

Easy planning tools

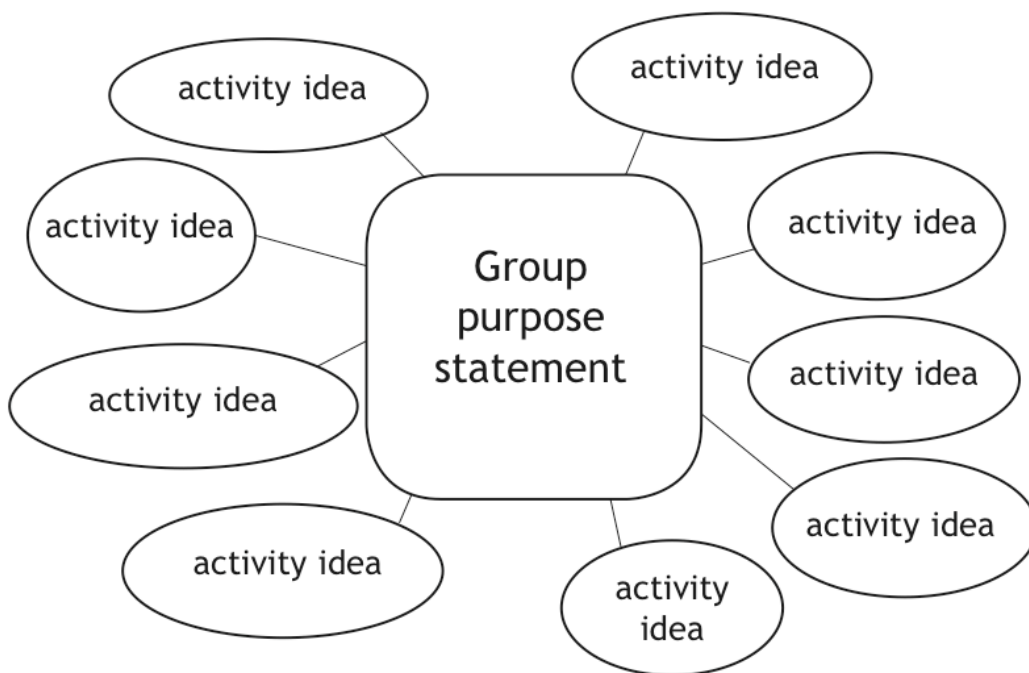
From The CLEAR GUIDE v1, written by Les Robinson for Mission Australia March 2009

www.enablingchange.com.au

How to brainstorm

The rules for brainstorming are simple.

- 1) Start with an agreed question e.g. "What activity would make the next meeting more enjoyable?"
- 2) Everyone takes a turn sharing their answers.
- 3) A scribe writes them all down, as a list or a mind map.
- 4) There is minimal discussion. No idea is wrong.
- 5) Just get those ideas down! Save the prioritising for afterwards.

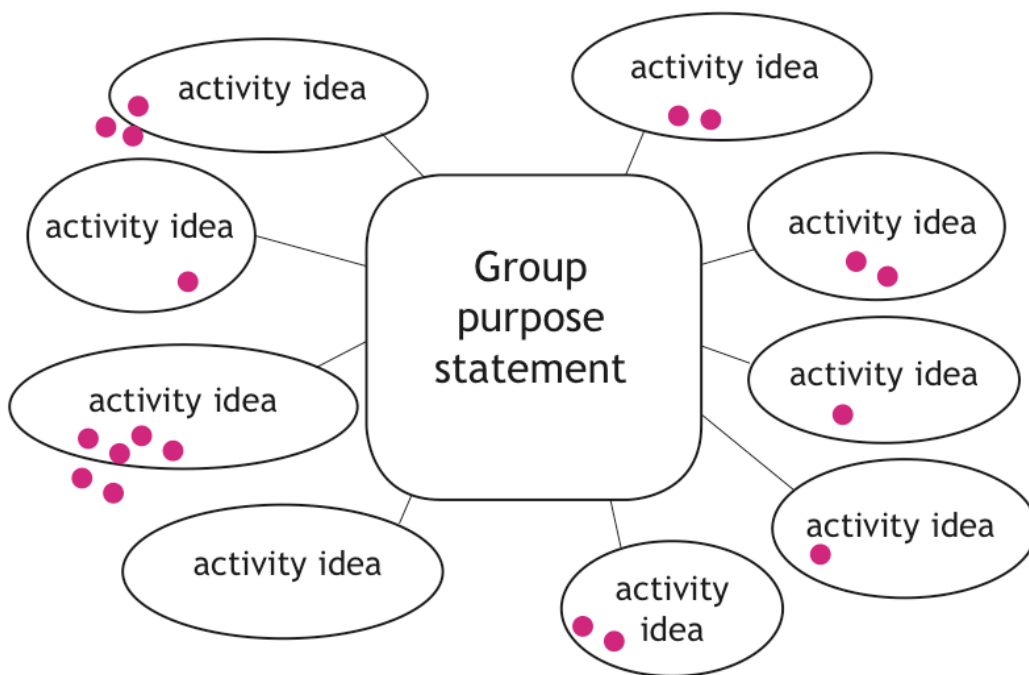


A mind map is a visual way to collect ideas as your brainstorm.

How to prioritise

1) The dots method

After you've completed a brainstorm, you'll need to make choices between the different items you've written down. Allocating dots is the simplest method of prioritising a list of items. Just allocate 10 dots for each person to "invest". Without discussion, they place their points where they think their "investment" will get the best results. Add up the points and the item or items with the most points are those you select.



2) Bang for Buck matrix

A more structured way to prioritise items is with a Bang for Buck Matrix. This takes a little longer but it gives better results because the participants have chance to discuss their choices in detail.

Here's how to do it.

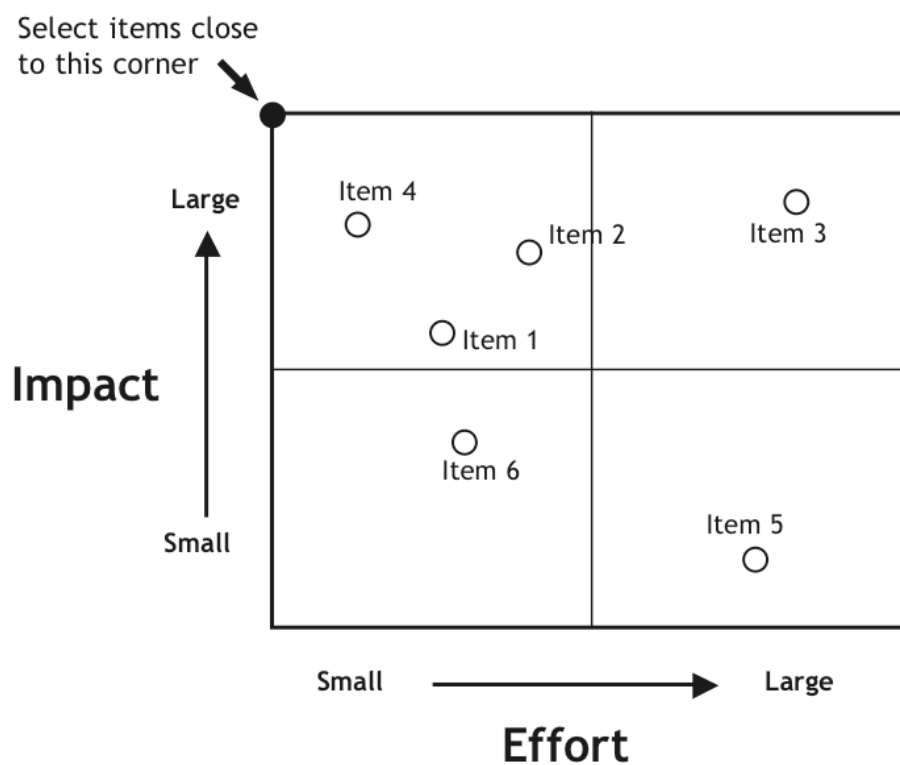
- 1) Number each of the items from your previous brainstorm.
- 2) Place each item on the matrix according to the team's assessment of two questions:
 - How much impact would the item have on achieving the purpose or goal?

and

- How much effort would your team have to invest to make that item happen?

You usually need a facilitator for this exercise so you don't spend more than 5 minutes discussing each item.

3) Stand back and look at the pattern you've created and make a decision about which items to select. Naturally, you'll be biased towards selecting items which are located towards the top left corner of the matrix, ie. Items 4, 2 and 1 in this example.



3) Assessing objectives or activities

The SMART test is a good all-round test of the practicality of objectives or activities. Basically, your project objectives and activities should be described in a way that allows you to tick every one of the following boxes.

The SMART test

☐ **Specific:** anyone reading it would know exactly what you mean.

☐ **Measurable:** capable of being measured.

☐ **Achievable:** realistic, within your group's skills and resources.

☐ **Relevant:** addresses one or more causes of the problem, or supports the group's purpose.

☐ **Time-limited:** has milestones or deadlines.

Useful resources

CoCreate: a facilitators' guide: Part 4 – Just in Time Tools

A collection of introduction exercises, energisers, visioning, idea capture and analysis tools for group work.

www.enablingchange.com.au/CoCreate_v1.A4.pdf

Process activities and ideas

See Paul Bullens page on activities and ideas for setting up group discussions.

www.mapl.com.au/facilitation/facil4.htm

communityplanning.net

An authoritative UK site that includes detailed descriptions of the many methods of engaging communities in planning.

www.communityplanning.net