Headstand Technique

Idea In Short

Headstand brainstorming is a variant of the brainstorming technique in which you reverse the meaning of the original key question to collect ideas through brainstorming. This method is a creative alternative to the classical brainstorming technique.

This technique goes by various names, such as inversion technique, flip-flop technique or provocation technique. The headstand technique is a brainstorming format for problem solving or idea generation. This method helps the moderator, note taker and participants in the brainstorming session to gain greater distance from the problem. The reverse formulation eliminates established thought patterns and promotes unexpected insights. Instead of brainstorming solutions to one problem, you brainstorm actual problems. This allows a different perspective: humans have a natural ability to see problems more easily than solutions, so you can use this to identify hurdles your team might face when working on a project. Think of it as a way to tap a group to brainstorm all the ways a plan could fail. Then you can start problem solving.

The basics

Headstand technique does not always come naturally to participants. However, everyone can benefit from this technique. With this creative technique, you should focus on approaching a problem from a negative angle; not just any angle. For example: Reverse the original key question:

> How can I motivate my team's creativity?

To

> How can I demotivate my team's creativity?

The moderator then asks the participants in the brainstorming session to generate ideas that might worsen the situation. To this end, at the end of the brainstorming session, the team helps the moderator reverse the generated wrong ideas and put them back on their feet. However, it is important to reformulate the question in itself and not just add negations such as not or none.

Example

For example: Reverse the original problem statement from:

> How do we encourage prospective customers to sign up for the Newsletter?

To:

> How do we scare prospective customers from signing up for the Newsletter?

The potential ideas could be:

- The sign up form should have many mandatory fields in addition to his / her email address
- Embed a multi-page questionnaire spread over several pages
- Ask the prospect more questions than required
- Disable auto-complete and require the prospects to type their inputs

After generating such ideas, consolidate and reverse into concrete positive action:

> The sign up form for the Newsletter should consist of a single field that captures the prospect's email address

The process

The headstand technique follows the same process as the classical brainstorming

technique:

1. Preparation
2. Execution, and
3. Follow-up

However, as usual, the moderator formulates the question negatively:

> What should we do to make the new advertising campaign fail? How do we drive prototyping to failure? How can we hinder the onboarding of new employees?

Advantages

Brainstorming offers several advantages such as easy-to-understand rules, manageable effort, collaborative idea generation and fun. The headstand technique offers three major advantages over conventional brainstorming: Associative Brainstorming is a technique used to come up with new solutions for problems or concepts. This is done by taking random adjectives and adding them to the problem that is defined or the concept, By mixing those words together you're inspired to create new possibilities or solutions.

1. Contrary to the actual brainstorming rules, the participants evaluate the generated ideas. In fact, the headstand technique enables associative brainstorming. Unusual answers spur the search for more unusual answers
2. You effectively eliminate the evaluation of ideas during brainstorming. This encourages introverted employees to participate more, which increases the number and the quality of the generated ideas
3. The format and process run counter to what participants are used to. This makes the brainstorming session fun-filled, collaborative and less-judgmental
4. This exercise is a playful method, especially for inexperienced participants in dealing with creativity techniques.

Summary

Creative thinking is about finding innovative solutions to client problems. The headstand technique supports ideation and helps consultants find solutions more effectively. If you want to be the person who can solve even the most complicated client problems, begin by using such techniques to find creative solutions that your client might have missed. The more you work on thinking creatively, the better you will become at problem-solving.