Productive Brainstorming

A room full of clever people agrees it needs more resources.

We need to do this, but first we need that, and we cannot do that without something else. Round it goes, like a cat biting its own tail, and you get nowhere. The brilliant solution at the end: we need more resources. It drives everybody crazy and gives brainstorming a bad name. Nothing is wrong with the people; they are stuck in the wrong mode for the job. This brief workshop draws, among other things, on Edward de Bono's reframing of productive thinking in a group setting.

FORMAT
Reframing and Playing

AUDIENCE
Executive Teams

FOCUS
Oxygenise Executive Minds

ReDiscovering Thinking Muscles

A playful thinking rehab workshop which improves a management team's willingness and ability to collectively observe, to reframe and to adapt forces within and outside.

Why Clever Teams Get Stuck

Closed thinking executes: it works inside the box, and there is nothing wrong with that. Open thinking explores outside it. Teams turn to brainstorming when the current way of operating is failing, fading or no longer viable, and bring their execution mode with them. Everybody has favourite ideas, and the better something has worked in the past, the harder it is to let go of it.

Out, Then Back In

Leaving the box is half the job. Good brainstorming explores outside it and comes back in, or changes the box. It works when the whole team can switch between the two modes, and when the facilitator holds the space while the switch is uncomfortable. Without that, brainstorming stays unproductive.

Two Modes, Both Needed

EXECUTION MODE
Inside the box. Gets the work done.

↓ Out: leave the box to explore

EXPLORATION MODE
Outside the box. Finds what the box left out.

↑ Back in: with the box reworked or redefined

METHOD
Drawing on Edward de Bono's work: the facilitator helps the whole team switch between modes, and holds the space while the switch is uncomfortable.

STUCK IN EXECUTION
"We need this, but first that…" The session circles and ends with: we need more resources.

Drawn from Thomas's description of the two modes.

AFTER THOMAS BOTHE

Next Step

Interested in improving your team's collective thinking ability, both for formal brainstorming and for everyday creative exchange? Get in touch to discuss the workshop and whether it fits your needs.

DIRECT ENQUIRY
hello@thinkwaredesign.com
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Feature Profile

Six scales describe how Productive Brainstorming is set up: why, how and with what results. Each runs between two poles, numbered 5 to 2 towards each pole, with a single 1 at the centre; there is no zero. Filled cells show where the workshop sits; each group carries its own colour.

Why

Aim

Whether the workshop sets out to build a skill or to inspire. The band leans towards skill, with some reach into inspiration.



Area of usefulness

Where what you take away is meant to be used. The band leans towards professional life, with some reach into private life.



How

Where we go into detail

Whose part the workshop looks at closely. The band stays with your own responsibility.



Method

How the workshop works with you: mentoring alongside you, or training. The band leans towards training, with some reach into mentoring.



Results

Learning

Depth of understanding or breadth of knowledge. The band sits evenly between depth of understanding and breadth of knowledge.



Confidence

The kind of confidence the workshop aims for. The band stays with presence.

