

Building Dynamic Groups



BRAINSTORMING – A USEFUL TECHNIQUE FOR GENERATING IDEAS

Brainstorming is an excellent technique for generating ideas from team members about problems and opportunities for improvement. It allows everyone to participate and is a good method for “breaking the ice.” This group process can be productive because group members can use their collective thinking power to create and build on the ideas.

Some reasons why brainstorming increases the team’s ability to generate ideas:

- Increases involvement and participation
- Produces the most ideas in the least amount of time
- Reduces the need to give the “right answer”
- Reduces possibilities of negative thinking

Some basic ground rules:

- **Don’t criticize or evaluate ideas.** That comes later.
- **Go for volume.** The greater the number of ideas, the greater the possibility of good ones.
- **Encourage combining ideas or “piggybacking.”** It is a great opportunity to merge ideas or build on them.
- **Encourage participation.** One way is to ask each member, in turn, to contribute an idea. If they have none, they can “pass.”
- **Document the ideas on a flip chart.**

When using brainstorming as a technique for generating ideas, it is important to focus on the improvements. When the brainstorming list is completed, the group should reach consensus by identifying the top two or three ideas that will help them reach the improvement goal. This may be accomplished by removing obstacles or spending additional time in problem solving.

Reference: Many sources are available for this technique.