Zash

User Guide

Helps guide you through your first
15-minute brainstorm

The process

The 15-minute brainstorm consists of 4 major rounds: divergence, grouping by theme, convergence and voting. These steps will be familiar to people with brainstorm experience but very accessible for people without prior brainstorm experience.

1.   Divergence

In the first round, everyone can submit ideas for five minutes. The goal is to come up with as many ideas as possible so try not to spend too long thinking about it, just submit whatever comes to mind.

2. Grouping by Theme

During the second round, the entire team will work together to divide all ideas with common themes into groups. Discuss the ideas and themes with each other. The brainstorm leader can drag and drop ideas between groups and give them a fitting name. When everyone is satisfied continue the brainstorm by pressing the next button in the upper right corner.

3. Convergence

In the third round, every team member should come up with three qualitative ideas. You can get inspired by the ideas from the previous rounds and use them to come up with your best ideas to solve the challenge, but you can also add completely new ideas if they come to mind.

4. Voting

What's the best idea? In the fourth round, you will vote on the ideas from the previous round to see which is best. Decide with your team beforehand what the voting criteria are: e.g. feasibility, creativity or costs. If there are multiple ideas that seem similar, vote on the one you think is best written.
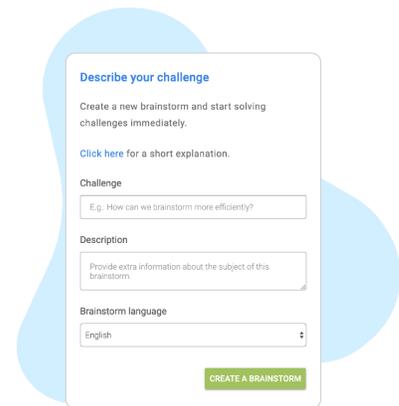
Get started

Start by selecting one team member who will create the brainstorm. We will call this person the *"brainstorm leader"*. The brainstorm leader will have to sign in to his account. If you don't have an account yet, you register via the registration form and follow the on-screen steps. The rest of the team can simply join the brainstorm and start immediately, but you can also create an account if you want to be able to revisit the results later.

Create a brainstorm

To create a new brainstorm you will have to fill out a simple form describing your challenge. Below are some tips to keep in mind while creating your brainstorm.

Right scope for the right question

Challenges are often in the form of a question. The way you formulate the question influences the ideas to a certain extent. A very broad question often results in very diverse and sometimes general ideas (which can be great for exploring a topic) while a narrower question is more likely to yield concrete ideas. Instead of asking *"How can we improve our lunchroom?"*, you could ask *"How can we improve the coffee in our lunchroom?"*.

Description

The description can be used to provide, for example, some background info. Feel free to add information that you think is important.

Language

The brainstorm language needs to be selected in order for our algorithms to perform optimally. It also communicates to the brainstorm team which language they need to use.

Invite team

When you have finished creating the brainstorm you will be sent to the lobby screen. From this screen you can invite your team members by sharing a link, letting them scan a QR code or inviting them by email. To get the most out of a brainstorm it

helps to work with a diverse team. Try to assemble a team with different expertise, backgrounds, interests and roles. This will result in the most creative and diverse ideas and solutions.

Dashboard

When the brainstorm is created it is possible to show information counters on a big screen. By pressing the dashboard button in the left-hand corner a second window opens that can be displayed on, for example, a beamer. This screen will then show an idea counter and a timer during the individual steps and will show the needed screens during group tasks. **Note that the dashboard is completely optional.**
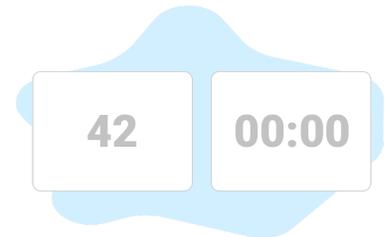
Your results

After you have finished the brainstorm you will have a list of amazing ideas that will help you solve your original goal. It does not stop there however. Every brainstorm can be downloaded as a PDF. This PDF contains some extra useful insights in the form of data visualizations. Note that these results are anonymized.

Rolling Average of Ideas

This graph shows the average number of ideas every participant submitted over time. It also shows the ideas submitted by the whole team. Using this graph you can find some dips in idea submissions, which can indicate that the user needs more stimulation. You can also see if users had problems submitting ideas at all.
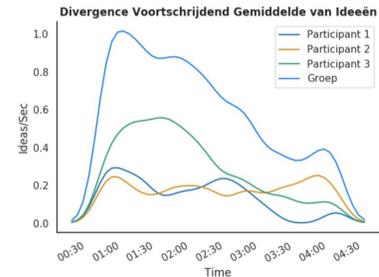

Participation Pie-chart

This chart shows the participation of every participant or in other words how much has each participant contributed to the total number of ideas. Using this graph it is possible to identify participants that submit fewer ideas. Note that less is not always a bad thing. Using this graph, participants can reflect on their own performance and start working on techniques to generate more ideas.
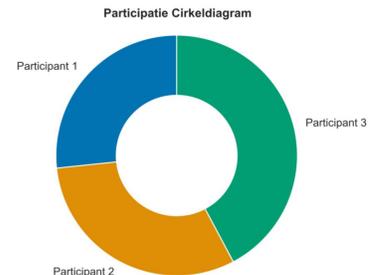
Themes Pie-chart

This graph shows the relative size of each group or theme in relation to the total amount of ideas. This graph often shows a big misfit theme. Theme importance can be found using this graph. Bigger themes, next to the misfits, mean that these themes are more important to the participants. When your brainstorm teams often generate just a few very big theme groups it might be a

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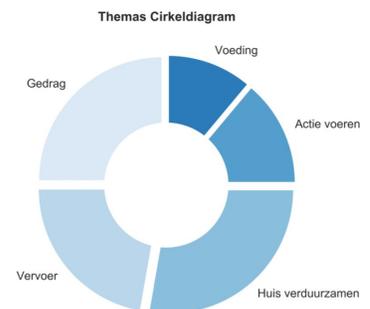
good idea to switch some team members to get a brainstorm team with a wider range of interests and expertise.

Wordcloud

The word clouds show all of the words used in brainstorm ideas. Bigger words mean that those words were used more often. You can use these word clouds to get important keywords from the brainstorm. It is also possible to see how important keywords differ between participants, this could be used, for example, to see if your brainstorm team is made up of different specialists.

What's next?

After a 15-minute brainstorming session, you end up with a list of your best ideas. What you do with these ideas afterwards is entirely up to you and depends a little on your specific case. Below are some tips to get you started!

Let it sit

If you have a broad or complex challenge in your brainstorm, it can be hard to come up with the best ideas within 15 minutes. Sometimes an idea just pops into your head throughout the day. That is why it can be very useful to brainstorm multiple times on the same subject, with a couple of days (or even weeks) in between. Giving some time for the idea to just sit often results in new insights and more ideas.

Discuss

After a brainstorming session, you can also discuss the top three ideas (and possibly other ideas) in a very focused way. An advantage that you have done a 15-minute brainstorming is that you can now have a more focused discussion about it. Perhaps you can refine the idea much more during the discussion.

Iterate

By approaching your challenge or solution from different angles you can come up with different improvements and ideas. How you do this depends on your specific challenge, but you could:

- Change the boundaries: What if there was no budget limit?
- Change the mindset: What if I was a bad actor? Or an elderly person?
- Change the conditions: What if there was no gravity?

Dive deeper

If the original challenge for the brainstorm was a bit too broad and the results are not concrete enough, it is often a good idea to reformulate the challenge to be more specific. You can use the results from the original brainstorm. Not only the top 3 ideas but also the

insights you have gained. Use them to do another 15-minute brainstorm and really start solving your challenge!

Get to work

If you feel like you've got some great and concrete ideas, divide the tasks and let your team get to work! For example, dive into the feasibility of an idea, how much budget would be needed to realize it or start building a prototype immediately.