Discover how to conduct
the perfect creative meeting,
eliminate productivity's losses
and foster breakthrough ideas

Optimized Brainstorming

Users need a better way to brainstorm

As our world becomes more interconnected and fields of human knowledge get more complex, collaboration is rapidly becoming the norm in innovation.

A study analyzed huge databases - 2.1 million patents and 19.9 million scientific papers - and found that average team size (number of coauthors) doubled over 45 years - from 1.9 to 3.5 authors.[i]

In organizations, the cornerstone of the team's creative process are underlined creative meetings, aka 'brainstorming'.

Although creative meetings are the center of the innovation process, the way companies conduct them is largely ineffective. Research shows that creative meetings manage to achieve the synergistic effect roughly 10-15 percent of the time.[ii] Businesses need a better way to conduct brainstorming.

In the first part of this booklet you will learn three simple, immediately applicable principles that will allow you to improve the way you conduct your brainstorming.

i. Wuchty, S., Jones, B. F., & Uzzi, B. (2007). "The increasing dominance of teams in the production of knowledge". Science, 316, 1036–1039.

ii. S. G. Rogelberg. "The Surprising Science of Meetings. How You Can Lead Your Team to Peak Performance". 2019, Oxford Univerity Press. Kindle edition.

Structured Brainstorming optimizes creative meetings

i. Alexander Faickney Osborn, the inventor of brainstorming, published the book that became the "bible" of creative thinking, *Applied Imagination*, in 1953. Indeed he had been working on the idea for at least 15 years. In 1942 he wrote a slim volume called *How to Think Up,* introducing a method called "brian-storming". Then followed two more books: *Your Creative Power: How to Use Your Imagination* (1948) and *Wake Up Your Mind: 101 Ways to Develop Creativeness* (1948).

ii.Rogelberg, Steven G. "The Surprising Science of Meetings. How You Can Lead Your Team to Peak Performance". (p.110). Oxford University Press, 2019. Kindle edition.

Born in the 1930s, brainstorming was launched in 1953. [i] Over seventy years of research, trial and error, a structure has emerged that optimizes the way creative meetings are held: underlined structured brainstorming. Structured brainstorming offers three advantages:[ii]

- 40% increase in the quality of ideas produced as compared to traditional brainstorming approaches.
- Reduction of a third of the time compared to traditional brainstorming.
- Elimination of productivity losses and group think

In the second part of this booklet you will understand in detail how to conduct structured brainstorming.

How to Plan for a Brainstorm Session

If you're wondering how to set up a brainstorm, think about the meeting in three phases. Get the most out of everyone's time by planning ahead.

Phase 1 – Setup	Phase 2 — Facilitation	Phase 3 — Follow Up
1. **Frame a question** grounded in an insight to guide the group's thinking.	1. Loosen people up with a **creative warm-up**	1. Group ideas into buckets or themes.
2. Share inspiration and insights from competitive and analogous research.	2. Start with heads-down individual brainstorming.	2. Vote on your favorite ideas.
3. Embrace a mindset of curiosity, using the **rules of brainstorming** as a guide.	3. Share ideas as a group and build on each other's concepts.	3. Define next steps and action items.

www.ideou.com/pages/brainstorming-resources

Both researchers and practitioners, like the iconic design company IDEO did, agree that structured brainstorming is the optimal way to hold a creative meeting.

Intuition enhances structured brainstorming

In the third part of this booklet you will discover how the 'structured brainstorming' process can be further improved by drawing on one of the most refined resources of the human mind: intuition.

The term 'Group intuition' refers to individual intuitions of group members related to the same question/problem that can be integrated into a collective insight/solution [i].

Group intuitions are of great value. Indeed, as Harvard's Gerald Zaltman has demonstrated, when two or more individuals in a group have the same intuition about a topic, it is bound to work in the marketplace.

In twenty years of experience with intuition, we have developed a procedure called 'Intuitive Brainstorming®', that brings intuition into structured brainstorming. In the third part of this booklet you will discover how Intuitive Brainstorming® works.

i. M. Sinclair, A. Hamilton, 'Mapping group intuition', in "Handbook of Research Methods on Intuition', Ed. By Martha Sinclair, Edward Elgar, 2014

To whom this booklet is directed

This booklet is for any individual responsible for calling and leading creative meetings at work.
This includes:

Team leaders, supervisors, managers, directors, and senior executives across organizations and industry sectors.	Learning and development professionals, executive coaches, and other educators who train and advise people on teamwork and leadership.	HR leaders and senior organizational leaders working to change the meeting culture at their organization.

The
principles

Brainstorming has been the standard of meeting for a long time

Brainstorming session at the RAND corporation in Santa Monica, California, 1958. Photo Leonard McCombe, The LIFE Picture Collection - Shutterstock.

The four principles of classic brainstorming

When most organizations need to unleash creativity, they follow largely the same formula: assemble a team of people, put them in a room with whiteboard markers or sticky notes, and tell them to spit out as many ideas as they can. In short, they brainstorm.

Classic brainstorming follows the four principles published by Alex Osborn in "Your Creative Power" in 1948:

1. Defer judgment on all ideas.

2. Generate wild ideas.

3. Generate as many ideas as possible.

4. Build upon each other's ideas.

Classic brainstorming inhibits creativity

Despite its popularity, brainstorming was immediately met with fierce criticism from both scholars and creative professionals. The first study that found that group brainstorming inhibits creativity was published at Yale in 1958 [i]. The research highlighted that people produce more and better quality ideas when they think alone rather than in groups.

Since then, over eighty studies have been conducted on this topic, with remarkable results. Participants who interacted during the meeting produced significantly fewer and lower-quality ideas than participants who produce ideas on their own before attending the meeting [i].

i. Taylor, D. W., Berry, P. C., & Block, C. H. (1958). Does group participation when using brainstorming facilitate or inhibit creative thinking? Administrative Science Quarterly, 3(1), 23–47.

ii. Rogelberg, Steven G.. The Surprising Science of Meetings (p.108). Oxford University Press. Edizione del Kindle.

Experts kill brainstorming

Some of brainstorming's harshest critics came from within the advertising world, where the method was born. David Ogilvy called brainstorming "the delight of sterile loafers who would rather fritter away their day in meetings than shut their doors and get down to work." W. E. Finley Carter, director of the Stanford Research Institute, was "frankly skeptical" of such "gimmicks." Paul Smith, president and creative director at the Calkins & Holden Agency, called brainstorming "a variety of 'groupthink' . . . with little or no basic understanding of the

creative process." William Whyte in 'The Organization Man' wrote that the most "misguided" belief of the social ethic was that "creative work" could be done "by committee."

People very rarely think in groups", wrote White, "they talk together, they exchange information, they adjudicate, they make compromises. But they do not think; they do not create."[i]

i. Franklin, Samuel W.. The Cult of Creativity (p.66). University of Chicago Press, 2023. Kindle Edition

Most hostile of all critics to brainstorming was Saul Bass, the legendary creator of iconic movie posters of the 50s and 60s like "Anatomy of a Murder" and "The Man with the Golden Arm". Bass defined brainstorming as Mickey Mouse business, "useful only in giving birth to gadgets or their visual and verbal equivalents."

The 3 problems of classic brainstorming

Seventy years of practice and hundreds of studies have highlighted the reasons why classic brainstorming is inefficient.
These can be grouped into three groups.

i. Janis, I. L. (1972). Victims of groupthink: A psychological study of foreign-policy decisions and fiascos. Boston: Houghton Mifflin.

ii. Diehl, M., & Stroebe, W. (1987). Productivity loss in brainstorming groups: Toward the solution of a riddle. Journal of Personality and Social Psychology, 53(3), 497–509.

iii. Steiner, I. D. (1972). Group processes and productivity. New York: Academic Press.

Groupthink
The phenomenon that a group's desire for harmony leads to the pressure to conform and to a state of lazy, shared consensus where no one wants to rock the boat.[i]

Productivity loss
During meetings some people are reluctant to share their ideas. This is largely due to the fear of 'social humiliation'. Other reasons include laziness, tendency to converge towards shared ideas, and reluctance to share information possessed by a single individual.[ii]

Production blocking
Production blocking is a *major cause* of productivity loss in brainstorming groups. In conventional brainstorming, only one person speaks at a time. If people can't voice an idea right when it occurs to them, they might forget the idea before they get a chance to speak, while others might feel that their idea is no longer relevant.[iii]

If classic brainstorming doesn't work, why do companies continue to use it? Because it's fun[i], says Keith Sawyer, one of the most prominent researchers on creativity and collaboration[ii].

i. Sawyer, R. Keith; Henriksen, Danah. Explaining Creativity (p.253). Oxford University Press. Kindle edition. i.

ii. And because it is fun people think that it is also effective. Homma, M., Tajima, K., & Hayashi, M. (1995). The effects of misperception of performance in brainstorming groups. Japanese Journal of Experimental Social Psychology, 34, 221–231. Paulus, P. B., Larey, T. S., & Ortega, A. H. (1995). Performance and perceptions of brainstormers in an organizational setting. Basic and Applied Social Psychology, 17, 249–265. Rowatt, W. C., Nesselroade, K. P., Beggan, J. K., & Allison, S. T. (1997). Perceptions of brainstorming in groups: The quality over quantity hypothesis. Journal of Creative Behavior, 31(2), 131–150.

The new 3 principles of brainstorming

The good news is that a solution to a better brainstorming exists and can work incredibly well. Today scholars and professionals converge towards a new way of holding brainstorming that eliminates productivity losses, raises the quality of the ideas produced and brings out collective intelligence: **structured brainstorming.**

The new way of brainstorming is based on 3 principles + 1:

1. Before brainstorming, people generate ideas individually

2. The ideas are not explained but collected anonymously in a bucket.

3. Ideas are grouped together looking for both common ideas and relevant ideas. The discussion starts from here.

The 4th principle is 'iteration': brainstorming is repeated several times in a process of progressive clarification of the problem.

The 3 new principles

Iteration

1. Ideas are generated individually
2. Ideas are shared simultaneously
3. Ideas are grouped in clusters

01.

Ideas are generated individually

01.

Ideas are generated individually

Participants come to the brainstorm with three ideas generated before the meeting. Research has shown that people working alone generate more and higher quality ideas than the same number of people working in a team. The advantages of generating ideas alone are three:

- It allows participants to come prepared.

- When participants come prepared they bring their best ideas to the table.

- It allows each participant's voice to be heard

02.

Ideas are shared simultaneously

02.

Ideas are shared simultaneously

The ideas are collected all together
in a bucket, anonymously. In this way:

- The discussion is not manipulated
  by the most vocal people.

- Hierarchies do not influence the discussion.

- Everyone expresses their ideas without
  fear of judgement.

03.

Ideas are grouped in search of patterns

03.

Ideas are grouped in search of patterns

Once the ideas have been collected in a bucket, they are grouped together to look for common patterns. This way you get two advantages:

- **Synergy**: the purpose of collective intelligence is to generate something greater than individual contributions.

Grouping ideas is the technique that allows you to achieve this synergistic effect.

- **Simplification:** grouping ideas in search of patterns is the way to reduce a large quantity of ideas into a few workable items.

The 4th principle: **Iteration**

04.

The fourth principle: iteration

"Creative thinking isn't a meeting; it's a process. Brainstorming is a part of that process, but it's not the entire process.

David Burkus

Iteration means that brainstorming is progressively repeated until a solution to the problem is reached. As Jon Kolko, designer and scholar of design thinking, write:[i]

"The central idea of creative problem solving is iteration: the act of doing something over and over with constant improvement.

The process of continually repeating the steps allows you to clarify your ideas more and more. By iterating, you take the idea from ambiguity to clarity. The ideas, insight and solution that you are looking for spring forth from this process. The essential process of ideation, is about making something to gain clarity, not to ship a product."

i. Jon Kolko, "Creative Clarity. A Practical Guide for Bringing Creative Thinking Into Your Company." Brown Bear Publishing, 2017

Meeting

Meeting

Meeting

01

02

etc.

Start

Individual work

Individual work

etc.

End
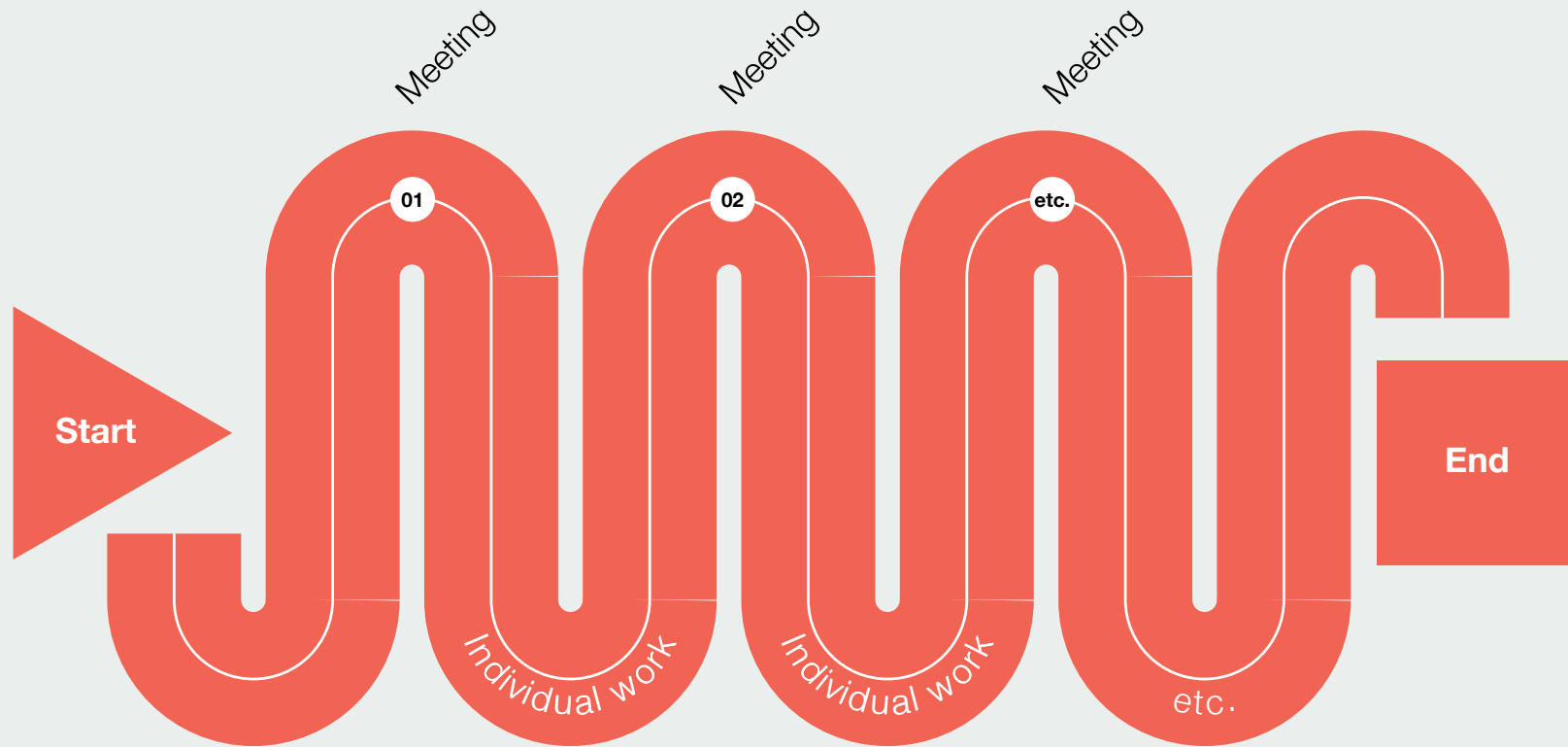
Meetings in a typical project timeline

Brainstorming serves as a moment of alignment within a staged creative process. The teams meet, debate and decide what to do. Based on the indications, participants delves into their own part of the work. Then they meet again to share the results, and so on until the problem is clarified.

> " *Iteration process underscores a simple idea: "one and done" just doesn't work: it takes time and patience."*
>
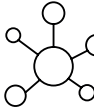> *Jon Kolko*

Structured brainstorming

The 5 steps of the structured brainstorming

In its essential form, structured brainstorming is very simple: at the beginning of the meeting the participants generate three ideas alone and in silence. Ideas are put into a bucket. The meeting manager takes the ideas from the bucket and groups them on a whiteboard. The discussion starts from grouping.

In this section we will see in detail the steps of this structure and its variations. By knowing the principles, process and variations, you can reconstruct the technique according to your needs and preferences.

01.		**Briefing**	The process begins by clarifying the terms of the problem. **Variation:** Silent Reading
02.		**Insights generation**	Participants individually generate three ideas. **Variation**: Brainwriting and Gallery Walk
03.		**Clustering**	Ideas are collected by the project leader and mapped into groups of similar ideas.
04.		**Discussion**	The team discusses the ideas that emerged. **Variation**: Votation
05.		**After the meeting**	The project leader analyzes the results and sends a report to the participants.

General Rules

Time
From 1 ½ hours to 3 hours.

Materials
Pen and paper (loose-leaf sheets, index cards, Post-its) and a whiteboard.

Number of partecipants
The ideal number of participants ranges from 4 to 10. Various authors indicate that 6 people are the perfect number.

Team composition
Ideally, participants should come from as diverse a background as possible: different specializations, different generations, internal and external members of the company. *Research on collective intelligence shows that a prevalence of women - thanks to their innate empathic ability - increases the probability of success.*

Facilitator
Since the process is structured and most of the operations happen silently (idea generation, sharing and grouping) a professional facilitator is not necessary. However, a manager is needed to coordinate the various phases, which may coincide with the project leader, his assistant or a process expert.

Project leader
Structured brainstorming serves to support a leader in carrying out a project. During the development of the project, the participants can change while the leader condenses the knowledge of the project within himself. The project leader is responsible for:

- convene meetings and write the briefing;
- analyze the results and make a summary;
- send the results to the participants at the end of the meeting.

01.

Briefing

The process begins by clarifying the terms of the problem

Participants are asked to provide three ideas regarding an issue related to the objective of the meeting. For example:

- How could we improve the quality of our department?

- How could we improve the selection process for new colleagues?

- What are the three aspects of our offer that our customers are most sensitive to?

If there is no briefing
If there is no structured briefing, the first meeting is dedicated to clarifying the terms of the problem. It is incredible how, when faced with a problem that is not well defined, different people can have a completely different interpretation of it. In this case a traditional open discussion will do just fine. Make sure all the people understand the nature of the problem before they leave the room.

01.Variant
Silent reading

Jeff Bezos at Amazon inaugurated a practice: briefings are written and given to participants to read before starting the meeting.

The reading takes place in silence (no questions can be asked) and lasts from 10 minutes to half an hour. Briefings are no longer than six pages and contain all relevant aspects, including the problem in question, the data that helps understand it, any proposed solutions and the impact of the solutions on customers. In this way a series of advantages are achieved:

- The problem is described accurately, through a detailed formulation of the ideas and its logic.

- It is recognized that people have busy schedules and it is difficult to dedicate time to pre-meeting work. This ensures that everyone is prepared and on the same page.

- There is no physical person who describes the problem, influencing the meeting participants with their personality.

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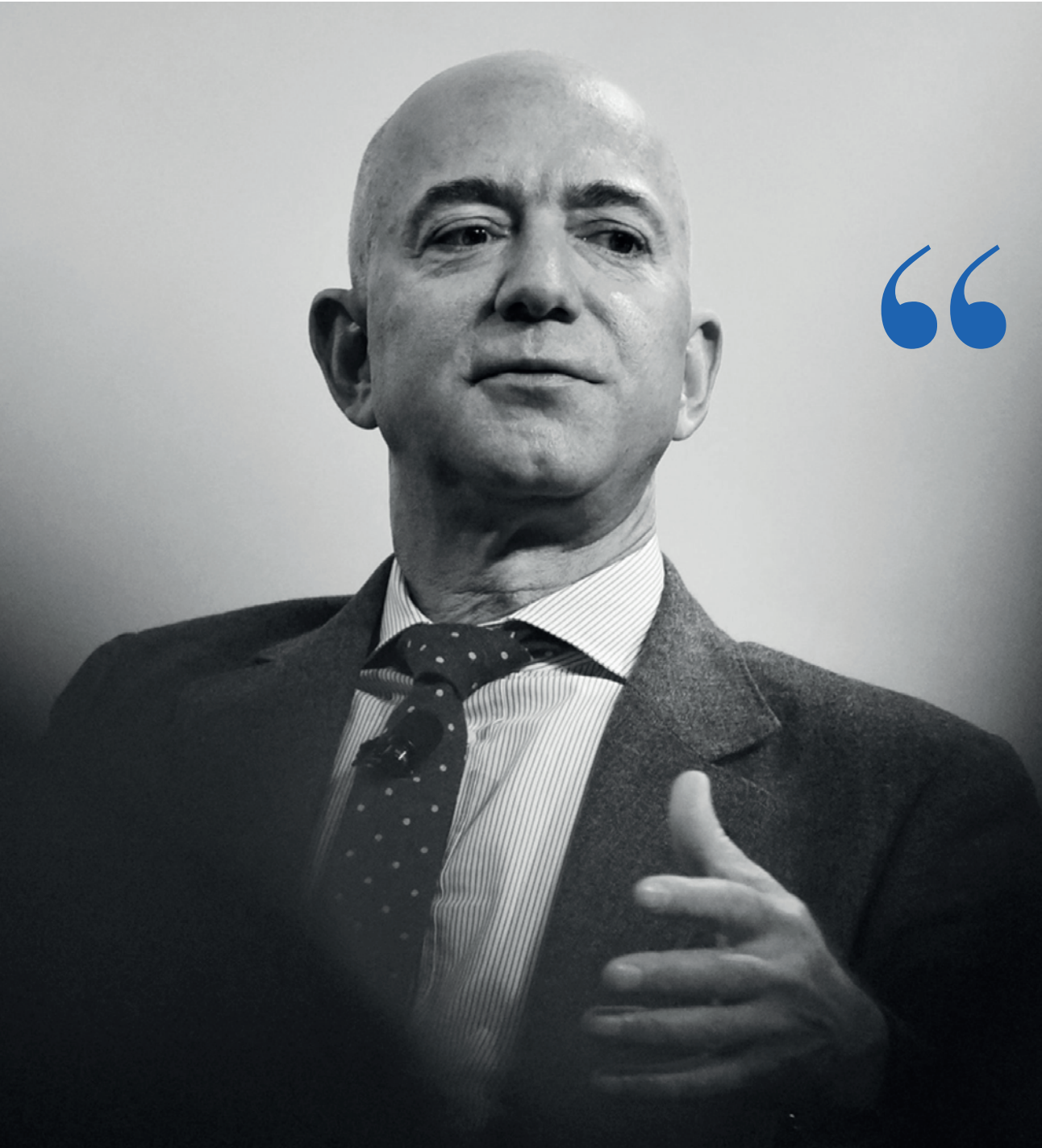
The traditional kind of corporate meeting starts with a presentation. Somebody gets up in front of the room and presents with a PowerPoint presentation, some type of slide show. In our view, you get very little information, you get bullet points. This is easy for the presenter, but difficult for the audience. And so instead, all of our meetings are structured around a 6-page narrative memo. When you have to write your ideas out in complete sentences, it forces deeper clarity.

Jeff Bezos, Amazon CEO

02.

Idea generation

Ideas are independently generated

Once the briefing is provided, the question is answered by each person, in writing and in silence. Each of the participants is asked to generate three ideas. Each idea is written on an index card. Thus, if there are 6 participants and each person produces three ideas, you will eventually have 18 index cards.

How to write down ideas
The answers should be written on loose sheets of paper or large post-it notes. Write a title that summarizes the topic in no more than 12 words and then detail it with a text of no more than 150 words. For example, the title of this page is 5 words and the text is 130 words. More than enough to explain an idea. Detailing ideas allows you to clarify your thinking and helps others understand them in the blink of an eye.

02.Variant A
Brainwriting

In the 'Brainwriting' technique, the attendants are disposed in a circle around a table.

Each participant writes his three ideas on three loose sheets of paper and stacks them on his right. Once the person has written down their ideas they can draw a sheet of paper from the pile of the person on their left and then do one of three things:

a) read it, decide to add a comment to the card, then pass it to the right;

b) read it, decide to take a new sheet of paper and write a new idea and pass it to the right;

c) read it and pass it to the right without taking any action and then draw another card.

We proceed in this way until the leader notices that the attention among the participants is waning. At that point the meeting is interrupted and the leader proceeds with the analysis of the material he has available.

02.Variant B
Gallery Walk

Gallery Walk is a technique mediated by Design Thinking.

In the Gallery Walk [i], each idea is written down on a sheet of paper and hung on the wall or on different tables in the room. Participants armed with pens and Post-its go around the room adding comments or new ideas to ideas already present. As people mingle in the room and comments and reactions to comments accumulate, it's clear that a discussion is developing, but in written form.

As with brainwriting (page 34), Gallery Walk is a silent discussion technique. "Silent discussion" is a way of building on each other's ideas without interacting directly. This avoids many of the problems of lost productivity.
The technique can also be done asynchronously with remote meeting apps. In this case, ideas are published on an electronic whiteboard which participants can access to add their comments.

Jeanne Lietdka, "Why Design Thinking Works", HHarvard Business Review, September-October, 2018.

02.Variant C
Electronic Brainstorming

Many experts argue that remote brainstorming works even better than brainstorming in presence.

There are several online electronic platforms that support meetings that make it possible to type ideas. Using these platforms you can work remotely [i] in asynchronous mode. 'Asynchronous mode' means that once the briefing has been given, participants have a few days available to develop ideas. Working asynchronously has three important advantages:

- Participants have time to delve deeper into the topic.

- The mind has time to incubate ideas, which is essential for producing quality results.

- Participants can add ideas when they are most inspired and can return to their ideas and refine them.
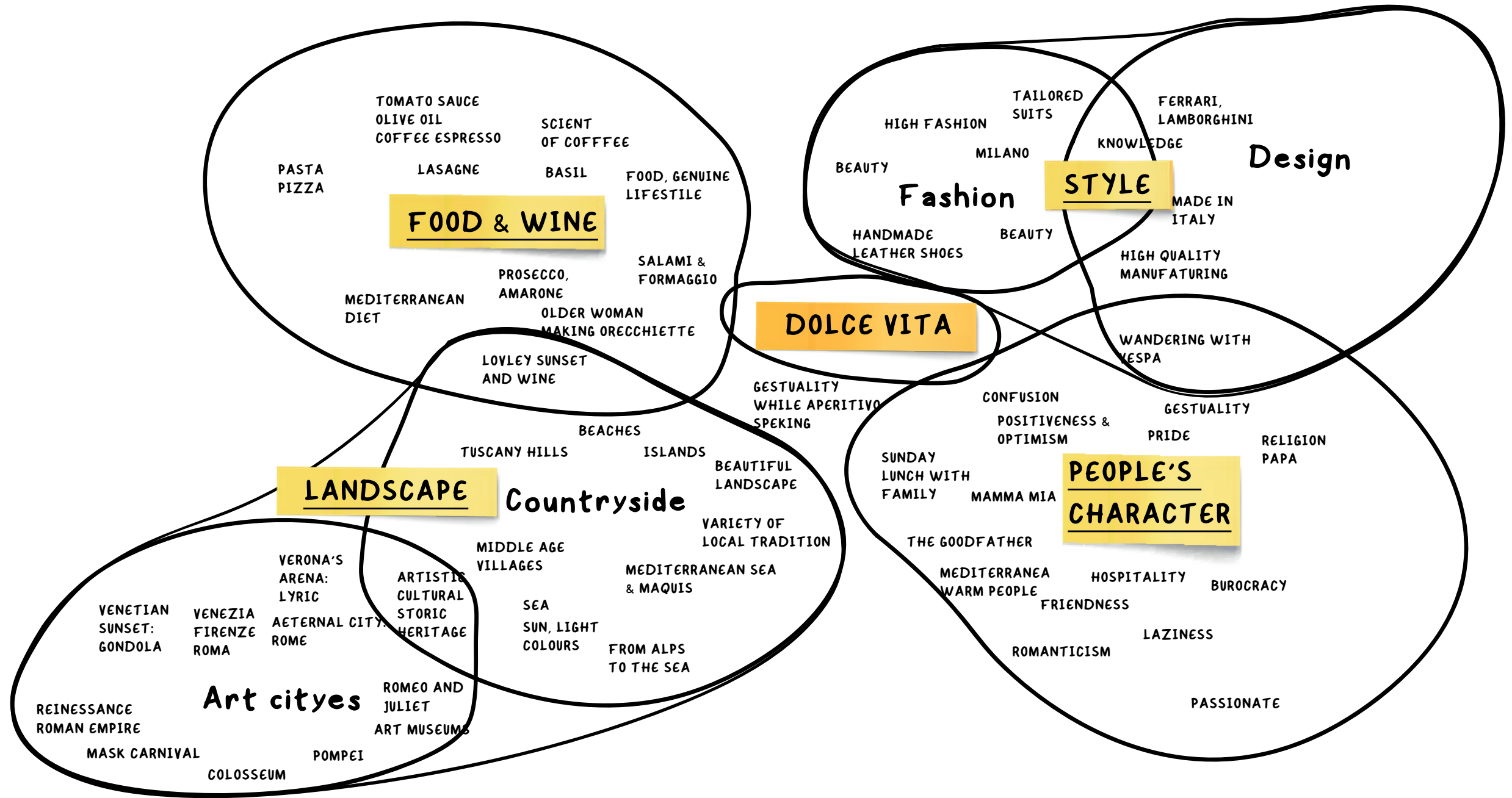
03.

Clustering

The project leader groups similar ideas into a concept map. As the ideas are produced, they are placed in a bucket from which the project leader draws to group them into conceptually similar ideas.

Grouping ideas is simple.
Start from the first idea you extract from the bucket and put it on the board. Take the second idea, and if it is similar to the first you put it next to it. If it is of a completely different genre you put it aside. Then you pick up a third idea. If it is similar to one of the previous two, you put near it, otherwise you put it aside. You continue like that, until you've run out of bucket ideas.

You may get to 10-15 groups of ideas. Group these clusters together until you reach 3-4 main groups, which also have titles. Give each group a title and draw a circle around it - this will make it easier to remember the groups. If there are interesting single ideas outside of the groups, you write them down and look for them, giving them the same weight that you assign to the groups.

TOMATO SAUCE
OLIVE OIL
COFFEE ESPRESSO

SCIENT
OF COFFFEE

PASTA
PIZZA

LASAGNE   BASIL

FOOD, GENUINE
LIFESTILE

FOOD & WINE

SALAMI &
FORMAGGIO

PROSECCO,
AMARONE

MEDITERRANEAN
DIET

OLDER WOMAN
MAKING ORECCHIETTE

LOVLEY SUNSET
AND WINE

TAILORED
SUITS

HIGH FASHION

BEAUTY

MILANO

KNOWLEDGE

FERRARI,
LAMBORGHINI

Design

Fashion   **STYLE**

MADE IN
ITALY

HANDMADE
LEATHER SHOES

BEAUTY

HIGH QUALITY
MANUFATURING

DOLCE VITA

WANDERING WITH
VESPA

GESTUALITY
WHILE APERITIVO
SPEKING

CONFUSION

POSITIVENESS &
OPTIMISM

GESTUALITY

BEACHES

TUSCANY HILLS   ISLANDS

BEAUTIFUL
LANDSCAPE

PRIDE

RELIGION
PAPA

SUNDAY
LUNCH WITH
FAMILY

**PEOPLE'S
CHARACTER**

MAMMA MIA

LANDSCAPE   Countryside

VARIETY OF
LOCAL TRADITION

MIDDLE AGE
VILLAGES

MEDITERRANEAN SEA
& MAQUIS

THE GOODFATHER

MEDITERRANEA
WARM PEOPLE

HOSPITALITY

BUROCRACY

VERONA'S
ARENA:
LYRIC

ARTISTIC
CULTURAL
STORIC
HERITAGE

SEA

FRIENDNESS

VENETIAN
SUNSET:
GONDOLA

VENEZIA
FIRENZE
ROMA

AETERNAL CITY:
ROME

SUN, LIGHT
COLOURS

FROM ALPS
TO THE SEA

LAZINESS

ROMANTICISM

REINESSANCE
ROMAN EMPIRE

Art cityes

ROMEO AND
JULIET

ART MUSEUMS

PASSIONATE

MASK CARNIVAL   POMPEI

COLOSSEUM

Clustering. The elements that constitute foreigners' perception of the Italy brand. Excerpt from a workshop carried out during a master's degree held by prof. Francesco Zurlo at the Polytechnic of Milan.

What you want are clusters, insights and relationships among ideas

The clustering process can take place at the meeting itself, or perhaps most efficiently, just before the next meeting.

Clustering is done by the project leader, who must pay attention to three aspects:

- **Clusters of ideas:** Grouping allows you to synthesize many ideas into a handful of key ideas that are easier to manage.

- **Relationship between groups:** Understanding how ideas relate to each other allows you to grasp the living and dynamic nature of the overall idea.

- **Isolated but interesting ideas:** It often happens that the best ideas come from single intuitions. Or that the decisive information to solve a problem is possessed by a single individual.

04.

Discussion

Discussion serves to align the participants

Once the ideas have been grouped, they are discussed.
The discussion begins with the project leader questioning the participants to delve deeper into the ideas that he considers most interesting. For example, he might say: "I find this idea very interesting. Can anyone who has had it can elaborate?". And then he continues by questioning the person/s with open-ended questions. Once the project leader has explored the most interesting ideas, the discussion can move to the group.

04.Variant
Votation

The leader can decide alone which ideas to explore, or he can let the group decide. If the group decides, a vote will be taken.

The leader introduces the groups by posting them on a wall, a bulletin board, or an app. Each participant has three votes available which they can assign to different ideas or concentrate them on a single idea. To prevent leaders from influencing the group you can use two tricks:

- To maintain the anonymity of the vote, while people vote the other participants have their backs to the board.[i]

- In his meetings, Jeff Bezos has the junior participants vote first and then the seniors, in ascending order of hierarchy.

If the meeting is remote, voting is anonymous and everyone can vote together. Finally, the votes are tallied and the ideas that received the most support are explored.

i. Steven G. Rogelberg. "The Case tor More Silence in Meetings". Harvard Business Revue, DIGITAL ARTICLE, June 14, 2019

05.

Conclusion

> " *An effective meeting ends with a clear and focused review of the result.*
>
> *J. Elise Keith, meeting expert*

At the end of the meeting share the results.

Once the meeting is concluded, the project leader, alone or with an assistant, analyzes the material that emerged and draws conclusions. He then draws up a report where he explains the results and sends it to the participants. Sharing results is important for two reasons.

Move the work forward

It may be that based on the results achieved you want to ask the group to further develop the ideas. In this case the summary document provides the indications for proceeding with the work.

Increase Engagement

Even if the team leader no longer needs the group to continue the work, sharing the results is a tangible way to thank the participants for their effort. If people know that their ideas matter, next time they will try even harder. Not to mention good manners.

In summary

Reducing the process to the bare bones

Based on this structure, knowing the variations allows you to configure the process to best serve your needs.

The process of structured brainstorming is simple. Essentially, it boils down to three actions:

1. People generate ideas individually before attending the meeting

2. Ideas are exchanged simultaneously

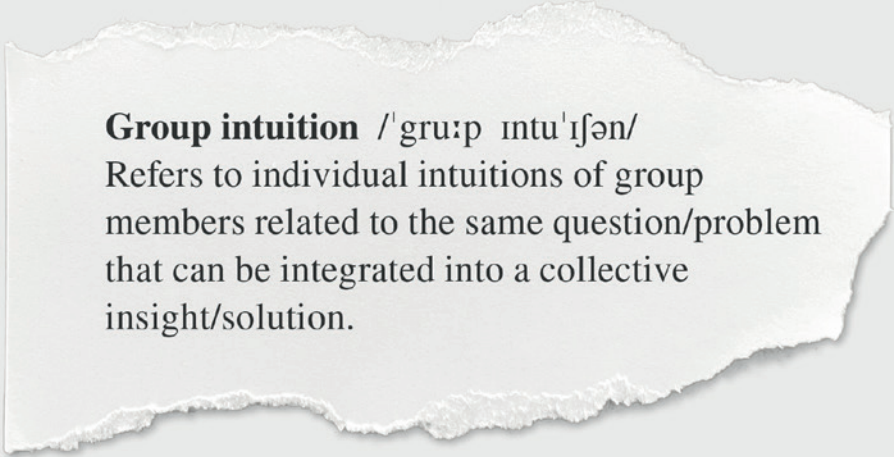**3.** Ideas are grouped together to look for common patterns and valuable insights

Intuitive Brainstorming

Intuition improves brainstorming

Intuitive Brainstorming® is the technique that brings intuition into structured brainstorming. This provides two main advantages:

1. Generate better ideas;

2. Identify collective intuitions that have a high probability of working in practice.

Group Intuition

Group intuition /ˈgruːp ɪntuˈɪʃən/
Refers to individual intuitions of group members related to the same question/problem that can be integrated into a collective insight/solution.

As collaboration is becoming increasingly important in innovation, scholars are looking at how groups can work together producing results beyond the individual contributions made by individual members. One of the most fascinating areas of research concerns 'group intuition'.[i]

The principle of group intuition is that through intuition an individual can access his/her own personal unconscious; when two or more people, thinking intuitively about the same topic have the same intuition, then that intuition belongs to the collective unconscious.

Ideas that belong to the collective unconscious, as we will see in the next pages, have great potential on the market.

i. M. Sinclair, A. Hamilton, Mapping group intuition, in 'Handbook of Research Methods on Intuition', Ed. By Martha Sinclair, Edward Elgar, 2014

"

I realized the potential of group intuition during a brainstorming for Alcatel in 2007. At the time the French brand had asked my firm to think about a repositioning strategy for its mobile phones.

At the time I had developed the Sensing® technique, which allows you to deliberately generate intuitions on a problem at hand. Using Sensing® during a brainstorm, two of us had had the same feeling of 'simplicity'. If we wanted to stand out from the competition, we felt, the brand would have had to go against the trend compared to the hyper-technological and complex devices, such as Blackberry, which dominated the market at the time.

Along with this feeling, another visual one rose: the same two participants had "seen" the image of colored mobile phones with rounded edges and sensual and tactile materials. It was a way to give shape to an idea of simple and "at hand" technology.

A series of panels conducted globally would then confirm what we had seen with the eye of intuition was what the market expected. These simple and colorful cell phones were thus put into production and at the time contributed significantly to the relaunch of the brand."

Marco Bassani, *Inventor of Sensing®*

Intuitive Brainstorming® arises from the intersection of three disciplines

In the following pages we will see how the three disciplines help bring intuition to brainstorming.
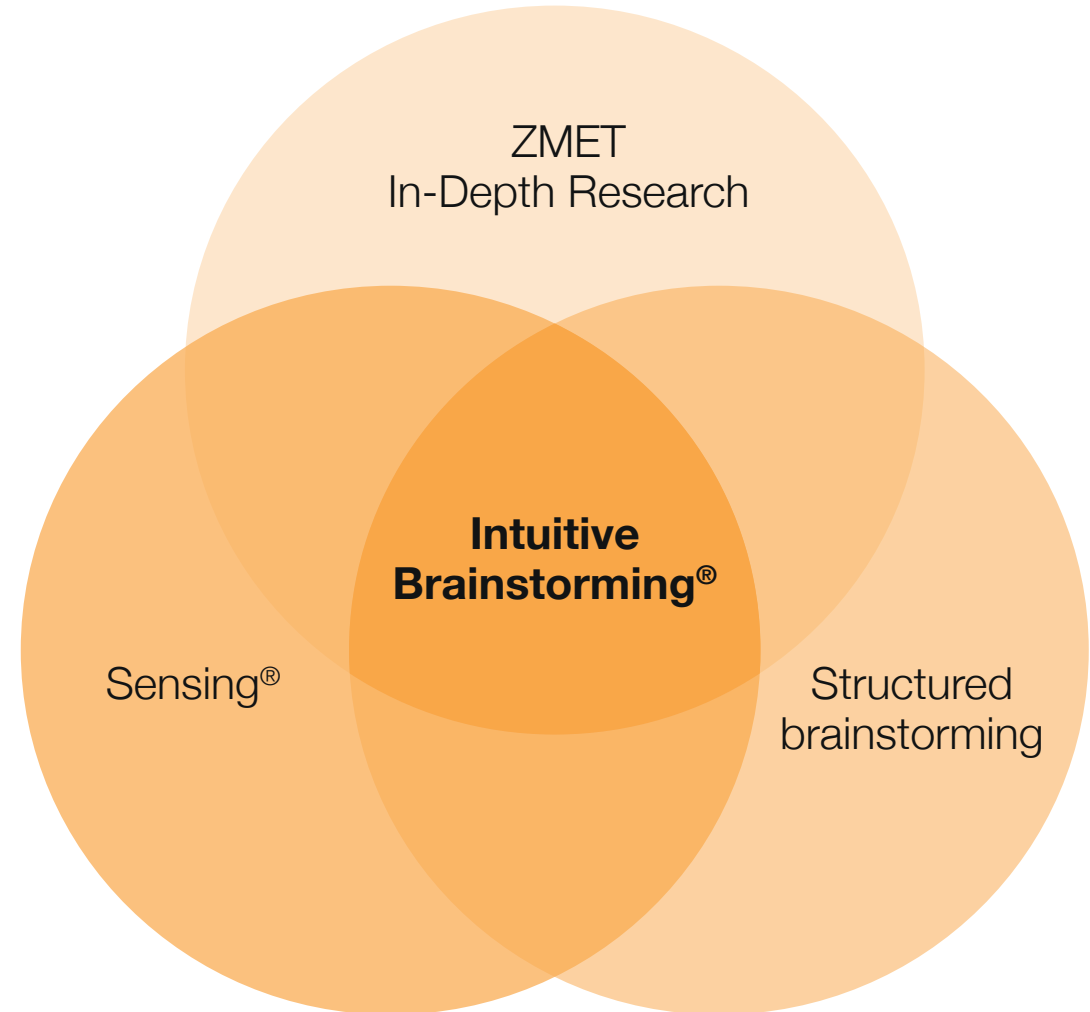
Discipline 1: ZMET® In-Depth Research

ZMET® In-Depth Research demonstrates the potential of group intuition

Harvard professor Gerald Zaltman developed a special in-depth research procedure, ZMET [i], to investigate consumers' unconscious motivations.

Zaltman has demonstrated that when two or more people who think intuitively about the same topic have the same intuition, that idea is bound to work because it reflects an idea shared at a deep level by consumers.

Although the ZMET technique is about market research, his findings nevertheless provide us with solid support in support of group intuition.

Over the course of thirty years of experimentation, the ZMET technique has been applied to dozens of companies of the caliber of Procter & Gamble, Google and Pfizer, Toyota and Microsoft, continuing to confirm the effectiveness of group intuition in identifying successful solutions.

i. Gerald Zaltman, "How Customers Think. Essential Insights into the Mind of the Market" Harvard Business School Press, 2003.
Gerald Zaltman, Lindsay H. Zaltman, "Marketing Metaphoria". Harvard Business Press, 2008.

Discipline 1: ZMET® In-Depth Research

To access the consumer's unconscious ZMET® utilizes in-depth interviews

In-depth research starts from the assumption that the real unconscious motivations that push people to act in a certain way are inaccessible to the conscious mind.

To access the real unconscious motivations, the researcher subjects the participants to a series of in-depth interviews (accompanied by

'visual imagery' techniques) which allow 'to know what they don't know they know'.

Finally, the results are cross-referenced in search of common patterns. Experience shows that if two or more participants have had the same intuition, that intuition is bound to work in the market.

Discipline 2: Structured Brainstorming

Structured brainstorming and ZMET® have the same backbone

Structured brainstorming and ZMET®
have the same backbone.
In both, ideas are originally generated
by single individuals. In both, ideas are
analyzed and grouped in search of shared
insights. The only difference is that in
Intuitive Brainstorming®
in-depth interviews to gain access
to the consumer's unconscious is
replaced by Sensing®.

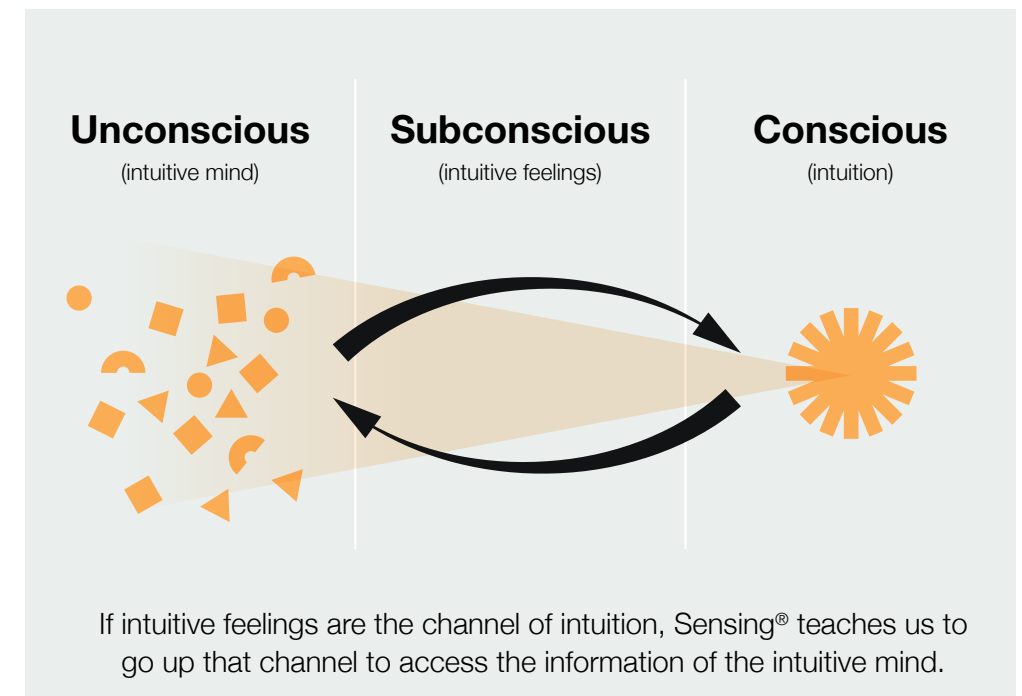|	Individual ideas generator	Grouping of ideas
ZMET	✓	✓
Structured Brainstorming	✓	✓

Structured Brainstorming and In-depth Research have the same structure: in both, ideas are generated individually and then grouped together in search of communalities.

Discipline 3: Sensing®

In Intuitive Brainstorming® in-depth interviews are replaced by Sensing®

Sensing® is the technique that allows you to directly access to the informations of intuitive mind.

Sensing® is based on the principle that intuition emerges in the form of feelings. If feelings are the channel of intuitions, when you have a problem you can ask yourself: "What do I 'sense' about this problem?" and by moving up the channel of feelings you can deliberately generate intuitions on a problem at hand.

Unconscious
(intuitive mind)

Subconscious
(intuitive feelings)

Conscious
(intuition)

If intuitive feelings are the channel of intuition, Sensing® teaches us to go up that channel to access the information of the intuitive mind.

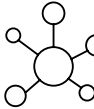In short, Intuitive Brainstorming® is a structured brainstorming where participants use Sensing® to generate insights. If two or more participants have the same insight, that insight has the greatest potential.

ZMET
In-Depth Research

**Intuitive
Brainstorming®**

Sensing®   Structured
brainstorming
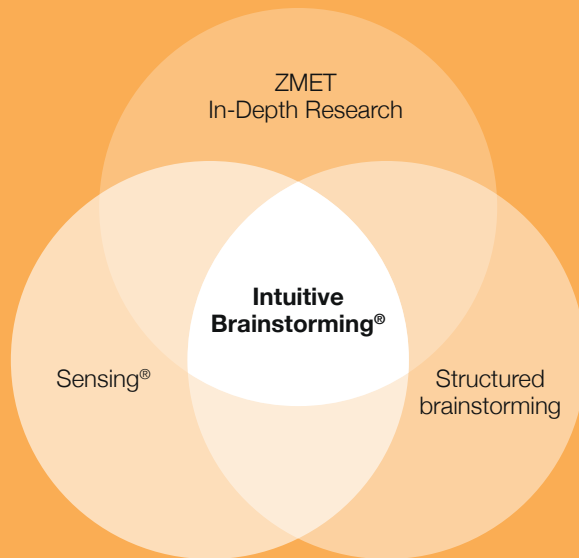
The procedure

Intuitive Brainstorming is a structured brainstorming where individuals practice Sensing to generate 3 insights before the meeting. Then the insights are analyzed in search of patterns and promising ideas. If collective intuitions emerge, they are considered before any other ideas.

01. **Briefing**

The briefing is assigned days before the creative meeting in order to activate the incubation, essential for generating insights .

02. **Insights generation**

Participants use the Sensing technique to generate three insights on the problem at hand.

03. **Clustering**

The ideas are sent to the project director before the meeting, to give him time to analyze them, group them, and identify collective intuitions and promising ideas.

04. **Discussion**

On the day of the meeting, the project leader presents the concept map and explores the most interesting ideas with the participants.

05. **After the meeting**

The director analyzes the results and sends them to the participants.

Our promise: to get the most out of your teams

The final result of a brainstorm
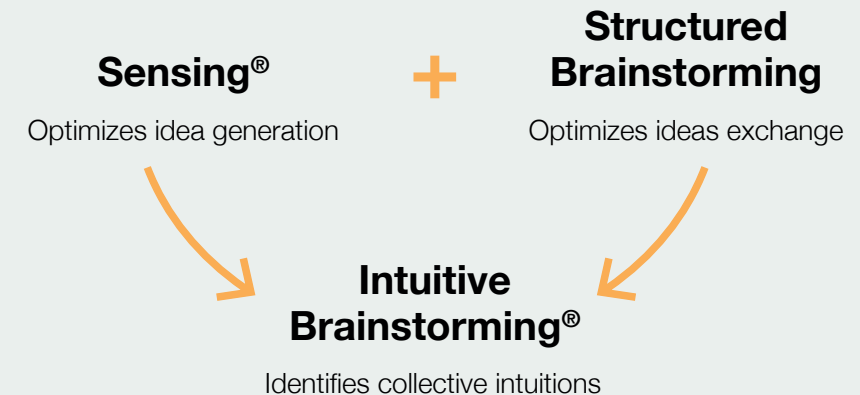is given by the sum of two elements:

1.
The quality of ideas generated
by individuals.

2.
The way they are exchanged in the
team.

With Sensing® you optimize the way ideas are produced individually. With structured brainstorming you optimize the way ideas are exchanged. The two elements combined are enough to obtain much better results from brainstorming.

Intuitive Brainstorming® allows you to do something more: identifing collective intuition which has the greatest potential.

If your company uses creative meetings as a working tool, you can bet that there is no better procedure to date.

Sensing®   **+**   **Structured Brainstorming**

Optimizes idea generation   Optimizes ideas exchange

Intuitive Brainstorming®

Identifies collective intuitions

IntuitiveThinking.com