

PEI Home and School Federation

Brainstorming Session

Tuesday, January 29, 2013

Harmony House Theatre, Hunter River, PEI

Draft Agenda

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| 6:30 | Welcome
Help yourself to refreshments |
| 6:45 | Introductions
Process |
| 6:55 | Brainstorming - Generation of Issues/Topics/Ideas |
| 7:20 | Vote - Coloured dots |
| 7:30 | Discussion on Top 3 |
| 8:15 | Wrap Up - Actions |
| 8:30 | Thank you for coming! |

Notes:

- A. Record of discussion recorded on flip chart will be circulated.
- B. Introduction to Brainstorming follows this draft agenda (Pgs. 2 & 3)

Introduction to Brainstorming

Participants "brainstorm" when they come together in a freethinking forum to generate ideas. Used in a planned format, brainstorming can be an effective method of gleaning public perceptions and ideas and moving participants out of conflict and toward consensus.

Brainstorming has these basic components:

- ✓ Generating as many solutions to a problem as possible
- ✓ Listing every idea presented without comment or evaluation
- ✓ Grouping and evaluating ideas to reach consensus, and prioritizing ideas.

Brainstorming brings new ideas to bear on a problem. The freethinking atmosphere encourages fresh approaches. Creativity is enhanced, because individuals are encouraged to bring up all ideas -- even those that might appear outrageous. Even imperfectly developed thoughts may jog the thinking of other participants.

Problems are defined better as questions arise. Alternatives appear in a new or different perspective. Brainstorming can help reduce conflict. It helps participants see other points of view and possibly change their perspective on problems. It may not be useful in resolving deeply felt conflicts but can help set the stage for a different technique if an impasse has been reached.

Civility is required of each participant. Brainstorming is democratic. All participants have equal status and an equal opportunity to participate. No one person's ideas dominate a brainstorming session. Brainstorming heightens the awareness of community and sensitizes individuals to the behavior of the group and its participants. It helps mold participants into a working group.

People participate by bringing their ideas to the table, working in groups of 6 to 10. If the group is too small, participants are not stimulated to generate ideas; if it is too large, the more vocal few may dominate the meeting. At large meetings, participants are divided into groups. Usually each group has a facilitator.

A brainstorming session usually has a Simple Agenda:

1. introductions with brief outlines of participants' backgrounds;
2. discussion of the brainstorming process and how it fits into the overall process;
3. generation of ideas, listed on newsprint without evaluation or criticism;
4. clarifying and explaining ideas, as required;
5. review, grouping, and elimination of redundant ideas;
6. prioritization; and
7. presentation of each group's results by the moderator to the larger group.

People can prioritize their ideas by different means, such as using strips of colored adhesive dots. About seven dots per person works well. Working individually, participants use dots to indicate their preferences. The dots can be divided among several good ideas or concentrated on one idea that is very important. The sheets of paper with dots are an effective display of the prioritization and help identify the group's top priorities. Participation is furthered when notes of the meeting and subsequent events can be distributed to the participants.