6-3-5 Method

Idea In Short

The 6-3-5 method, also known as the "brainwriting" technique, is a structured approach to brainstorming that encourages a large number of ideas in a short amount of time. It involves six participants, each generating three ideas on a sheet of paper, which is then passed on to the next participant who builds upon those ideas. This process continues for five rounds, resulting in a wealth of creative input. This method is excellent for generating many ideas quickly.

This method offers a systematic way to gather a large number of ideas from a group in a relatively short period. It is particularly useful when dealing with complex problems or when seeking innovative solutions. The structure of the 6-3-5 method ensures that everyone contributes and that ideas are built upon and refined by others. This process fosters collaboration and encourages creative thinking.

The process

The process begins with a clearly defined problem or question. This provides a focus for the brainstorming session. The facilitator presents the problem to the group of six participants and explains the rules of the 6-3-5 method. Each participant receives a sheet of paper with the problem written at the top.

The first participant writes down three ideas related to the problem on their sheet of paper. These ideas can be short phrases, keywords, or even rough sketches. The key is to capture the essence of the idea clearly and concisely. After writing down their three ideas, the participant passes the sheet of paper to the next person on their right.

The second participant receives the sheet of paper with the first participant's three ideas. This participant then adds three new ideas to the same sheet. These new ideas can be completely original or they can build upon, modify, or combine the existing ideas. The goal

is to develop the existing ideas further and to generate new perspectives.

This process continues around the table. Each participant receives a sheet of paper with existing ideas and adds three new ideas of their own. After five rounds, each sheet of paper will contain a total of 18 ideas (three initial ideas plus five sets of three added ideas). With six participants, this results in a total of 108 ideas generated in a single session.

A crucial aspect of the 6-3-5 method is that participants are encouraged to build upon the ideas of others. This promotes a collaborative approach to brainstorming and helps to refine and develop ideas in ways that might not have occurred through individual brainstorming. It also helps to overcome mental blocks, as participants can use the existing ideas as a springboard for their own thinking.

Once all the sheets have circulated through all participants, the facilitator collects them. The ideas are then reviewed and categorized. This can involve grouping similar ideas, identifying key themes, and prioritizing the most promising solutions. This review process is essential for making sense of the large number of ideas generated and for identifying actionable insights.

Case Study - Optimizing User Experience

Let's consider a case study where a company wants to improve the user experience of their e-commerce website. They decide to use the 6-3-5 method to brainstorm ideas. Six members of the website development team participate in the session. The problem statement is: "How can we improve the user experience on our e-commerce website to increase conversion rates?"

The first participant writes down three ideas:

1. Simplify the checkout process
2. Improve website navigation, and
3. Personalize product recommendations

The sheet is then passed to the next participant.

The second participant, building on the first set of ideas, adds:

1. Offer guest checkout option
2. Implement a mega menu for easier navigation, and
3. Use browsing history for personalized recommendations

The sheet continues to circulate.

The third participant adds:

1. Reduce the number of required form fields in checkout
2. Add a search bar with auto-complete, and
3. Offer personalized product bundles

This process continues until each participant has added three ideas to each sheet.

After five rounds, each sheet contains 18 ideas related to improving the website user experience. The facilitator collects the sheets and the team reviews the generated ideas. They identify several key themes, such as simplifying the checkout process, improving navigation, and personalizing the user experience. These themes are then used to develop concrete action plans to improve the website.

This example illustrates how the 6-3-5 method can generate a large number of diverse ideas in a structured and collaborative way. It demonstrates how building upon existing ideas can lead to more refined and innovative solutions. The method provided a solid framework for the team to brainstorm and develop concrete improvements for their website.

Advantages and Considerations

The 6-3-5 method offers several advantages over traditional brainstorming techniques. It ensures that everyone participates equally and that no single voice dominates the conversation. It also encourages creative thinking by prompting participants to build upon the ideas of others. This can lead to more innovative and well-developed solutions.

This approach is particularly useful for larger groups or when dealing with complex problems. It provides a structured framework that helps to manage the brainstorming process effectively. The method also generates a written record of all the ideas generated, which can be useful for later analysis and review.

However, there are also some considerations to keep in mind. The method requires a clear problem statement to focus the brainstorming session. It also requires some preparation, such as preparing the sheets of paper and explaining the rules to the participants. The method may not be suitable for situations where immediate feedback or in-depth discussion is required. It is primarily a tool for idea generation.

Summary

The 6-3-5 method is a valuable tool for generating a large number of ideas in a structured and collaborative way. It encourages creative thinking, ensures equal participation, and provides a written record of all ideas generated. It is a highly effective brainstorming method. This method effectively generates many ideas quickly.