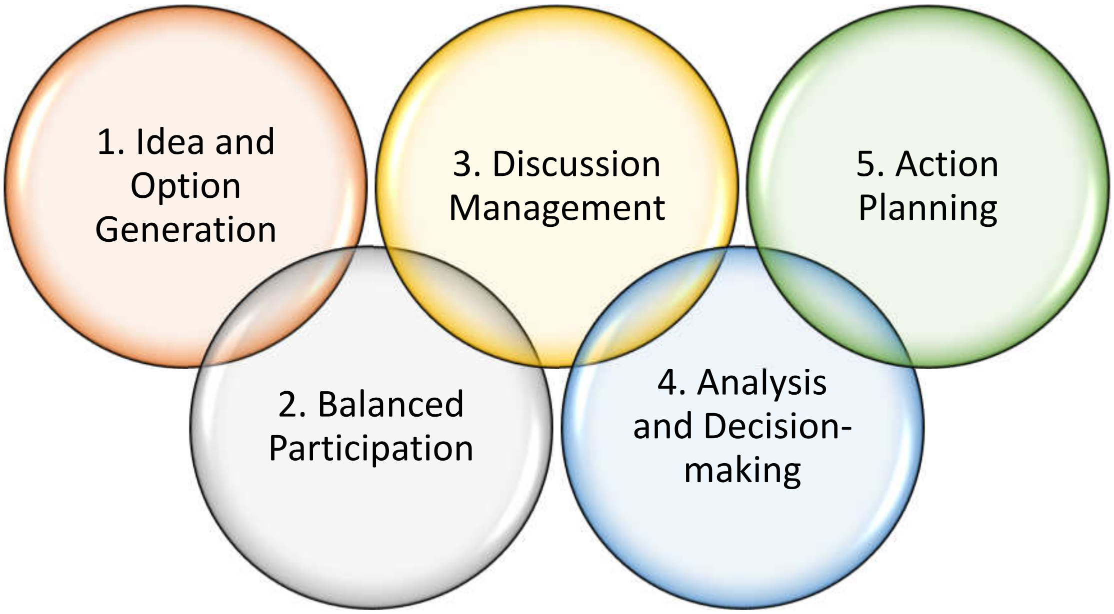
Handbook of Facilitation Techniques



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Handbook of Facilitation Techniques

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Four Prerequisites for Balanced Participation

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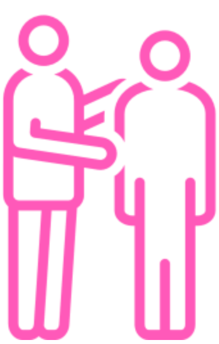

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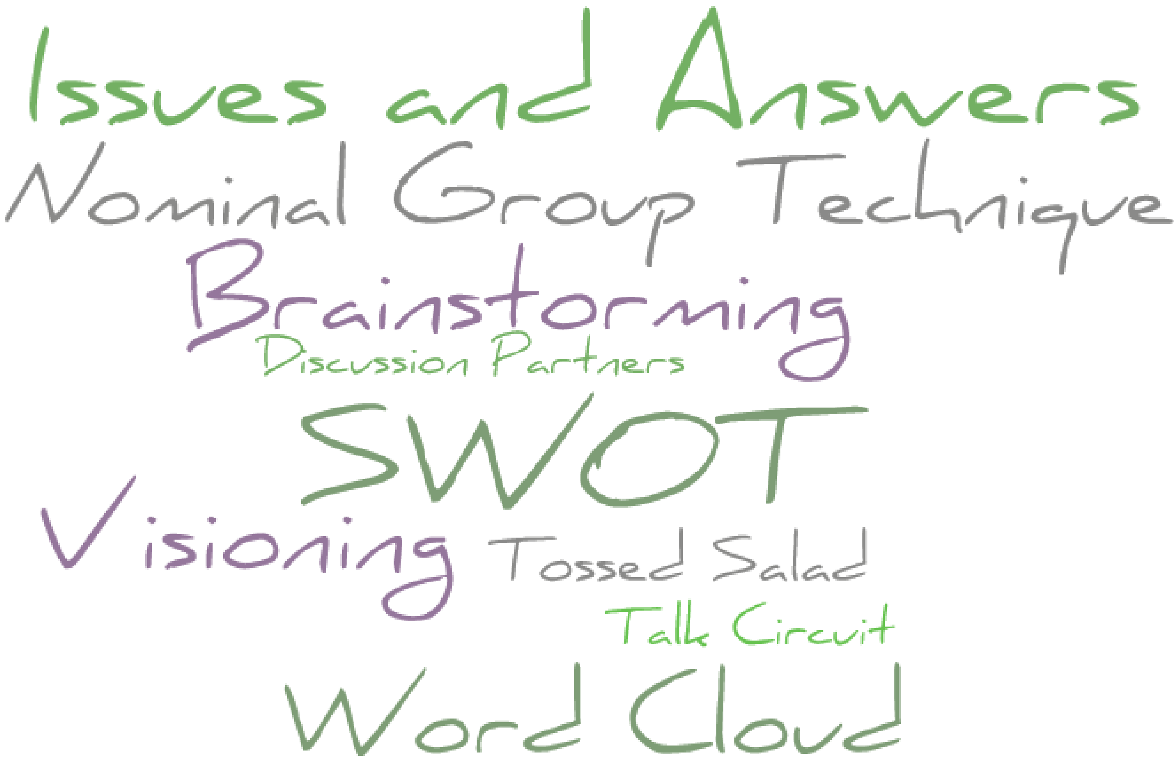


QuickTip - Brainstorming

Brainstorming is a method for generating many creative ideas in a short period of time, making it a divergence activity. Participants call out their ideas as they think of them, so that each person has an opportunity to build on the ideas of others.

The goal of brainstorming is to stimulate creative thinking. Follow these guidelines:

1. Don't criticize or evaluate the ideas – just record all of them
2. Encourage wild ideas
3. Hitchhike – combine, modify, and build new ideas on the ideas of others
4. Encourage quantity

When

Use brainstorming when:

1. When a broad range of options is desired.
2. When creative possibilities and ideas are needed.
3. You need to capture input from a variety of people

How

Review the guidelines of brainstorming (above) with the entire group. The leader ensures that the group understands the objective of the brainstorming session and the process to be used, then presents the situation in the form of a question. The question should use wording that encourages specific, tangible ideas, not opinions or vague concepts. Often it is best phrased as a "why," "how," or "what" question.

Then use one of the following brainstorming procedures.

Free Wheeling

1. Allow several minutes of silence for everyone to think about the question, then start the brainstorming.
2. Group members call out ideas spontaneously.
3. Facilitator or scribe records ideas as they are suggested.

Round Robin

1. Allow several minutes of silence for everyone to think about the question.
2. Facilitator asks each member in turn for an idea.
3. Facilitator or scribe records ideas as they are suggested.
4. Participants may pass on any round.
5. Session continues until everyone has passed during the last round.

Slip Method

1. Facilitator asks participants to write down their ideas individually. There is no group interaction.
2. The ideas are collected and organized.

Technique	Pro	Con
Free Wheeling	• Spontaneous • Most creative results • Encourages ideas built on input from several people	• Loudest participants may dominate, discouraging quieter people • Can get confusing, resulting in lost ideas
Round Robin	• Involves participants more equally • Tends to focus discussion • Allows ideas built on input from several people	• Some loss of energy while participants waiting for turn • Less able to build on ideas from others • Reluctance to pass when out of good ideas
Slip Method	• Anonymity allows sensitive topics to surface • Can be used with very large groups • Gathers ideas from quiet participants	• Not interactive - can't build on ideas of others • Difficult to clarify or get context for ideas • Slower

Tips

1. Record ideas where everyone can see them during the session to encourage building on them.
2. Judgment and creativity cannot occur simultaneously. That's the reason for the rules about no criticism and no evaluation.
3. Record ideas on flip charts or large pieces of paper. When ideas overflow to additional flipchart pages, post previous pages around the room so all ideas are still visible to everyone. If you write directly on a whiteboard you will have to do a lot of copying after the session (or take a photo).
4. Encourage unconventional thinking. Crazy ideas often come from a different perspective and can lead to great solutions by sparking someone's imagination.
5. If brainstorming will be followed immediately by an affinity exercise, consider recording the brainstorming ideas directly onto cards or stickies.
6. You can "seed" ideas by taking a few minutes at the start for each participant to write down some initial ideas that he can throw into the session at the appropriate time.
7. The skill of the facilitator has a large influence. Practice or call in an expert.
8. For large groups, have a facilitator AND one or more scribes so that the rapid flow of ideas is not impeded.
9. The scribe should try not to rephrase ideas. If an idea is not clear or is too long to capture, ask the person who suggested to rephrase it in a way that can be recorded and that everyone can understand.

10. Karl Albrect's *Brain Power* suggests phrases that the facilitator can use to spur ideas. "How can we: "
    a. put to new uses
    b. adapt
    c. find similar things
    d. magnify
    e. eliminate
    f. make smaller
    g. substitute
    h. rearrange
    i. combine
    j. blend

For further information, see the ASQ article on brainstorming at http://asq.org/learn-about-quality/idea-creation-tools/overview/brainstorm.html

Excerpted from Synergy's Project Tools and Techniques Guide, p. 11-13, rev. 201022

QuickTip - Nominal Group Technique (NGT)

Nominal group technique (NGT) is a structured method for group brainstorming that encourages contributions from everyone. See the Brainstorming article for tips and other variations.

When to Use Nominal Group Technique

- When some group members are much more vocal than others.
- When some group members think better in silence.
- When there is concern about some members not participating.
- When the group does not easily generate quantities of ideas.
- When all or some group members are new to the team.
- When the issue is controversial or there is heated conflict.

Nominal Group Technique Procedure

Materials needed: paper and pen or pencil for each individual, flipchart, marking pens, tape.

1. State the subject of the brainstorming. Clarify the statement as needed until everyone understands it.
2. Each team member silently thinks of and writes down as many ideas as possible in a set period of time (5 to 10 minutes).
3. Each member in turn states aloud one idea. Facilitator records it on the flipchart.
    - No discussion is allowed, not even questions for clarification.
    - Ideas given do not need to be from the team member's written list. Indeed, as time goes on, many ideas will not be.
    - A member may "pass" his or her turn, and may then add an idea on a subsequent turn.

    Continue around the group until all members pass or for an agreed-upon length of time.

4. Discuss each idea in turn. Wording may be changed only when the idea's originator agrees. Ideas may be stricken from the list only by unanimous agreement. Discussion may clarify meaning, explain logic or analysis, raise and answer questions, or state agreement or disagreement.
5. Prioritize the ideas using multivoting or list reduction.

Nominal Group Technique Considerations

- Discussion should be equally balanced among all ideas. The facilitator should not allow discussion to turn into argument. The primary purpose of the discussion is clarification. It is not to resolve differences of opinion.
- Keep all ideas visible. When ideas overflow to additional flipchart pages, post previous pages around the room so all ideas are still visible to everyone.
- See brainstorming for other suggestions to use with this tool.

Excerpted from Nancy R. Tague's *The Quality Toolbox*, Second Edition, ASQ Quality Press, 2004, pages 364–365.

Retrieved from http://asq.org/learn-about-quality/idea-creation-tools/overview/nominal-group.html on 9/2/15

QuickTip – Discussion Partners

Discussion Partners is a simple technique that can be used to start a discussion on almost any question or issue.

When to Use

Use it to gather broad input on a topic, create energy in the room, and encourage participation from everyone. It works well with a large group because it allows you to break the group into manageable small groups.

Procedure

1. Pose question to large group
2. Break into pairs or small groups to discuss
3. Have small groups report back on what they concluded

Considerations

1. Discussion Partners is simple and easy. It is a useful technique when you are thinking about the design of a session. You can also insert it on the fly - when the session seems to need a small group activity that encourages participants to dig deeper and hear from each other.
2. This technique is a good way to involve quiet voice and minority opinions.

QuickTip – Tossed Salad

Tossed Salad combines elements of brainstorming and small group work. It helps a large group draw out everyone's best ideas, refine them, and select a few for further action.

When to Use

Use this technique when you want to make sure that the group considers ideas from all participants. It requires some supplies – small cards to write on and a container (the "salad bowl") to collect them.

Procedure

1. Provide each person with a stack of blank cards, such as index cards.
2. Ask everyone to write down their best ideas, one per card, and place their cards into the "salad bowl."
3. Mix up the cards in the bowl - "toss the salad."
4. Pass the bowl and draw. Typically, each person draws as many cards as they put into the bowl.
5. Break into small groups. Give the groups time to discuss and evaluate the ideas on the cards that the group members drew.
6. Get back together as a large group. Have a representative from each small group verbally summarize their evaluation, then facilitate a large group discussion that further refines and selects the most promising ideas for further action.

Considerations

1. Consider limiting the number of cards that each person can put in the bowl so that they focus on writing down their best ideas.
2. This is a good technique to use when some participants are more comfortable expressing their ideas in writing rather than speaking about them.
3. It also can provide some degree of anonymity about the initial ideas.

QuickTip – Issues and Answers

Issues and Answers is a group problem-solving technique. It is a good way help a large group tackle a long list of issues in a reasonably short amount of time.

When to Use

Use this technique when the group is working on issues that can be partly evaluated in small groups but still benefit from the participation of everyone. This technique is more complicated than many facilitation techniques, so prepare for it carefully and give clear instructions to the participants.

Procedure

This technique has four distinct phases – list the issues to be solved, analyze them, generate potential solutions, and select the best.

List issues

The facilitator may do this step in advance or during a break, depending on the nature of the problems to be solved.

- Agree on which problems the group should work on.
- Write a very short summary of each problem at the top of a flipchart and post the flipcharts around the room.

Analyze in small groups

- Ask participants to select a flipchart that lists a problem they have input on and go to that flipchart. This will result in groups of people gathered around each flipchart.
- Give the groups at the flipcharts time to analyze the problem on the flipchart and write their observations on the top half of it. The groups should stick to observations and analysis and leave recommending solutions for the next step (as much as possible). They should leave the bottom half of the chart blank for now.
- After a short time, stop the groups and ask participants to select a new flipchart that they want to work on. The newly formed groups should add more ideas to the top section of their new flipcharts. Do not repeat ideas that are already listed – only add new ideas.
- Repeat this process until participants are out of observations to write down. It is not necessary for every person to participate in every flipchart if they have nothing to add.

Generate potential solutions

- Ask participants to go back to the flipcharts that they started with. This reforms the initial small groups.
- Ask each small group to read the comments that others have written, then generate potential solutions. Write the solutions on the bottom half of the flipchart.
- Call time, and as before, ask participants to select new flipcharts. The new group should continue adding solutions.
- Repeat this process until everyone has been able to contribute solutions to the flipcharts of their choice.

Select the best

- Each person visits all flipcharts and makes check marks next to their top 1 to 3 solutions. An alternative is to lead the group in multivoting for solutions.

Considerations

1. Alternative: if breakout rooms are available, you can use one room per problem. This may reduce the energy level and make it harder for people to visit other problems to keep track of what is going on, but it also may give more room to people to spread out. Add more time if you use this alternative.
2. Have extra flipcharts on hand in case the originals over flow.

QuickTip – Talk Circuit

Talk Circuit is a pairs activity that elicits ideas from everyone and gets those ideas in front of the entire group.

When to Use

Use Talk Circuit when you want to create energy, encourage participation even from quiet participants, and help participants get to know each other. It works well with a large group.

Procedure

1. Pose an open-ended question to the group that you would like everyone to express an opinion on. For example, "What are the biggest opportunities you see for our organization over the next 12 months?"
2. Allow a short period of quiet time for all participants to silently write their responses.
3. Ask everyone to pair with a partner. One person in each pair should start by summarizing his responses while the other listens and asks clarifying questions. After two to three minutes, ask them to switch roles.
4. When time is up, ask participants to switch partners and repeat, but for a shorter time, such as two minutes each. Encourage people to improve their responses from one round to the next as they hear new ideas from partners.
5. Continue this for a third round, limited to one minute per person.
6. Gather the group back together. Share the ideas in the whole group and record them in a visible location, such as on a flipchart.

Considerations

1. The QuickTip for Visioning describes a variation of this technique that is tuned specifically to elicit ideas about a desired future state.
2. Since this technique requires everyone to participate, it is a good way to involve quiet voice and minority opinions. Most of the action happens in pairs rather than in the large group, appealing to people who prefer speaking in small settings.
3. Keep the times short to nudge participants to prioritize sharing key points. This also keeps the energy level up.
4. It is not necessary to do so many rounds that everyone speaks to everyone else.

QuickTip - SWOT Analysis

SWOT analysis is a popular tool for situational analysis. SWOT is an acronym for "strengths, weaknesses, opportunities, and threats." It looks at both internal and external factors (figure 1).

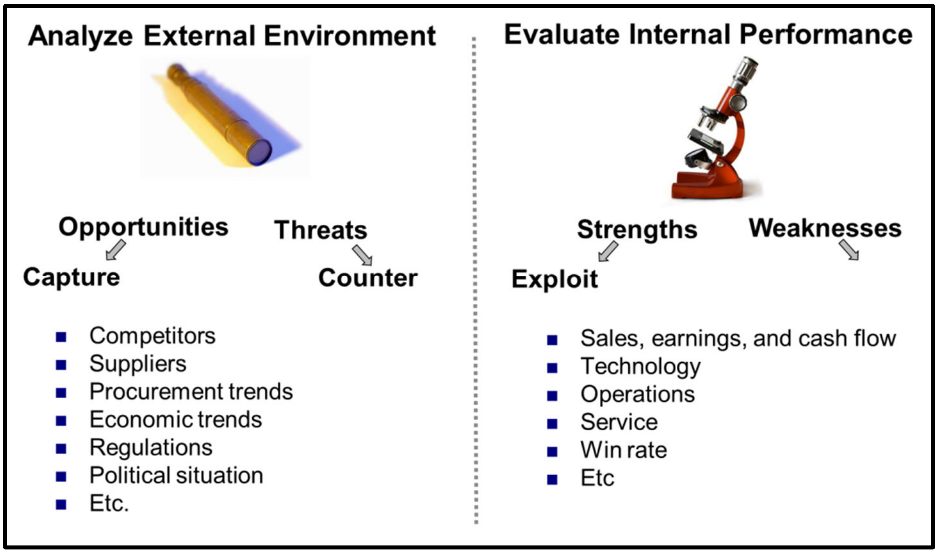


Figure 1: SWOT does internal and external analysis.

The external analysis examines both opportunities and threats from factors such as competitors, suppliers, economic trends, and regulations. Then it looks for ways to take advantage of (capture) the opportunities and counter the threats.

The internal performance analysis looks at the organization's strengths and how to exploit them, as well as weaknesses and how to mitigate them.   Examples of internal areas to evaluate are financial performance, development capabilities such as engineering expertise, technology, and service and operations capabilities.

All of this gives a good understanding of the current state of the organization, as well as some ideas on how to change that state to get to the desired state.

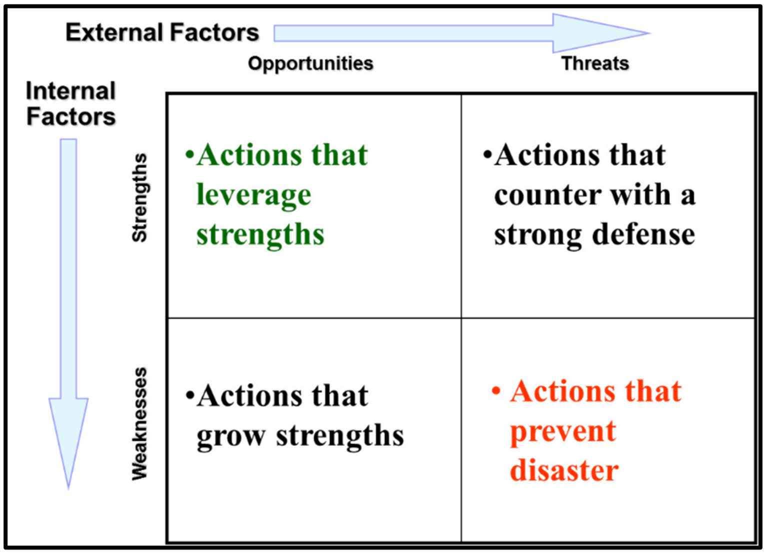


Figure 2: Develop actions based on SWOT analysis.

The strongest strategic actions emerge from external opportunities that intersect with an organization's internal strengths (upper left quadrant of figure 2).   These are chances for an organization to "lead the charge," moving forward as a leader leveraging its strengths.

The most dangerous situations for an organization are in the lower right quadrant, where external threats intersect with internal weaknesses. This puts the organization in a defensive position right where it is weak.

Source: *Strategic Planning* lecture

QuickTip - Visioning

Visioning is a highly participative approach to developing a shared description of a desired future state. It is a variation of the Talk Circuit technique tuned especially for visioning.

When to Use

Use this technique when the group must identify and get alignment on a goal. It helps participants clarify their thoughts, put forward their ideas, and hear perspectives from everyone. It increases buy-in to the future state because the group's direction is coming from all of its members. Visioning often creates a high energy level in the room.

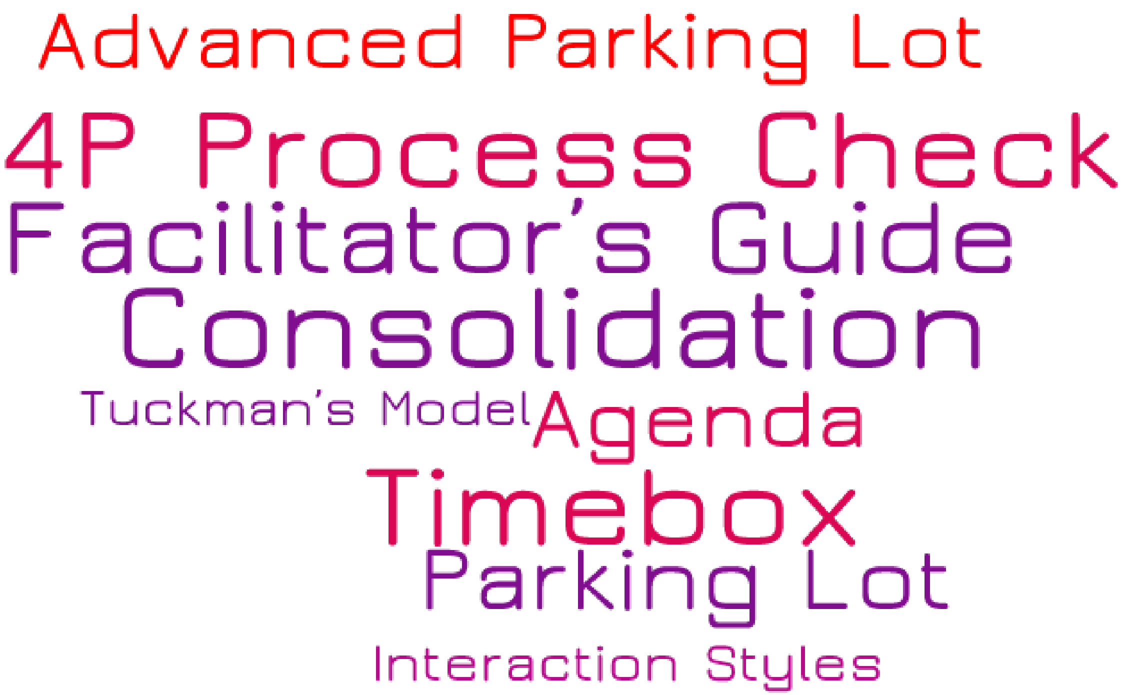
Procedure

1. Identify the area at hand, for example, patient satisfaction. Pose a series of questions about what participants desire that area to look like at a point in the future. For example, "Two years from now, how are front office employees behaving differently when they interact with customers?" or "What problems have we solved in order to reduce patient waiting times?"
2. Ask each participant to silently write responses to the questions.
3. Ask each participant to partner with someone they work with the least, or who has a significantly different area of expertise. One person in the pair shares their vision for three to five minutes, then they switch and the other person shares.
4. When time is up, have participants switch partners and repeat, but for a shorter time. Encourage participants to incorporate good ideas they have heard during previous rounds. Continue this for as many rounds as desired but limit each round to 1 – 3 minutes per person to nudge participants to prioritize sharing key points. It is not necessary to do so many rounds that everyone speaks to everyone else.
5. Have the group gather back together. Facilitate a discussion to consolidate the ideas that emerged during the rounds. Typically, by this point there will be a lot of commonality.

Considerations

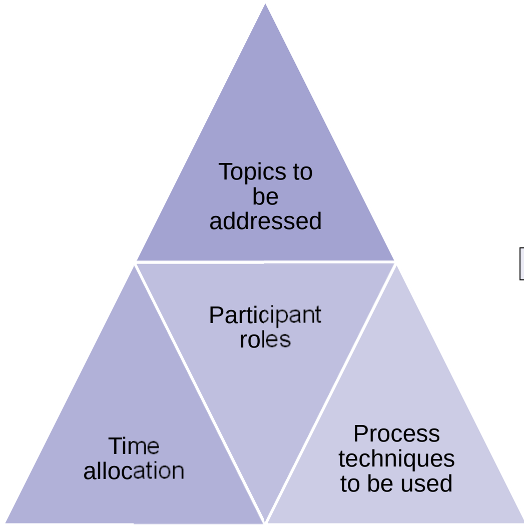
1. This technique involves everyone. It is a good way to involve quiet voice and minority opinions.
2. It may be helpful to describe the current state at the start of the exercise, before starting to get the group working on the desired future state. For example, if the topic is customer satisfaction, summarize data on the current level of satisfaction, major reasons for dissatisfaction, and trends or changes. This will help the participants generate more informed ideas, especially if they are not personally deeply familiar with the area.
3. Think carefully about what initial questions to pose, since they influence the direction of subsequent conversation. However, don't require that people stick to those questions.
4. Encourage people, as they go through the rounds, to incorporate good ideas they hear into their own vision for the next round.

Techniques to Manage Discussion



Facilitator's Guide Shows "How"

Contents



- Detailed agenda (for all participants)
- Facilitator's guide (for facilitator only)

Formal vs. informal

Editable Templates For You

Facilitator's Guide

Purpose of Meeting (why is it worth our time to hold this meeting?)

Specific Objectives to be Accomplished (what do we want to get done by its end?)
1. 2.

Participants Needed

Name	**General Role or Purpose for Attending**

Topics (total duration: _)
1. Topic name
   a. Purpose of topic:
   b. Process techniques and roles that will be used to achieve the purpose of this topic
      i.
      ii.
      iii.
   c. Other roles for this topic:
   d. Estimated duration:
2. Topic name
   a. Purpose of topic:
   b. Process techniques and roles that will be used to achieve the purpose of

Meeting Agenda

Date: <date>, <start time> - <end time>
Location or call-in info:
Meeting purpose: <short summary>
Specific objectives to be accomplished
1.
2.

Participants

Name	Meeting Role	Contact Info

Outline of meeting

	Time	Topic	Who facilitates?	How long?	Purpose [2]
1	9:00	Greetings, review agenda and update open action items		10 m	Update
2	9:10	Review risk landscape		5 m	Discuss
7	9:55	End • Review and log new decisions • Review and log new action items (clear action description, owner and due date) • Agree on next steps, meeting time & location		5 m	Decide

Attachments:
1.
2.

Technique to Re-steer: 4P Process Check

Progress
- “Is the goal of this meeting still being achieved?”
- When: few ideas are emerging or the discussion goes in circles

Process
- “Is the technique (e.g brainstorming) that we’re using still working?”
- When: process is not being followed or technique is not yielding expected results

Pace
- “Is this meeting moving at the right pace?”
- When: agenda timeline is not being met, or people are fidgeting or want to go back over previous material

People
- “How are you feeling? Have you lost the thread of the discussion?”
- When: Meeting has gotten long or people look disengaged, tired or frustrated

“Conducting a process check involves stopping the action to shift member focus to the process or how things are going” Ingrid Bens, Facilitation at a Glance, p. 16

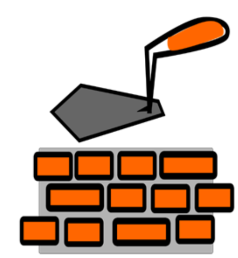
My Tips:
1. Check against the agenda.
2. If off track, let the group help you decide what to do.
3. Process check at periodic intervals, whether or not you think the meeting is on track.

Technique to Move Forward: Consolidation

- Pause the meeting
- Restate, clarify, or summarize important points, arguments, ideas, or agreements
- If agreement, declare closure
- Move to next topic or agenda item

“What I think I heard you say is …”

“Let me summarize what we all just agreed on.”



Consolidation firms up the foundation of agreement built so far, enabling you to start building the next layer.

Techniques to Avoid “Rabbit Holes”

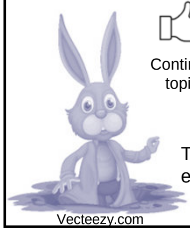
Timebox

At start of meeting set a norm about timeboxes

At start of a topic agree on time limit for it

Call for thumb vote when approaching limit

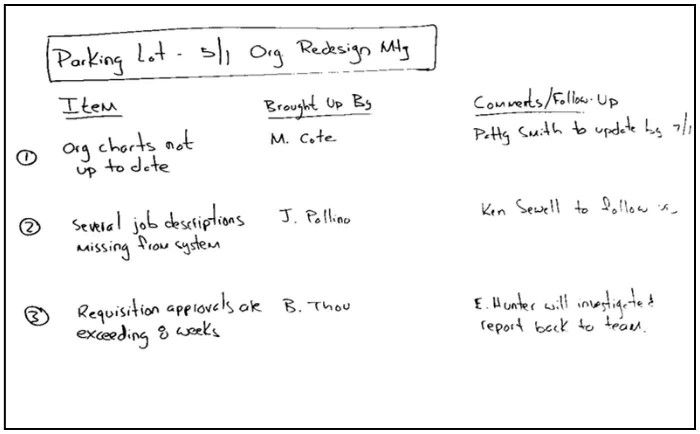
- Continue topic
- Move on
- Either is fine



Vecteezy.com

Tip: group decides whether to extend timebox

Parking Lot



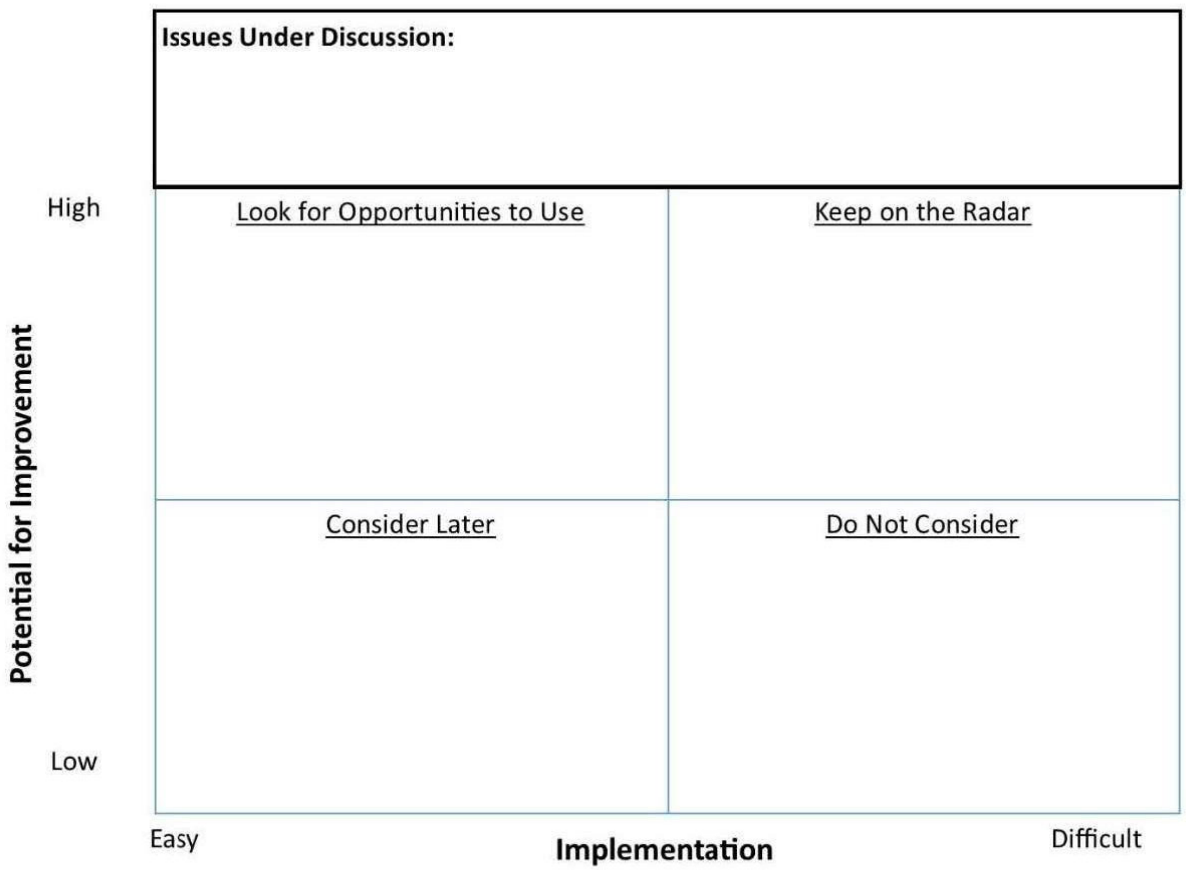
Example from https://projectmanagementskills.info/facilitation-skills/, retrieved 7/3/2017

Parking Lot is a technique for dealing with the tangential issues that threaten to take your meeting off track.

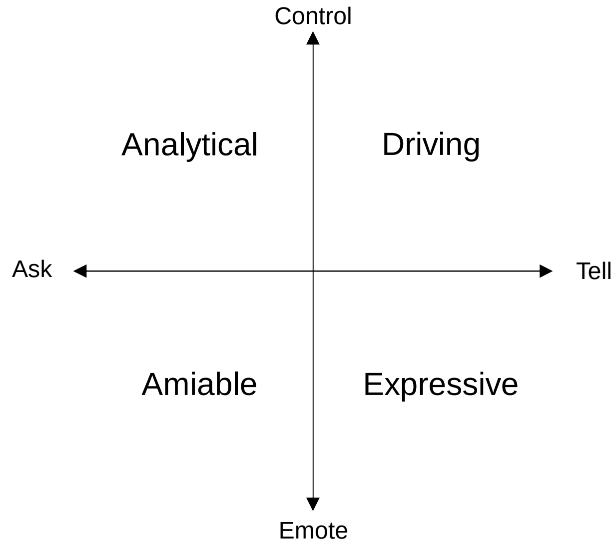
- Ava Butler, organizational development consultant, http://www.avasbutler.com

Advanced Parking Lot

Many of us know how to use a parking lot during a meeting, but you can enhance the technique when the meeting participants are discussing what actions to take. When the group agrees to park an idea or option, do more than stick it in a general parking lot. Use a chart like the one below to decide on the spot the type of follow up that is most appropriate.



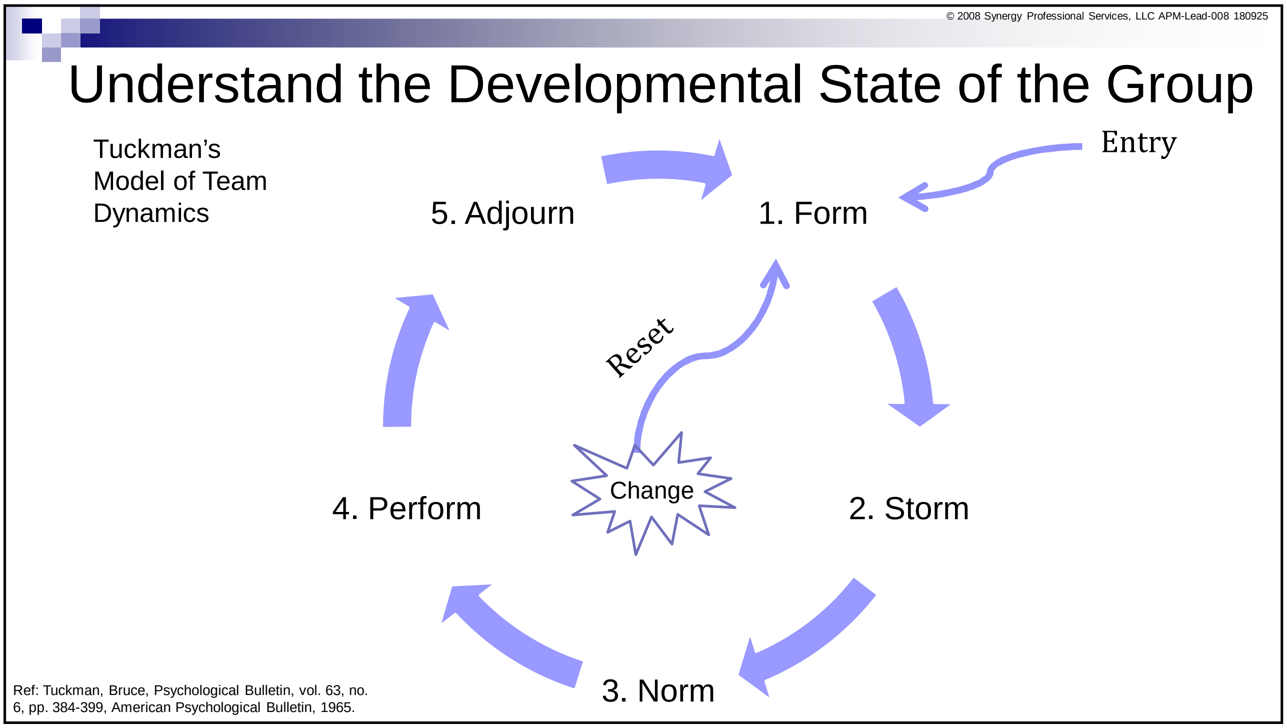
Four Interaction Styles



- "Home Base"
- Style movement, especially under stress

Leverage Style Strengths

Style	Contribution
Driving	■ Clarifies expectations ■ Offers solutions or paths to solutions ■ Produces results efficiently
Expressive	■ Casts vision and shares ideas ■ Creates excitement and energy ■ Provides "gut check"
Amiable	■ Promotes loyalty and dedication to team ■ Offers support ■ Encourages teamwork
Analytical	■ Provides structured, well-analyzed data ■ Considers multiple options ■ Promotes practicality



What Happens in Each Stage

Stage	Behaviors	Team Actions
Forming "Orientation"	•Excitement and anticipation •Optimism •Guarded	• Testing dependencies • Abstract discussions • Identifying the tasks • Complaints
Storming "Independence"	•Emotional responses to tasks •Resistance and competition	• Conflict and intra-group hostility • Arguing, tension • Bids for power
Norming "Interdependence"	•Expressing opinions •Constructive criticism •Acceptance, relief •Cooperation	• Development of team "Norms" • Clear roles and responsibilities • Team sets common goals
Performing "Cohesiveness and Performance"	• Insightfulness • Satisfaction	• Emergence of solutions • Constructive, self-directed • Positive conflict management • Teamwork
Adjourning "Endings"	•Feeling of loss when team disbands	

Main Focus: Team Dynamics (Forming, Storming)

Main Focus: Work (Norming, Performing)

Analysis and Decision-making Techniques

Option Analysis
Consensus Building
Decision Grid
Questioning
Affinity Clustering
Multivoting
Five Whys
Fist to Five
PICK Chart
Cause and Effect
Gap Analysis
Pareto Analysis
Plus / Delta

QuickTip – Affinity Clustering

An affinity diagram is an information organizing tool. It promotes creative synthesis by asking a team to identify and group similar items from a large list of possibilities. The resulting structured information can then be used in further convergence activities such as ranking and rating. Affinity clustering is often paired with a preceding divergence activity that generates many raw possibilities, like brainstorming.

When to Use

- You need to clarify or structure a large mass of information
- The problem is complex and difficult to understand
- You need to decide which ideas or information are important to the problem
- The problem requires or benefits from involvement of a group

Procedure

Before the session, write each of the ideas on a small "sticky" (sheet of adhesive note paper). Often, this has already been done during a brainstorming session. Place all of the stickies in random order on a large, accessible surface such as a wall or table. If the ideas haven't been discussed recently, the team may need time to re-read them.

The team members silently arrange the ideas into similar clusters (affinity clusters) by moving the stickies. If a team member does not agree with the positioning of a sticky, he can move it into another cluster with which it has a stronger affinity. No communication is allowed, since this might limit thinking on possible affinities.

This repositioning continues until the affinity clusters have solidified. Then the facilitator asks members to explain why they organized the ideas into these clusters. What makes the items in a cluster similar, and how do they differ from other clusters? These discussions may cause further rounds of repositioning.

After the team agrees on characteristics of each cluster, label and describe them. Examine the relationships between clusters to reveal underlying structure of the problem.

Considerations

1. Draw a "parking lot" in a section of the work area. If people repeatedly move a specific sticky, this indicates an important disagreement that should be discussed later. Move the contentious sticky to the parking lot for discussion after the silent clustering is done.

2. Do not label the clusters until after the team completely agrees on grouping. Prematurely labeling emerging groups will limit the teams thinking.
3. The team may want to talk during the positioning. Discourage communication until the clusters have taken shape and the change rate is low. At that point, there may be some left behind or parking lot stickies that need to be discussed.
4. You can use an online collaborative whiteboard such as Miro or Mural to do affinity clustering with virtual or hybrid teams.

QuickTip – Multivoting

Multivoting is a way to quantify the positions and preferences of a group by allowing each member to decide how much an option is worth to them. Each member's votes are recorded, but a decision is not necessarily reached. Multivoting gives the group information about where individual members stand and the strength of their positions. The votes are used as a springboard for identifying consensus, surfacing disagreements, and identifying the size of gaps.

When to Use

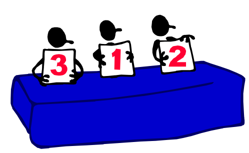
- "Taking the temperature" of a group as it is moving toward agreement.
- Identifying areas of disagreement, misunderstanding, or differing priorities.
- There are fewer than ten options under consideration.

Procedure

Set up a grid of names and options on a flip chart. Give each member a number of votes to distribute across the options according to their preferences. Members distribute their votes across the options to indicate their relative preferences. Use these voting guidelines:

	A	B	C	D
Tom	3	1	1	1
Mary	1	1	2	2
John	1	1	3	1
Karen	1	1	2	2

- Encourage members to spread their votes across all options to express their relative feelings about all of them. Don't lump all votes on a single favorite.
- Each person should decide how to distribute votes before recording them on the chart, to avoid being influenced by how others vote.
- Ask for and record votes by option, not by person. For each option, members should vote simultaneously by raising fingers, showing a scorecard, or similar method.
- Allow votes of "zero" only when a person can't live with that option.



Considerations

1. The number of votes available to each member should be about 1.5 times the number of options.
2. The biggest value of multivoting is the discussion that follows. Facilitate a discussion of large gaps, extreme positions, and area of agreement.
3. A variation of multivoting is "red dot" voting. All options are listed on a flipchart. Members have adhesive dots corresponding to their votes. All members simultaneously distribute their dots next to the options. The resulting visual cluster gives a picture of the group's preference for each option. The method is fast and works well with a large group, but does not allow follow up discussion on individual disagreements because individual votes

are not recorded. Thus it is good for fast sensing of the temperature, but less effective at closing gaps and building commitment.

4. To use meeting time most effectively, schedule a multivote just before a break. Allow people to finish voting during the break.
5. See the Fist ot Five technique for a quick variation of this technique that is optimized for voting on just one issue.

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QuickTip - Fist to Five

To use this technique, the facilitator restates an action the group might take and asks the team to show their level of support. Each team member responds by holding up a closed fist or the number of fingers that corresponds to her level of support. If a team member holds up fewer than three fingers, she is given the opportunity to state her questions, objections, or recommendations for improvement. Then the team may respond, modify the idea under discussion, or generate new ideas.

This encourages several positive behaviors that may lead the team toward a higher quality decision.

- Dissenters make a case for their position to the rest of the group.
- Proponents hear and consider differing points of view.
- Everyone works together to make the proposal better.
- Reduces the chance that silent disagreement later leads to lack of support or sabotage of the course of action.

The facilitator continues the fist to five process until the team achieves consensus (everyone holds up three or more fingers) or agrees to move on to the next issue.

Closed fist - No. A closed fist is a way to block consensus.

1 finger - I have major concerns that could potentially be addressed.

2 fingers - I would like to discuss some minor issues or get more information.

3 fingers - I'm not in total agreement but I feel comfortable enough to let this proposal pass without further discussion.

4 fingers - I think it's a good idea and will work for it.

5 fingers - It's a great idea and I would like to take the lead when we implement it.

Definition modified from an entry on the agile-focused site whatis.com., which was retrieved 7/3/17 from http://whatis.techtarget.com/definition/fist-to-five-fist-of-five

Use Constructive Language Styles

Style	Paraphrasing	Reporting behavior	Describing feelings	Checking perception
Example	"What I'm hearing you say is …"	"I'm noticing that we've only heard from the left side of the room on this topic."	"I feel like we've run out of energy and could use a break."	"You seem anxious to move on to the next agenda item."
Benefit	Assures participants that ideas are being heard Helps consolidate discussion so it can move forward	Gives participants information about how their actions are being perceived	Lets participants know it is OK to constructively express feelings	Allows facilitator to take emotional pulse and possibly redirect

Question Formats

Fact-finding Gathers verifiable info
- "What progress tracking methods were used on that project?"

Feeling-finding Reveals subjective opinions
- "What kind of reaction are you expecting from the users?"

Tell-me-more Encourages people to elaborate
- "What other options can you think of?"

Best / worst Tests outer limits
- "What is the biggest challenge working on that project team?"

Third-party De-personalizes challenging questions
- "What are your thoughts about why some people might resist this approach?"

Magic wand Encourages innovative thinking
- "If you had total control over the project, what would you change first?"
- "I wonder what it would look like if … What do you think?" (empathetic nudge; de-personalizes)

QuickTip - Five Whys

This is a very simple but powerful questioning process that helps a team peel away layers of symptoms to get closer the real root cause of a situation. Understanding these root causes is key to making long term improvements to a situation rather than treating symptoms. The technique was originally developed by Sakichi Toyoda who stated that "by repeating why five times, the nature of the problem as well as its solution becomes clear."

When to Use

- When you want to bring clarity and refinement to a problem statement.
- When you need to elicit information on real motivations, needs, or existing ways of doing things. For example, you may need to understand how a business process is really performed instead of how it is supposed to be done, and why.
- When you want to push a group to delve deeper to figure out what the real problem is, not just its obvious symptoms.

Procedure

1. To use informally, usually in a 1:1 or small group interview:
    a. Ask a question about why something happened or is done a certain way.
    b. When you get an answer, ask why that is the way it is, or why not an alternative approach.
    c. Keep asking why or why not, being careful to phrase the question in a variety of ways so that you don’t come across as obnoxious or confrontational.
    d. Repeat until you get to the root cause, which may take more or less than five repetitions.
2. To use more formally, such as in a problem-solving session or kaizen event:
    a. Gather a group of people who have good insight into the problem or situation that you want to understand.
    b. At the top of a whiteboard or large piece of paper, write a summary of the problem.
    c. Ask why five times, as described above. Write the answer to each successive why below the previous one, connecting it with a vertical line. If there is more than one answer to a why question, write all of them on the same line, resulting in a branching tree.

Example

- Customer satisfaction scores are too low.

Why are scores too low?

- They hang up on calls to the customer service number.

Why do customers hang up?

- They get lost in the automated telephone tree that they must traverse being being connected to a live person.

Why do they get lost?

- The tree is very complex, so it takes many choices and keypresses to get to a relevant option (the tree is five levels deep, with ten choices at the top level).

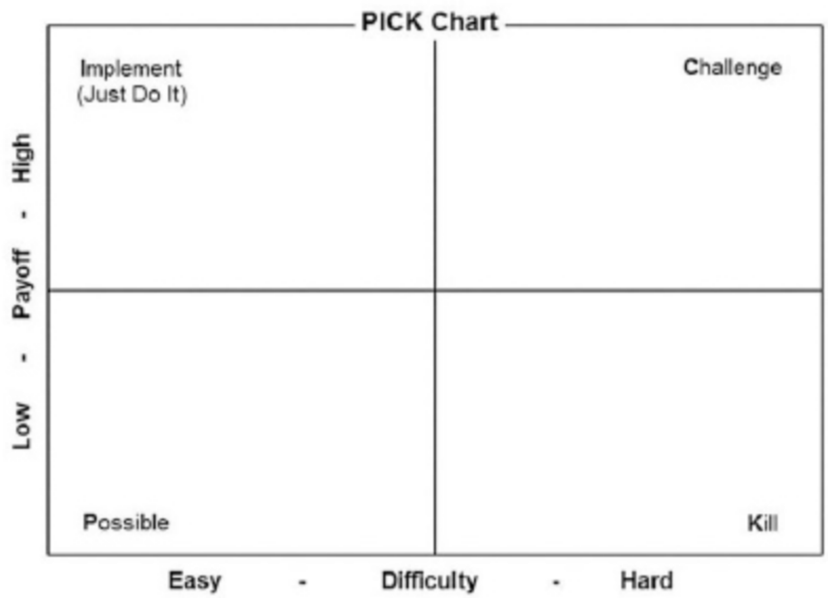
Why is the tree so complex?

- The choices for the most common customer problems are buried deep down, and many of the choices are for obsolete products or rare situations.

See more about the Five Whys technique at ASQ's quality tools resource center: https://asq.org/quality-resources/five-whys

QuickTip - PICK Chart

A PICK chart is a Lean Six Sigma tool used to categorize and prioritize improvement ideas. It's sometimes called an effort/impact chart. The chart has four quadrants:



- **P**ossible idea.
- **I**mplement idea.
- **C**hallenge idea.
- **K**ill idea.

An easy way to create a PICK chart is to draw a 2 x 2 grid either on a whiteboard or a large paper flip chart. Have participants place improvement ideas (written on sticky notes) in the quadrant where they feel the idea best fits.

A PICK chart can be a helpful tool for deciding what to work on first. The ideas in the "implement" quadrant are likely a good place to start. The team can then start looking at some of the ideas in the "challenge" quadrant that are more difficult but have a high payoff. The ideas in the "possible" quadrant are not a priority to pursue, and the ideas in the "kill" quadrant should likely not be considered.

Here are some guidelines for using a PICK chart:

- Don't let participants put their sticky notes between quadrants. They need to decide what quadrant they go in. The beauty of sticky notes is that they can always be moved as the team discusses each idea.
- Keep the PICK chart simple. Don't subdivide each quadrant or allow participants to be strategic about the quadrant they place their sticky note in.
- If participants have trouble putting an idea in the quadrant labeled "kill," explain that "kill" just means that the idea is hard to do and has a low payoff.

Internet Citation: Appendix B. Prioritize Opportunities for Improvement. Content last reviewed October 2017. Agency for Healthcare Research and Quality, Rockville, MD. https://www.ahrq.gov/patient-safety/settings/hospital/resource/pressureinjury/guide/apb.html

QuickTip - Cause and Effect Analysis

In 1943 Dr. Kauru Ishikawa developed cause and effect analysis. The technique creates a visual diagram of what causes an observed effect or situation. The diagram shows is usually called a fishbone diagram (after its shape) or an Ishikawa diagram (after its inventor). This technique is a structured way to think about why something is happening, allowing you to focus your limited resources on the most effective way to change the situation.

When to Use

Use this technique when you need to get to the root causes underlying a situation in order to solve the real problem rather than just a surface symptom.

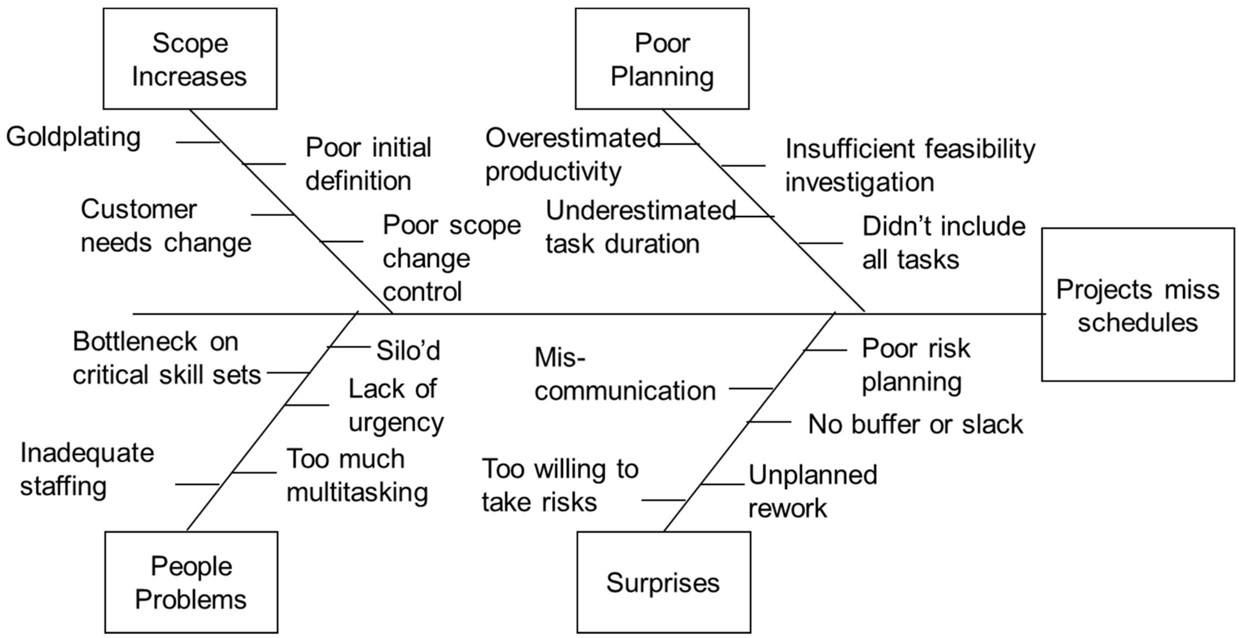
Procedure

List Effect	• At head of the fish write the symptom or effect of the situation to be analyzed.
Name Major Sources	• Identify the major categories of causes of the effect name a big bone of the fish for each category. • For example, "methods, machines, materials, and people" are typical categories in a manufacturing environment.
Determine Causes	• Iteratively break down underlying causes into smaller bones (contributing causes).
Narrow the Focus	• Select the vital few causes to investigate further.

Example

The example below shows the fishbone diagram for a situation where projects at a company often finished behind schedule. The company wanted to understand why so many projects were late and where to focus to improve things. Therefore the effect, shown on the head of the fish, is "Projects miss schedules." The main bones of the fish are the four major categories of things that contributed to past slips, such as poor planning. The smaller bones are causes that contribute to each category.

Note that the diagram is not just a collection of causes. Causes are organized into major categories to help make sure some are not left out. The company found the causes by extensively interviewing the people who worked on projects. It used the affinity clustering technique to figure out the relevant categories for the fishbone, and finally it looked for overlooked causes in each category. Then it was ready to select a vital few root causes to focus on for improvement.



QuickTip - Pareto Analysis

Pareto analysis is used to help decide which of many causes to focus on in order to change a situation most effectively. It takes advantage of the Pareto Principle, which says that most problems have only a few primary root causes. Fixing those root causes will fix most of the resulting problems.

When to Use

Use this technique when you don't have enough time or resources to fix everything and want to focus on the things that will have the biggest effect on a situation.

It is often used together with cause and effect analysis. Cause and effect analysis is used to figure out the root causes of a situation, then Pareto analysis is used to decide which of those causes to focus attention on. A Pareto chart plots the frequency of occurrence of causes in descending order.

Procedure

1. Decide what causes you will analyze or what categories you will use to group items. For example, if you are working on improving customer service, you might use categories like "excessive wait time" or "unable to fix customer's issue."
2. Decide how to measure the categories. Common measurements are number of occurrences, frequency, cost, and time spent. For the customer service example, you could measure number of occurrences (how often the representative was unable to fix the issue) or frequency (what percentage of the interactions resulted in no fix).
3. Decide what period of time you will analyze. It should be long enough to capture a valid picture of what is happening, but not so long that it will be unfeasible to gather data.
4. Collect data for each category or gather data that already exists. Subtotal into each category.
5. Plot the categories on a column chart in decreasing order. If there are many categories with small measurements, they can be grouped as "other."
6. Optionally, also plot a line that shows the cumulative contribution of causes (see example below). This line should reach 100% at the rightmost category.
7. Based on this information, decide which categories you will focus on to get the most return for your improvement effort.

Example

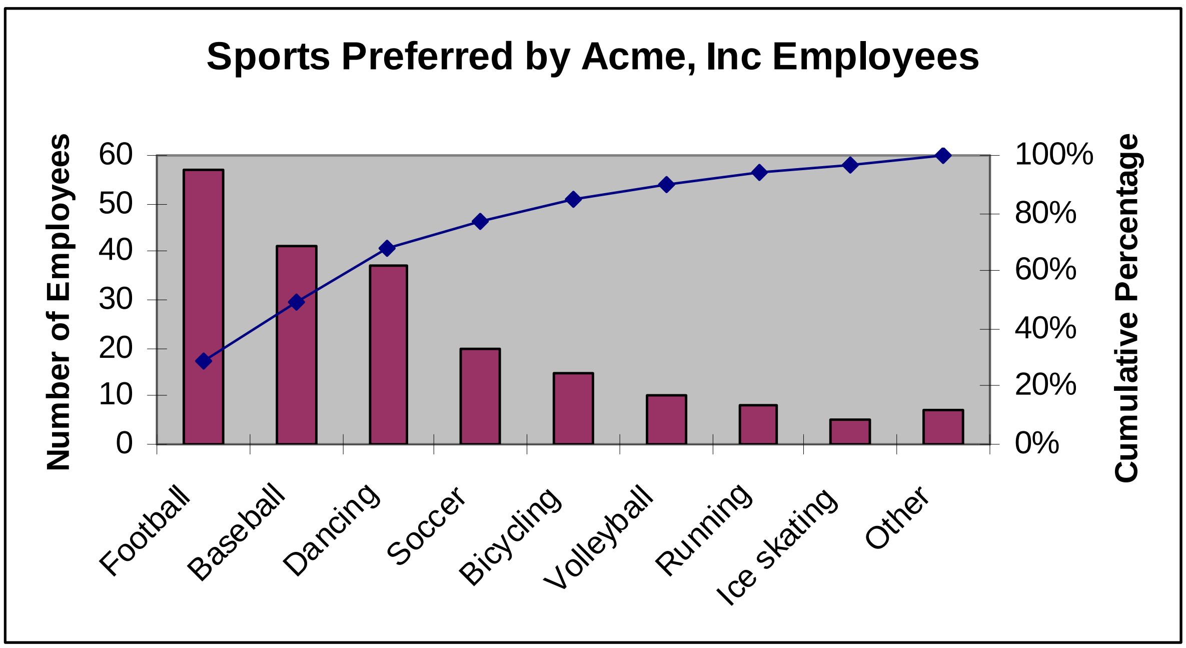
Quality pioneer Joseph Juran popularized the Pareto Principle, which he named after Vilfredo Pareto, a 19th century Italian economist who developed a theory of unequal distribution. Pareto observed in the area he studied that 80% of the wealth was held by 20% of the population. The 80-20 ratio, or one similar to it, seems to apply to many situations.

For example, if 80% of customer complaints are caused by 20% of the issues that we have uncovered, we should focus on fixing those few issues to get the most return on our quality improvement investment.

The example Pareto chart below shows the primary sports that are preferred by employees at a company, which plans is doing a Pareto analysis to guide its decisions on which recreational benefits to offer to them.

By convention, the causes (in this case sports preferences) are arranged left to right in decreasing order of contribution. The columns show the number of employees who named a certain sport as their first preference, and the blue line shows the cumulative percent contribution of each sport in order of preference.

In this example, just over 80% of employees would get access to their preferred sport if the company offered opportunities for the leftmost four – football, baseball, dancing, and soccer. This isn't 80-20, but it illustrates that focusing on a subset of causes can satisfy most of the need.



See more about Pareto analysis at ASQ's quality tools resource center:

https://asq.org/quality-resources/pareto

QuickTip – Decision Grid

A decision grid helps select the best option from several defined choices. The options are evaluated on important criteria. For example, a decision grid can be used to help a car purchase decision by rating alternative car models on important features like safety, gas mileage, performance, and styling. Criteria can be treated equally or given weights relative to each other – for example, for some people styling is twice as important as anything else. Often the chief value of a team rating exercise is in the discussion and prioritization that it encourages rather than in the absolute point winner.

This tip describes a simple rating system that is sufficient for many uses. There are more sophisticated methods of weighting priorities and rating options, such as used in quality function deployment (QFD).

When to Use

- Selecting the best option from several well-defined choices
- Making priorities and feature comparisons explicit

Procedure

Decide which criteria will be used to rate the options. They should reflect the essential features desired in the solution.   Clearly define them and determine what weights, if any, should be assigned.   If this is complicated or contentious, use a separate technique such as pairwise analysis or weighted voting to determine the criteria.

Name and clearly describe each of the options to be evaluated so that participants have a thorough understanding. Create a rating matrix with option names on one axis and criteria on the other.   Define a rating scale that clearly defines the possible rating values.

As a group, rate the performance of each option against all criteria by entering a value into every cell in the matrix.   It may be difficult to reach consensus on a value, indicating either a need for further research or for a decision, depending on the situation. Use an appropriate tool to get the needed information (e.g., research) or decision (e.g., voting).

Considerations

1. Start filling in the matrix by rating an item that is not contentious and is on one extreme of the rating scale. This will serve as an "anchor" for other ratings.
2. Rate all options on a particular criterion before going to the next criterion.

3. Encourage a spread in the ratings. If most ratings are a middle value, it will be difficult to distinguish between the options.
4. It is normal to discover part way through the process that a previous weighting, criterion, or rating should be changed. This may indicate legitimate new understanding but be careful of a subtle bias to get the preferred answer.
5. Define criteria and ratings such that desirable ratings convert to consistent numbers on the scale. For example, if you are rating on a scale of one to five, don't define criteria so that lowest (best) cost is rated a one and highest (best) performance is rated a five.
6. Small differences in rating totals may not be significant. Don't be tempted to assign too much precision to the values.

Criteria	Weight	Options			
		Ferrari	Civic	Miata	Caravan
Performance 5 = highest					
Best Cost 5 = lowest					
Safety 5 = safest					
Availability 5 = immediate					
Total					

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QuickTip – Gap Analysis

Gap analysis is a steering technique. It is like reading a map to determine where you are, where you want to be, and routes to get there. Gap analysis determines the current state, the desired state, and steps to get from one to the other. Applied periodically, it is a useful way to ensure forward progress through the fuzzy front end of a new initiative or project.

When to Use

- You want to start a team off in the right direction.
- You want to align objectives among the team.
- You need to verify that you are still on track.

Procedure

Gap analysis can be an individual or a team activity, depending on who is doing the steering and who you want aligned. If done as a team, gap analysis tends to build alignment and commitment to a shared direction and approach.

Identify and write down the desired state. These are the essential attributes of where you want to be. Depending on what you are steering, the attributes could be project deliverables, product features, or operation parameters. This list of desired attributes should be short and SMART (specific, measurable, assignable, realistic, and time-bound).

Write down the current state of each of the attributes identified in the desired state. The descriptions of current and desired states should describe the situation, not causes or solutions. For example, a desired attribute could be "The charter for the project is ready for review by June 1", not "Add more developers to get the charter done faster."

Then for each attribute identify specific actions to get from the current to the desired state, as shown in the example below.

Attribute	As-Is	Desired	Action Steps
Project Charter	Not started as of 7/1	Ready for review by 8/1	1. John write first draft by 7/18. 2. Mary and Fred agree on scope versus cost tradeoff by 7/9. 3. …

Considerations

1. If the actions to get from current to desired state are not apparent, use other divergence and convergence tools to generate possibilities and select the best options. Popular tools for this include cause-and-effect analysis (Fishbone or Ishakawa diagrams) and flowcharting.

Action Planning Techniques

SMART Goals

Action Items

Roadmapping

Use Action Items to Get Agreement on Next Steps

Issue and Action Item (AI) List

Project Name: Online for All			List owner: Jessica W.		
ID	Issue Description	Action and Status	Entry Date	Owner	Due Date
1	Department has decided that all fall MBA classes will be 100% virtual, so must replace face to face team exercises with something in cyberspace that is compatible with Zoom.	Find supplementary software that enables virtual, collaborative manipulation of forms, stickies, work breakdowns, and network diagrams. Status as of 6/30/20: Miro recommended by WU EDC, so prototyping virtual classroom. Next step is to demo to department head.	6/16/20	John S.	08/10/20
2					

Really important tips!

1. Ensure that each AI contains information on *what*, *who*, and *when*.
2. If you can't get a firm date for the *when*, ask for a "date for a date."
3. Capture action items and decisions in real time by writing on a whiteboard or flipchart. Take a photo at the end of the meeting.

Use an Issue and Action Item List to manage the issues and action items that come up. This may seem simplistic – you probably learned about it in facilitation 101. However, in the heat of battle, I've seen clients (and my own teams) forget to "take ARs" and to follow up on them, even at the level of the executive team. The result is that a lot of time and energy that could have been spent on problem solving is sucked up in non-productive confusion and churn. So consider this a reminder of a simple and effective tool that you already know about.

Review the AI list frequently with your team. Especially make sure that each item has the name of owner who will take charge of it and a date for when the action is due. Doing all of this really helps focus the action. If all else fails, take a "date for date," but never leave an action item without agreeing on an owner, next step, and due date.

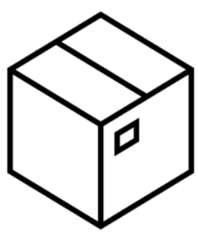
When items are closed or no longer relevant, remove them from the list or transfer them to a separate section for inactive items so that the active items are not obscured by clutter.

Objectives Should Be SMART and in Writing

Specific	• Stated as desired *outcomes*, not process • Specific and tangible
Measurable	• How success of each objective will be assessed
Actionable	• Objective can be achieved by taking specific actions
Realistic	• Feasible to accomplish, although perhaps challenging
Time-bound	• Clearly stated end point

Example

Think of the session as a “black box” that you can’t see inside.



A well written objective describes what comes out of the box by the end of the session, not what happens inside the box during the session to produce the output.

Poor example

- Discuss preferred options

Good example

- By end of session, reach agreement on MOU content to support a WA multi-payer collaborative

Monitor Action Items (Short Term)

- Regularly check status of AI's (e.g. weekly update on AI's with upcoming target dates)
- Post simple status visually and publicly
  - Example: RYGC dashboard
- Enable pressure and help from colleagues
  - Visual methods create subtle pressure to act
  - Consider scheduling a regular AI review and problem-solving meeting

In my experience, AI monitoring is most effective for AI's with time horizons of less than a month

Monitor Action Roadmap (Longer Term)

- Use visual roadmap
  - Communicate and track action plans that have longer horizon
  - A month to several years
- Bar format is easy to understand
  - Example uses Office Timeline plugin for PowerPoint
  - Can also draw using Excel or Miro grid and shape tools