Tool – Idea generation

THE FIVE PHASES OF IDEA DEVELOPMENT

If you have a shared vision or purpose common purpose but no fixed idea yet, you need to start generating project ideas. And not least qualify them. You can get a lot of good and not so good ideas, which you eventually have to sort and combine them until only one remains. Imagine the idea phase as a funnel into which you pour a lot of input. Out comes the idea that becomes the project.

01 ASK THE GOOD QUESTION

02 GENERATE IDEAS

03 QUALIFY THE IDEAS

04 TEST THE IDEAS

05 CHOOSE AN IDEA

01 ASK THE GOOD QUESTION

Start by asking the question from which you are going to generate ideas. This is the most important point because the question frames the ideas you will be working on. Go back to your vision or purpose and create an idea generation question that is related to one of them.

EXAMPLE

VISION: All people in our city should live more sustainably.

IDEA GENERATION QUESTION:

What can we create that will make people in our city to live more sustainably?

02 GENERATE IDEAS

Once you have the idea generating question in place, you are ready to get ideas. In this phase you are opening up, so keep three basic principles in mind:

☺ YOU ALWAYS SAY YES.

☺ ALL INPUT IS ALLOWED.

☺ NOTHING IS TOO STUPID TO SAY.

When generating ideas, it's all about throwing as many ideas on the table as possible. Even the bad ones! The first many ideas are usually not very good or innovative. But they need to be said so that they can get out of your system, and you can open up to the gold nuggets. Most of the time, they are hiding until the brain is ready.

For example, try the Negative Brainstorm exercise to get bad ideas, that can be transformed into good ones.

Tool: Negative Brainstorm

Objective: To find different and interesting ideas by first creating a lot of negative ideas and then turning them into positive ideas.

Time: 30-60 minutes

Materials: Flipchart, markers, and post-its.

HOW TO DO IT

01 Ask a positive question.

For example: What can we create to make people in the local area live more sustainably?

02 Turn the question into a negative one.

For example: What can we create to make people live as unsustainably as possible? Write it clearly on a flipchart for everyone to see. Feel free to ask several sub-questions to the negative question: What does it look like? What does it smell like? What is going on there?

03 Take five minutes to individually produce as many negative ideas as you can think of based on the question. Write them individually on post-its.

04 Present the negative ideas to each other one by one and hang them on the wall.

05 Take the negative ideas (avoid your own) and spend five minutes to individually turn them into positive ideas.

06 Present them to each other.

TIP FOR FACILITATOR:

☺ Ask a clear and relevant positive question. This sets the framework for the whole exercise.

☺ Insist that the ideas should be as negative as they can possibly be. Sometimes they can be unrealistic - and that's okay. It also makes the exercise more fun when you read them to each other.

HACK:

If you have an idea you would like to use this exercise to develop, you can adapt the questions. For example, ask: How do we create the best theater performance ever? (and the worst?) Also play with developing each other's negative and positive ideas along the way. This way, you can unfold the ideas and discover new sides to them.

Experiment with letting your idea development take place in different spaces. Go outside, down to the water or up to the attic. New surroundings can spark new thoughts - and it's always good to good to stretch your legs a little.

03 QUALIFY THE IDEAS

Once you have generated a lot of ideas, it is important to qualify them, look at them from different angles and build on them. You do this by going through all the ideas and asking: "What if...?", and "What would it take for [idea] to become possible?". You still open up but use all the ideas you have each generated as a starting point to build on them and make them common property. The Brainwalking tool takes you through the process.

Tool: Brainwalking

Purpose: To qualify your generated ideas and build on top of them.

Time: 10-30 minutes

Materials: Your generated ideas on post-its and a larger piece of paper.

HOW TO DO IT

01 Spread all your generated ideas on a table and stand around it.

02 Take turns to pick up a post-it with an idea. Lift it up so that everyone can see it and have a round where everyone fires away with new perspectives or additions to the idea. Complement each other by saying: "And then...", and the next one: "and then...". It may sound silly, but it works.

03 When no one has anything else to add, you take you take a new post-it with an idea. Make a note of the comments as you go along.

TIP FOR FACILITATOR:

Speed up the exercise the exercise so that one "and then" is replaced by the next. Help the team along by encouraging more pace.

HACK:

Try to combine the different ideas across the board. Take two post-its at a time. Or ten!

Spend time qualifying your ideas, before choosing the one you want to run with.

This way, you will be clearer about ideas and have a solid basis for to choose the best one.

04 TEST THE IDEAS

Once you have selected one or more good ideas, you should test them. What do the people you want to address think?

Talk to your target audience: What are their needs? What is important to them? What would make them interested? And what would scare them away?

Also ask yourself if anyone else is doing something cool that could work with your idea.

05 CHOOSE AN IDEA

Once you've tested the ideas, pick the one you want to take forward.

What are you most passionate about? What gives you a tingle in your stomach? What is visionary but at the same time possible to realize with the time and resources you have? Once you have qualified your ideas, you can often feel what has energy.

Can't agree on the best idea at all? best idea? Then you can do a simple vote on it, or maybe combine several ideas.

Inspired by: DEN LILLE PROJEKTHÅNDBOG — FRONTLØBERNE