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## QuickTip – 1-2-4-All

Use the 1-2-4-All technique to engage a medium to large group in generating questions, ideas, or solutions. It is friendly to multiple styles, since it includes both solo reflection time and small group discussion time. It encourages everyone to contribute ideas, and then quickly evaluates and sifts those ideas so the most relevant one surface for the entire group to consider. Since participants generate and evaluate the ideas, they feel a strong sense of ownership, improving follow-up and implementation.

### When to Use

- When you want to engage everyone in generating and evaluating ideas.
- When you want to diminish power differentials or create safer spaces for expression.
- When you want to encourage diverse ideas, then move the group toward consensus or shared understanding.
- This technique takes about 30 minutes, but the time can vary depending on the complexity of the question you pose and the size of the group.

### Procedure

1. Describe the 1-2-4-All technique to the group if they are not already familiar with it.
2. Ask an open-ended question related to a shared challenge or the issue to be solved. For example, “How can we change the way we work so that our customers are more satisfied?”
3. Give a short time for silent reflection (for example, 3 minutes) and ask everyone to write down several ideas. (This is the “1.”)
4. Ask participants to pair up and together create some ideas, building on their solo reflections. (This is the “2”.) Pairing can be done by self-selection or can be pre-assigned, depending on what you want to achieve. Make this time a bit longer, such as 5 minutes.
5. Ask the pairs to group into quads. (This is the “4” step.) Each quad should combine and refine the work of its pairs, with the goal of narrowing down to a few of the best ideas that they can present to the entire group. A good way to encourage this is to ask the quads to look for similarities and differences in the ideas from each of their pairs. Allow more time for this step, such as 10 minutes, since this is a more complex assignment. Make sure that the quads understand that during the next step they will be asked to describe their best recommendations or ideas to the entire group. You may also want to ask them to write down the other ideas they discussed so they don’t get lost.
6. Gather back together as one large group. (This is “All.”) In round robin fashion, each quad shares one unique idea or recommendation with the group (don’t repeat what other quads have already said). Either continue for a specific number of rounds or until all quads are done, depending on how much time you have. The time for this step varies, depending on the number of quads.

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7. Once all quads have presented their best ideas, you may want time for large group discussion.

### Considerations

1. Timebox each step. At the start of each step, clearly announce how much time will be given for it and what the expected output should be. Keep the steps timeboxed will help the conversations stay focused.
2. Don't skip the silent reflection and writing time (step 3 above). You can also tie this into pre-work, asking members of the group to write their thoughts on the question before coming to the session.
3. Limit the number of ideas or recommendations that each quad can make during the "All" step, either by limiting the number of rounds or noticing when the ideas become repetitive or drop in quality.
4. Possibly follow a 1-2-4-All activity with another activity that encourages further discussion, evaluation, or action planning, such as PICK.

### Acknowledgement

This QuickTip describes the 1-2-4-All technique originally developed by Henri Lipmanowicz and Keith McCandless. It is part of the Liberating Structures toolkit and is licensed under a creative commons license CC BY-NC 3.0. See [www.liberatingstructures.com/1-1-2-4-all](http://www.liberatingstructures.com/1-1-2-4-all) for more tips and examples.