Five ideation techniques you can use to help boost creativity in your organisation

Five ideation techniques that will boost your team's creative-idea generation

Reading time 11 mins

Key Points

- Try multiple ideation techniques with your team and see which work best

- Be aware of the less confident people in the team

- Ideas come easier when people don't fear criticism

- Ideation sessions should be short, energetic and fun

- If ideas start to dry up, take a break and try something else

Download our [Crazy Eights template](#)
Download our [Brainwriting template](#)

Ready to start developing your new product?
Call us for a quote!

[Get in touch](#)

Ben Mazur

Managing Director

Last updated Mar 29, 2023

I hope you enjoy reading this post.
If you would like us to develop your next product for you, [click here](#)

[Share](#)
[Share](#)
[Tweet](#)
Pin

Five Ideation Techniques

Ideation is the important middle phase of the [five-step design-thinking process](#). It bridges the gap between understanding, defining the problem and building prototypes for testing to gather deeper insight.

Ideation is the period when team collaboration is at its highest, and criticism is eliminated so free-flowing conversation can ensure the generation of ideas and solutions for a defined problem. In this article, we will introduce five ideation techniques that will boost your team's creative ideas and solutions.

1. Brainstorming

Brainstorming is all too often the first technique we think of when we need to generate ideas. But it doesn't work the way we expect. Typical brainstorming sessions are an hour-long opportunity for a team's extroverts to dominate discussion and generate ideas while the introverts struggle to contribute. The result is usually some fairly run-of-the-mill ideas. But brainstorming sessions can be extremely potent if you approach them differently. Next time try these methods:

Worst ideas

Ask participants to focus on generating bad ideas only. They should consider everything that couldn't work before you ask them "What can we do to make these ideas work better?"

This method reduces or removes the fear of criticism and frees the flow of discussion because bad ideas are easier to find – which makes idea generation easier and more fun.

Eliminate constraints

Constrains block our thinking and idea generation. Naturally, we consider constraints as soon as an idea germinates, so eliminating even some of these constraints can encourage creative idea generation; for example, ask participants "What if there is no gravity, how can we improve the flying experience?"

You'll find creative ideas abound, and, sometimes, those apparently infeasible ideas can be adjusted to deliver some deeply creative solutions.

Use analogies

Using analogies can take your idea-generation sessions to a whole new level of creativity. By comparing your idea to a commonly understood situation helps you explore the idea from a different angle.

Let's use the analogy of 'fishing' to explore the idea of converting users to buyers, for example. Encourage participants to think of ideas and solutions to the problem using this analogy: in fishing, we need the correct bait to catch the bigger fish – this is also true for users we want to convert – we need to bait our users with the right content if we want to catch them.

2. Crazy Eights

This is a sketching technique that aims for quantity rather than quality; it's about generating a vast number of ideas and is great for both designers and non-designers.

- Give each participant a sheet of A4 paper ruled off into eight sections.
- Set a timer for five minutes and ask each participant to fill six to eight of the sections with rough sketches.
- Put all the sheets on the wall then give each participant two stickers to put on his or her two favourite ideas.

This process can continue until you find an idea everyone believes in. Flesh out the winning sketches with details before moving to prototype creation and user testing.

Crazy Eights

Crazy Eights

1	2	3	4
5	6	7	8

Instructions: You have 8 minutes to come up with 8 ideas and sketch each one in the boxes above. Use brief notes to help explain your thinking. Once the time is up, review all the ideas with the group. You can stick your ideas on the wall and use post-it notes to add thoughts and build on ideas.

If you found this template useful, please share it. Visit igniteo.com for more free design tools.

[Download our free template](#)

3. Brainwriting

This technique can get up to 108 ideas from six participants in just 30 minutes, and it's great if you want to encourage every participant to generate ideas – especially if your team is predominantly introverts.

- Give each participant a sheet of paper and ask them to generate three ideas in five minutes.
- Pass all papers to the right.
- Ask each participant to build on his colleague's ideas, improving them or using them as inspiration to generate another three ideas.
- Continue passing papers to the right until they reach their original participant.

With all the ideas gathered, discuss each one, improving and building on those that the group feels has promise.

Brainwriting

Brainwriting

1

2

3

Instructions: Generate three ideas in five minutes. Pass all papers to the right. Build on your colleague's ideas, improving them or using them as inspiration to generate another three ideas. Continue passing papers to the right until they reach your original paper reaches you again.

If you found this template useful, please share it. Visit Ignitec.com for more free design tools.

## [Download our free template](#)

4. Mind Mapping

Mind maps are visual diagrams used to represent words, ideas, tasks or other items linked to and arranged around a central keyword or idea. Often, colours and drawings add to the visualization.

- In the middle of a board, write a word that summarises the problem you need to solve or the idea you're building on.
- From the central word, draw lines out to new elements that relate to the core problem or idea.
- Use lines to show connections between further ideas and solutions.
- Create sub branches for ideas related to the main branches' ideas.

Mind maps work well with ideation of features, cases or complex problems that benefit from being illustrated.

5. Storyboarding
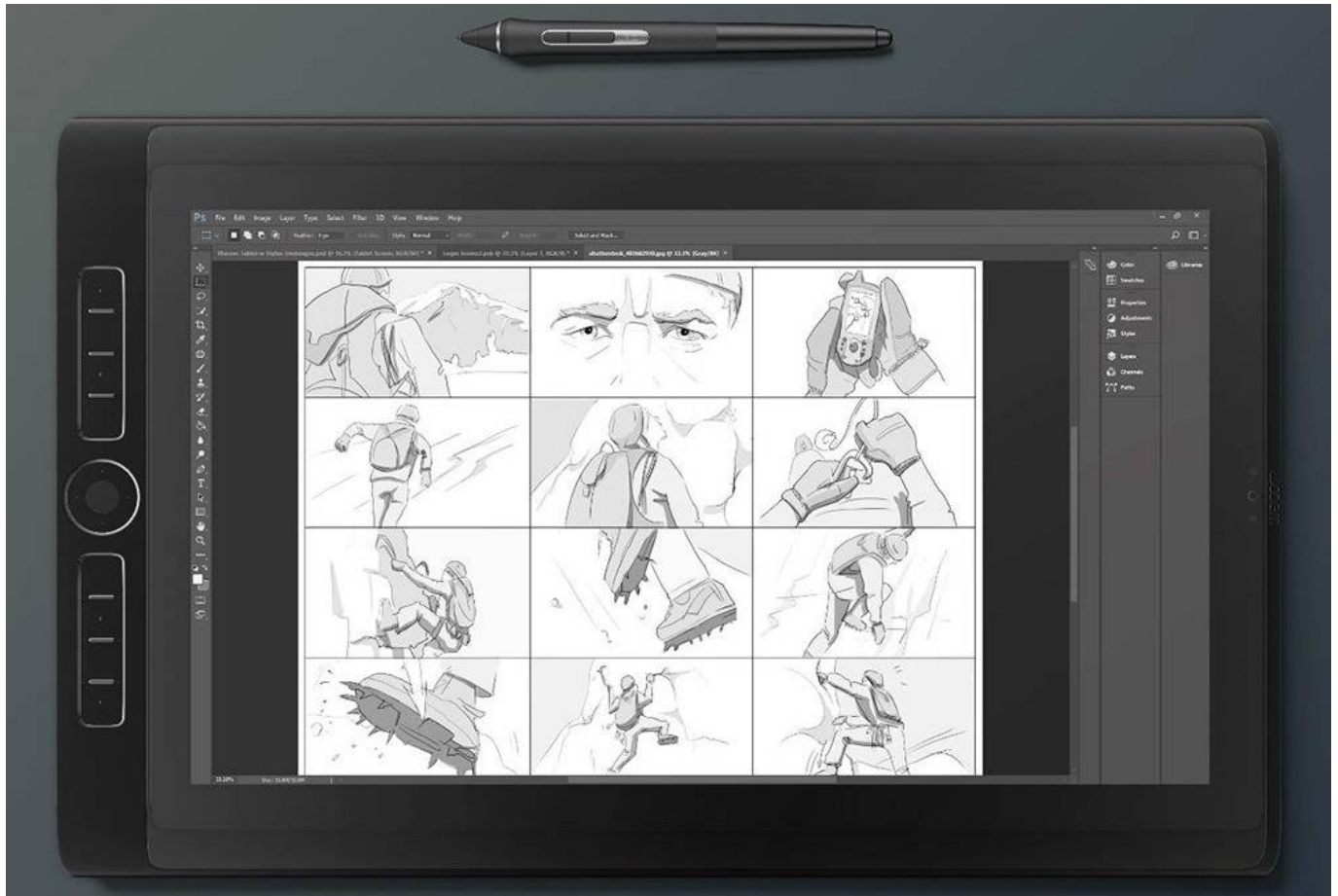
Storyboarding is about arranging and categorizing ideas and solutions in a linear format and order. It's best done after brainstorming to generate ideas.

- Gather previously brainstormed ideas and solutions on post-it notes on the wall or coloured cards on the floor or large table.
- Identify the user's goal: say, to reserve a seat on the bus.
- Identify the high-level steps for achieving that goal, i.e. open the app, search for the appropriate bus and reserve a seat.
- Categorize and order the generated ideas to fit in the steps you have created.

This technique puts ideas into action and context and opens the room for more ideas.

Conclusion

Using the right ideation techniques in your ideation phase will help you generate more creative innovative ideas. Choose the correct technique by considering your goals, objectives and the type of ideas you are hoping to generate.

Share
Share
Tweet
Pin

Up next

[Responsible AI Implementation in Business: Building Trust, Ethics, and Governance](#)

Last updated Nov 9, 2023 | [AI](#), [BUSINESS SERVICES](#), [INSIGHTS](#), [PRODUCT DESIGN](#), [TIPS](#)

Responsible implementation of AI in business requires trust, transparency, and ethical decision-making.

[read more](#)