

# Brainstorming Checklist

## PREPARE

### Define the challenge

- ☐ Topics should be broad enough for surprises
- ☐ But narrow enough for focused ideation
- ☐ Prepare 5-min context-setting opener

### Invite participants

- ☐ Diversity is essential
- ☐ Ideal group size: 5-8
- ☐ Include experienced brainstormers

### Determine location

- ☐ Offsite: less distractions
- ☐ Onsite: easier to find participants

### Prepare the space

- ☐ Quiet space with few distractions
- ☐ Large vertical surface to hold Post-its
- ☐ Surface easily visible to all
- ☐ Comfortable seating for long sessions
- ☐ Standing room for short sessions

### Prepare materials

- ☐ Post-it notes: light colors, 3"x3" or 3"x5"
- ☐ Felt-tip markers: e.g., Sharpie "Fine Point"
- ☐ Inspirational props: e.g., products, lego

### Prepare participants

- ☐ Not necessary if topic is familiar
- ☐ If necessary, send brief one day ahead
- ☐ Brief leadership to mitigate conflicts

## FACILITATE

### Set the stage

- ☐ Give a 5-min brief to set the context
- ☐ Review process: Post-its, whiteboard, etc.
- ☐ Remind the group of brainstorming rules:

**LISTEN**  
**DEFER JUDGMENT**  
**BUILD ON IDEAS OF OTHERS**  
**ENCOURAGE WILD IDEAS**  
**ONE IDEA AT A TIME**  
**BE PRECISE AND CONCISE**  
**BE VISUAL**  
**GO FOR QUANTITY**

### Group dynamics

- ☐ Stay focused on the topic
- ☐ Keep ideas flowing
- ☐ Prepare to pivot if an idea grabs the group
- ☐ Switch topics when flow slows down

### Deal with extremes

- ☐ Encourage quiet participants to speak
- ☐ Manage dominant participants

### Capture and document

- ☐ Photograph all boards
- ☐ Collect all post-its and sketches

### Extend the session

- ☐ Provide channels for adding ideas later

## FOLLOW UP

### Invite participants for synthesis

- ☐ Include someone from the session
- ☐ Ideal group size: 2-4

### Prepare the session

- ☐ Print all photos of boards
- ☐ Spread Post-its on large surface
- ☐ Have empty space for rearranging

### Work the data

- ☐ Cluster, group, look for patterns
- ☐ Define categories and attributes
- ☐ Iterate, re-cluster, re-categorize
- ☐ Arrange items along a scale
- ☐ Identify key themes

### Next steps

- ☐ Select ideas for prototyping and testing
- ☐ Decide if you need another session
- ☐ Share conclusions with original participants

