

Brainstorming

Organized Ideation

- Forget what you thought you knew about Brainstorming, Osborne “people ran away with the idea without practicing it correctly”
- Video Game design is coordinated creative collaboration involving different skilled workers
- Social pressures against being imaginative in a collaborative environment

4 PRINCIPLES OF BRAINSTORMING

According to Osborn, Alex F. Applied Imagination.
New York: Charles Scribner's Sons. 1957.

- 4 primary principles of brainstorming according to Osborne
 - Advertising Manager
 - BBDO very large advertising agency
 - similarities in ad, marketing, and video game design

NO CRITICISM!

“Adverse judgement
of ideas must be
withheld until later.”

- Most important rule of a brainstorm session
 - if this rule is not adhered to it can subvert the entire session
 - positive v. negative reinforcement
 - p. 160 professional shame and fear (not uncommon at MIT)
- Why?
 - inhibition stunts ideation
 - freedom to explore new territories
 - social pressures/professional pressures

FREE-WHEELING

“The wilder the idea, the better; it is easier to tame down than to think up.”

- Straightforward

- innovation generally starts with “pipe-dream” or “blue moon” ideas.
- expanding on a simple idea is more difficult than reworking a wild idea to be feasible

QUANTITY!

“The greater the number of ideas, the more the likelihood of useful ideas.”

- The entire goal of brainstorming is not problem solving but idea generation
 - Therefore, the more ideas that can be generated, the more successful the brainstorm session
 - Judgement is not applied in a brainstorm session, so all ideas are welcome, nothing is excluded

BUILD ON IDEAS!

“...two or more things can be combined to yield something greater than the sum total of the individual parts.”

Synthesis of ideas

- *great ideas are often generated when disparate ideas are combined*
- *often ideas are built or expanded off of other ideas*

Organization

- Casual spirit/atmosphere
- Start with a “bad” or “worthless” idea
- Don’t interrupt anyone
- Designate a facilitator and secretary
- Explain process and principal question at start of session
- Write down **EVERYTHING!**

- Casual “Picnic”
 - negate social pressures
 - “spirit” p. 157 “playing”
- Starting with wild idea encourages “free-wheeling”
- Absolutely no interruptions (social pressure)
- Leader (talk more about this coming up)
- Clarity of process and goal
- Record keeping
 - Often forget best ideas or important variants that are not written down
 - Write a little more than just the title of the idea
 - So you actually remember what the idea actually was

Problems Suitable to Brainstorming

Clear definition of the aim of the session is essential.

- Problems should be simple
- Divide complex problems into subdivisions for separate brainstorm sessions
- Problems should be clearly and simply articulated

- Not all problems are suitable to brainstorming

- creative questions, not judgement calls

- “get married” bad example from Osborn pros and cons vs. idea generation

Responsibilities of the Facilitator

- Understand and explain the problem and the aim of the brainstorm session
- Facilitate the session, encouraging ideation and discouraging criticism
- Ensure that no voices are lost during the discussion
- Encourage synthesis of ideas

- Leader responsibilities

- don't like term "leader" prefer facilitator or borrowing from Quakerism "clerk"
- make sure goals are understood, and that the session runs smoothly
- steward to the process more than the goal

Responsibilities of the Secretary

- Record every idea
- Monitor duration of the session
- (If possible) Participate in brainstorming

Record keeping is vital to ideation

- reportorial
- two secretaries if needed, noting every other idea

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