



No more awkward silences. Brainstorming sessions that rock.



If someone mentions a brainstorming session and you shudder, you are not alone. Nothing worse than a room full of awkward silence.

So we are sharing the Spinifex guide to running brainstorming sessions that foster creativity, encourage collaboration, and drive tangible results. Nirvana right?

01 Set the Stage for Success

- ✔ **Clear the Decks:** Clearly define the objective of the brainstorming session. What problem are you solving? What goal are you trying to achieve? Ensure everyone understands the purpose and desired outcomes.
- ✔ **Gather Your Tools:** Equip your team with the necessary tools to facilitate creative thinking: whiteboards, markers, sticky notes, and (crucially) snacks and refreshments. These can be done online as well with the use of Miro, Mural, Slack or Google Workspace.
- ✔ **Lay Down Ground Rules:** Establish guidelines to ensure a productive and respectful session.
- ✔ **Virtual Etiquette:** Have participants with cameras on and on mute when not speaking to minimise background noise and encourage using the “raise hand” feature to maintain order.
- ✔ **Start with Fun:** Start with a quick game to relax the atmosphere and encourage interaction. We find the more absurd the better. There is nothing like laughter to breakdown barriers.

Emphasise active listening and no interruptions.

Promote inclusivity by inviting quieter voices to share first and reminding senior members to allow space for others.

Encourage constructive feedback focused on ideas, not individuals.



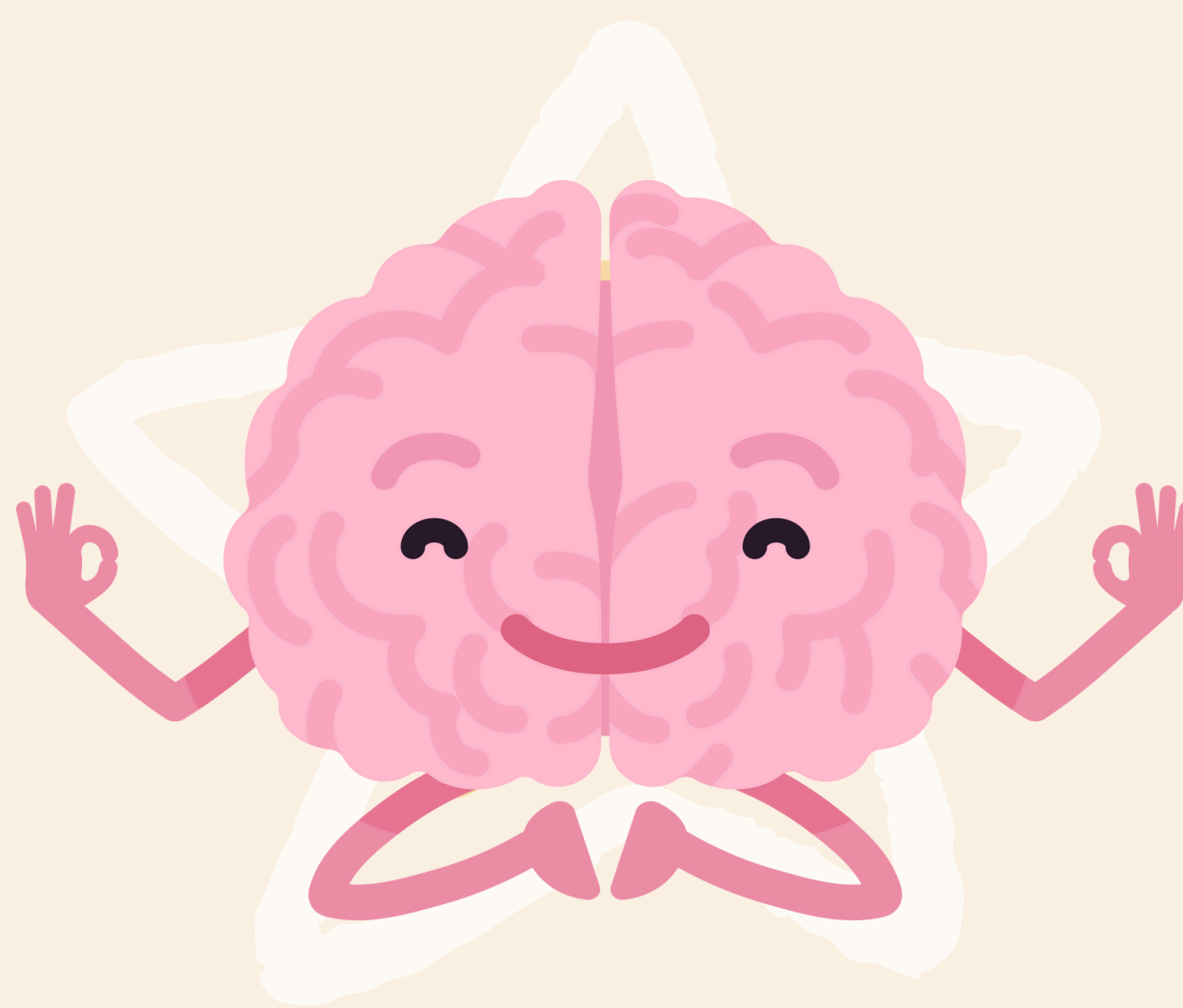
02 Unleash the Flow of Ideas

- ✔ **No Idea Too Out There:** Encourage wild thinking and suspend judgment. The focus here is divergent thinking – no idea is wrong. Seemingly crazy ideas can spark unexpected solutions. We often use a method we call 16 boxes – we just yell out 16 ideas in 16 minutes. It's fast and furious but it sparks ideas.
- ✔ **Build on Each Other:** Foster collaboration by encouraging team members to build upon and refine each other's ideas. Use the “Yes and” technique to build.

- ✔ **Keep it Visual:** Use visual aids like whiteboards (real or virtual) or sticky notes to capture ideas, identify patterns, and maintain focus.
- ✔ **Ensure All Voices are Heard:** Use things like
 - **Brainwriting:** Have everyone write down their ideas (anonymously, if preferred) before sharing, ensuring all perspectives are captured.
 - **Round-Robin:** Go around the group in a structured order, giving each person a dedicated time to share their thoughts.

03 Maintain Momentum and Focus

- ✔ **Timeboxing:** Allocate specific time limits for each topic or phase of the brainstorming session to keep the energy high and prevent discussions from going off-track.
- ✔ **Don't Get Bugged Down:** If a particular issue stalls progress, “park it” for later discussion and move on to maintain momentum.
- ✔ **Stay Positive:** Cultivate a positive and encouraging environment where everyone feels comfortable contributing.
- ✔ **Vary Group Dynamics:**
 - **Smaller-Group Breakouts:** Divide the team into smaller groups to facilitate deeper dives into specific topics.
 - **1-2-4-All:** Start with individual brainstorming, then have people pair up, then form groups of four, and finally share with the whole team. This gradual approach can help build confidence and encourage participation.
- ✔ **Consider a Neutral Facilitator:** If team dynamics or hierarchy are a concern, appoint a neutral facilitator (or rotate the role) to ensure balanced participation and prevent any one voice from dominating. (If you need some help there – we love a good creative workshop.)



04 Translate Ideas into Actionable Steps



- ✔ **Prioritise and Select:** Use techniques like dot voting to democratically narrow down the generated ideas and select the most promising ones.
- ✔ **Make it SMART:** Transform selected ideas into SMART goals: Specific, Measurable, Achievable, Relevant, and Time-bound.
- ✔ **Develop an Action Plan:** Break down goals into smaller tasks, assign responsibilities, and set deadlines to ensure accountability and progress.

05 Reaching Your Goals Post Workshop

To sustain momentum and ignite lasting team success you'll need to think about:

- ✔ **Regular Check-ins:** Schedule regular follow-up meetings to track progress, celebrate successes, address challenges, and maintain team morale.
- ✔ **Open Communication:** Encourage open and honest feedback. Provide anonymous channels (like suggestion boxes or online polls) for team members to share concerns or suggestions without fear of repercussions.
- ✔ **Celebrate Successes:** Acknowledge and celebrate milestones achieved throughout the process to reinforce positive momentum and motivate the team.

