



## Brainstorm Advisory

In a typical brainstorming session, you pack the room full of people and start shouting ideas at a facilitator. The facilitator then writes the ideas down on a whiteboard. The extroverts in the room dominate the session by simultaneously throwing out their solutions or even ridiculing those offered by the other participants. The introverts in the room generally want to participate, but they struggle to get a word in. In many

instances, they are simply not comfortable sharing their ideas in this type of environment. Since introverts make up around 35% of all Covenant Employees, you could effectively be missing out on 35% of your team's ideas.

Studies have demonstrated that allowing employees the opportunity to occasionally work alone during a group ideation session consistently produces higher quality results. This also helps create an environment where introverts are much more comfortable participating in the ideation process. Additional studies have uncovered that attempting to generate ideas while simultaneously assessing them will significantly reduce the quality of ideas generated.

You are probably saying to yourself, "gee that's great, but study results don't help me solve problems." Never fear! Here are a few tactics you can use to make your next ideation session far more productive.

1. Separate the idea generation and assessment phases of the Ideation process. Make it a rule that nobody in the group responds to any of the ideas generated until the ideation phase is complete. This helps us in a few ways:
  - a. Analyzing or ridiculing ideas during the ideation phase will likely lead to an unwillingness from participants to continue to share their thoughts.
  - b. Analysis interrupts and distracts the group from creatively generating ideas.
  - c. Separating the idea generation and analysis phases creates a much more comfortable environment for the team.
  - d. Providing time in between idea generation and analysis will lessen the likelihood of someone supporting their own ideas to the grave.
2. Focus on quantity over quality in the idea generation stage. If you don't have a few absurd ideas thrown out there during this process, you aren't doing it right. Make sure the team understands this.
3. Use brainwriting to get the introverts involved. Here is how it works:
  - a. Give each participant a piece of paper and have them write down a single idea they have to solve the issue at hand.
  - b. Once they write their idea, they pass their paper to the person to their right. This person reads the new idea in front of them and either builds on that idea or adds their own. This continues until each participant receives their original paper back. If you have a small group, you might want to pass the papers around numerous times. It is best to have at least 8-10 ideas per piece of paper.
  - c. When the rounds of idea generation are complete, each person picks 2-4 of their favorite ideas from the paper in front of them for the group to discuss.

By implementing the above during your next ideation session, you will undoubtedly generate higher quality ideas.

The content within this quick tip is just a small portion of LLD's new Strategic Planning and Ideation class. This class is a team based workshop where you and your team have the opportunity to identify your barriers, ideate, and start constructing a strategic plan for your department.

LLD is also looking to pilot a virtual ideation session where your entire team can participate using their smartphones. If you have a pressing issue that you need a creative solution to solve, please consider piloting this new process with your team.

For more information regarding the team workshop or virtual ideation pilot, please contact us for more information.

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