?
- Does this product truly solve the customer problem (without introducing some new problems in the process of adoption)?
- Are there strong barriers to entry that can be sustained over time?
- Can you build a viable business model around this idea?
- How long, and how much capital is required, to complete the solution?
- How significant are the risks involved?