Brainstorming may be just the technique to rejuvenate your organization and get everyone excited and involved. The purpose of this method is to get out as many ideas as possible. The more you have to choose from, the better your final choice will be! You can use brainstorming for almost anything: program ideas, themes, slogans, publicity, group goals and problem solving.

The rules for brainstorming are deceptively simple. Be sure the group understands them and someone has the job of making sure they are followed.

### Brainstorming Basics

- **Relax**
  Brainstorming is anything but a rigid and formal exercise.

- **Limit**
  Set a time limit, depending on the size of the group and the complexity of the issue.

- **Record**
  Select someone to write down the ideas as they develop.

- **Focus**
  Select what you want to brainstorm.

- **Blurt**
  Have everyone in the group blurt out as many ideas pertaining to the subject as they can.

- **Review**
  After you have exhausted your great mental reservoir, review your ideas.

### Narrowing Down the Possibilities

- Combine-two or more ideas to make a great idea and improve on the rough thoughts thrown out in the session.
- Discard ideas which are impractical, impossible, not feasible, or illegal.
- Chose the three best ideas by having everyone vote.
- Examine each of the top three ideas.
- Pick the strongest one.

### The Ground Rules

- All participants and ideas hold equal weight.
- Ideas are placed on blackboard/flipchart, visible to everyone.
- A time limit is determined.
- One specific problem/issue discussed at one time.
- Everyone is encouraged to speak often.
- Building on one another’s ideas is encouraged.
- Quantity not quality of ideas is important at this stage.
- Negative and critical remarks are not allowed.

Check Out These Brainstorming Resources

- Pfeiffer and Jones; 1972 *Annual Handbook for Group Facilitators*.
- Schindler-Rainmann E. and Lippitt, R.; *Taking Your Meetings Out of the Doldrums*. 

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**LEADERSHIP TAKEOUT**

- Is your group stuck with no ideas?
- Do you do the same activities the same old way year after year?
- Do the leaders and just a few others seem to do all the talking?