Shift & Share

Idea In Short

Shift & Share is a Liberating Structure designed to quickly generate and share multiple ideas or insights within a group. It uses a structured process of individual reflection, small group sharing, and whole group synthesis. Shift & Share rapidly shares ideas within a group.

This structure provides a simple yet effective way to gather diverse perspectives and identify key themes. It ensures that everyone has an opportunity to contribute and that a wide range of ideas are considered. Shift & Share helps groups quickly move from individual thinking to collective understanding. It promotes inclusive and efficient sharing.

The process is divided into three main phases:

1. individual reflection
2. small group sharing, and
3. whole group synthesis

Each phase has a distinct purpose and set of activities. This three-phase structure ensures that ideas are generated, shared, and synthesized in a structured manner.

Individual reflection

The first phase, individual reflection, provides time for each participant to think about the topic or question at hand. This individual time is crucial for generating original ideas and formulating personal perspectives. Participants may use this time to brainstorm, jot down notes, or create sketches. The goal is to prepare for sharing in the next phase. This phase fosters individual thought.

Small group sharing

The second phase, small group sharing, involves dividing the larger group into smaller groups, typically of two to four people. Within these small groups, each person takes turns sharing their ideas or insights. This small group setting creates a safe and comfortable space for sharing and encourages more in-depth discussion. It allows participants to receive feedback on their ideas and to learn from the perspectives of others. This phase facilitates deeper discussion.

Group synthesis

The third phase, whole group synthesis, brings all the small groups back together. Each small group shares the key themes or insights that emerged from their discussions. This can be done by having each group appoint a spokesperson or by using a visual representation, such as a flip chart or whiteboard. The goal is to create a shared understanding of the key takeaways from all the small group discussions. This phase creates a shared understanding.

The transition between each phase is important. The facilitator clearly signals the end of each phase and provides instructions for the next phase. This ensures that the process flows smoothly and that everyone understands what they need to do.

Shift & Share can be used in a variety of settings, from team meetings and workshops to conferences and training sessions. It is particularly useful for gathering feedback, generating ideas, and identifying key themes. It can also be used as a warm-up activity to energize a group and encourage participation.

The time allocated to each phase can be adjusted depending on the complexity of the topic and the size of the group. The size of the small groups can also be varied depending on the desired level of interaction.

Case Study: Gathering Feedback on a New Product Prototype

Imagine a company has developed a new product prototype and wants to gather feedback from potential users. They decide to use Shift & Share to structure a feedback session.

Individual Reflection

Participants are given a few minutes to individually examine the prototype and consider its

features, usability, and potential benefits. They jot down their initial thoughts and impressions. This allows for focused individual thought.

Small Group Sharing

Participants are divided into small groups of three. Within each group, they take turns sharing their feedback on the prototype. They discuss what they liked, what they disliked, and what they would change. This creates space for detailed feedback.

Whole Group Synthesis

Each small group shares the key themes that emerged from their discussions. One group reports that most participants found the user interface intuitive but suggested adding more detailed instructions. Another group reports that participants appreciated the product's innovative features but expressed concern about its durability. The facilitator records these key themes on a whiteboard. This creates a clear overview of feedback.

The company then uses this feedback to refine the product prototype before launching it to the market. This example demonstrates how Shift & Share can be used to gather valuable feedback quickly and efficiently.

Advantages & Potential Limitations

Shift & Share offers several advantages. It is a simple and easy-to-learn method that requires minimal preparation or resources. It is also a highly effective way to quickly generate and share a large number of ideas or insights.

This structure ensures that everyone has an opportunity to contribute, promoting inclusivity and maximizing participation. It also creates a safe and comfortable space for sharing, especially in the small group phase.

Shift & Share facilitates the identification of key themes and patterns. The whole group synthesis phase allows participants to see the bigger picture and understand the collective perspectives.

It is a very flexible structure that can be adapted to suit different contexts and time constraints. The time allocated to each phase and the size of the small groups can be

adjusted as needed.

However, there are also some potential limitations to consider. The effectiveness of the method depends on the willingness of participants to engage in open and honest sharing. If participants are hesitant to share their true thoughts or opinions, the insights gained may be limited.

It is important to create a safe and supportive environment where participants feel comfortable expressing themselves. The facilitator plays a key role in setting the tone and ensuring that everyone feels respected.

The whole group synthesis phase can sometimes be challenging if there are a large number of small groups or if the discussions have generated a lot of diverse information. The facilitator needs to be skilled at summarizing and synthesizing the key takeaways.

Summary

Shift & Share is a valuable Liberating Structure for quickly generating and sharing multiple ideas or insights within a group. It uses a structured process of individual reflection, small group sharing, and whole group synthesis. Shift & Share rapidly shares ideas within a group.