BRAINSTORMING - CREATIVE PROBLEM SOLVING METHOD

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Session objectives

- What is brainstorming
- Why and when use it
- How to organise and lead a successful brainstorming session
- What mistakes are to be avoided

What is brainstorming

"The best way how to have a good idea is to have many ideas"

- Alex F. Osborne, 1939
  - **method of thinking** up solutions, concepts, ideas in problem solving
  - using the *brain* to *storm* new ideas **in groups**
  - *"It is easier to tone down a wild idea than to think up a new one."*

- Brainstorming is a group or individual creativity technique by which efforts are made to find a solution for a specific problem.

- Clear Objective

- Record Ideas

- Never Interrupt

- No criticism or judgment

- Encourage creative ideas

Aspects of diversity

- ▸ Skill Diversity
- ▸ Thinking Style Diversity
- ▸ Learning Style Diversity
- ▸ Experience Diversity
- ▸ Age Diversity
- ▸ Gender Diversity

Research shows that individual with diverse background can enhance the flows of ideas, making people open to new idea and finding ways to integrate solutions.

Participants are encouraged to come up with (during green session)

- Crazy ideas
- Stupid ideas
- Wild ideas

- No criticism
- No censorship
- No negative judgment
- No distractions or interruptions

Why and When Use It

- the creative process is **not always easy** (problems of fear, criticism, no existing solutions yet)
- one person has a **limited capacity**
- people **tend to judge** new ideas immediately (a change is difficult for a human being)
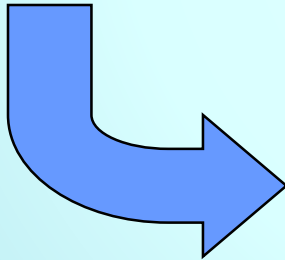
Creative thinking require appropriate tools !

How does it work

- in a **group of people**
- **free associations** to the topic given
- **relaxed and friendly atmosphere**
- **deferred judgements** – release the human mind, lateral thinking

As many ideas as possible, no matter how crazy they are

The key rules

1. relaxed atmosphere – completely free
2. no criticism or judgements
3. quantity matters
4. all ideas legitimate
5. all ideas put on the sheet of paper
6. evaluation only after the session
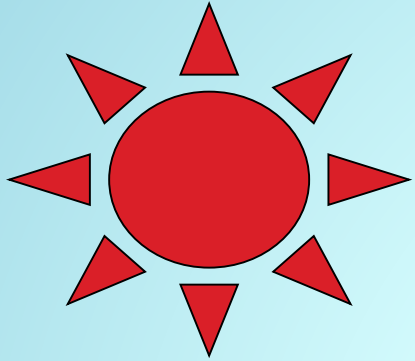
BENEFITS of brainstorming

- Solution of a problematic situation
- Free thinking
- Develops high cognitive abilities

Why and When Use It

Specific questions:

- *How can we promote our placements/productivity?*
- *What can our organisation do in 5 years hence?*
- *What can we do to solve the problem XY?*
- *How can we improve co-operation of A and B?*
- *What do our farmers/students really want?*
- *What opportunities do we have this year?*

BRAINSTORMING CONSTRAINTS

▸ does not rank the ideas
▸ cannot help you select the important ones
▸ does not suggest the best solutions
▸ must be amended by other methods
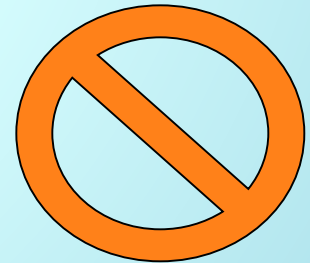
Organising a session?

1. PREPARATION PHASE
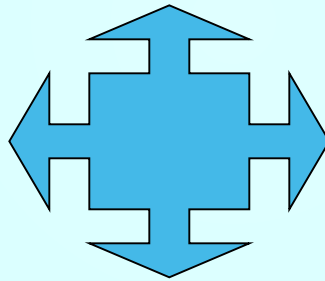
3. EVALUATION

2. CONDUCT THE SESSION
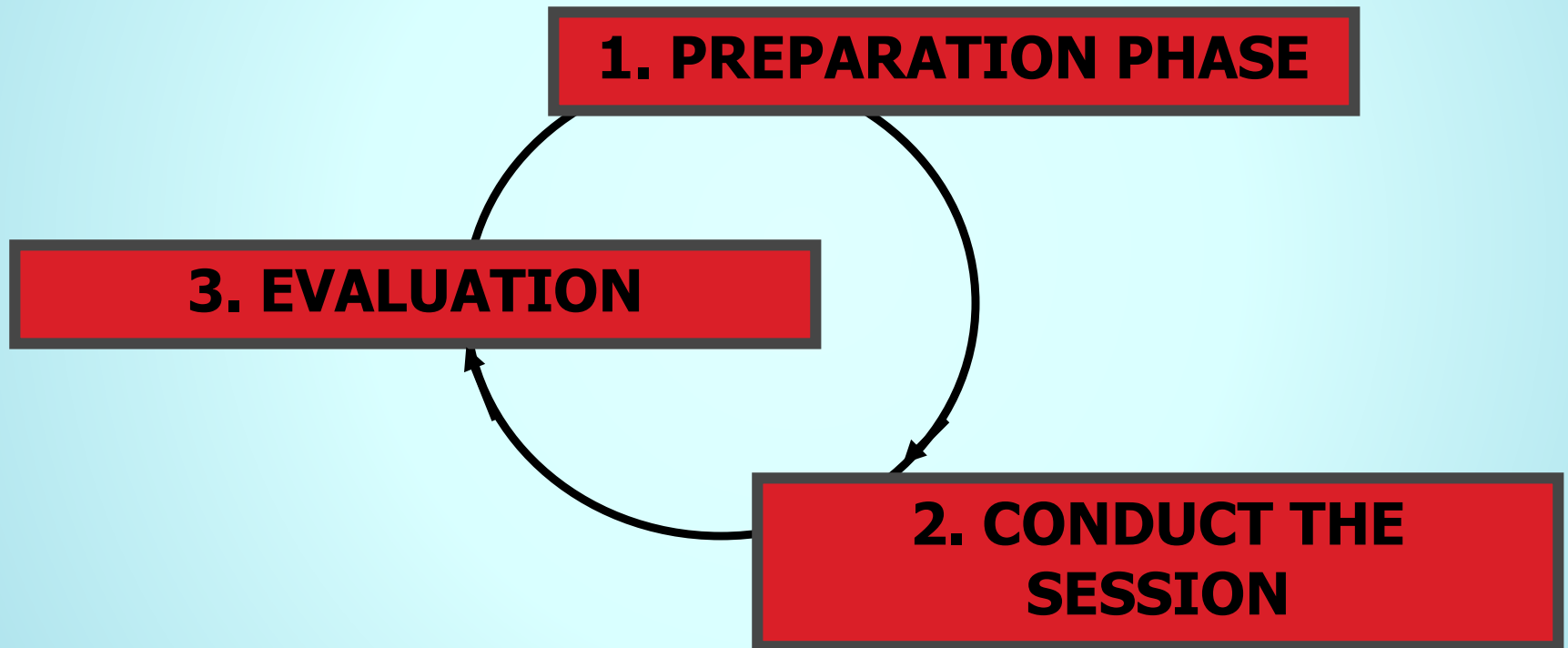
1. PREPARATION PHASE

Specify the problem

What do we really want?
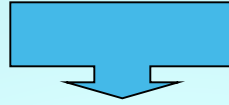
Invite people

make sure they
have time

Select the right people

up to 10 – 12
different positions

Decide when and where

place and time matters
„U" layout of the room

2. CONDUCT THE SESSION

1. **Specify the objectives** – make sure that everybody is happy with the central question.
2. **Decide the roles:** - leader, recorder, panel.
3. **Explain the rules** (or make sure that everybody knows them. Eventually – a warm-up exercise for fun). You can let people to jot down a few ideas before starting.
4. **Begin** by going around, after some rounds, open the floor.
5. **Record** the ideas **exactly**, clarify only in the end.
6. **Suspend judgements !**
7. **Encourage the ideas,** even the most radical and far-fetched. Allow the late coming ideas, do not hurry.
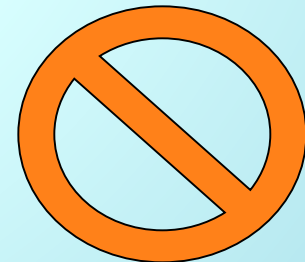8. **At the end** – eliminate duplicates, clarify, thank the participants.
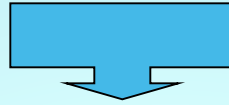
3. EVALUATION PHASE

Put the evaluation off / next day

Add newly born ideas to the list

Group similar ideas together

Select the best or most interesting suggestions

Create teams which will work on them further

Inform people about the results

Mistakes to be avoided

- **people are negative** in advance (it will not work anyway)
- **too many brainstormings** in the organisation
- **bad atmosphere** in the beginning
- **bad experience** with the method
- **judgements occur** during the session
- **any criticism** and **personal attacks**

THANK YOU