**Brainstorming**

A technique to generate ideas, input and insights from the team



**WHY**

* To gather the greatest variety and diversity of ideas and insights into the problem or solutions
* To stimulate creative thinking
* To allow consideration of input from all the team
* To allow collection of ideas over a short period of time
* To group the ideas in categories or themes to facilitate organization of the brainstorming session
* To evaluate how many people identified a particular opportunity, idea or solution – to assign a degree of consensus or numerical “vote” to each option

**WHEN**

* Define Phase - Post Process Mapping - to gather Opportunities for Improvement (OFIs) that the team identified as they walked the process
* Analyze Phase - With the Cause & Effect Diagram to explore potential causes
* Improve Phase – With the Impact-Effort Grid to prioritize potential solutions

**HOW TO**

1. Gather all team members or activity participants & describe the goal of the session
2. Provide all participants with multiple self-stick notes
3. Ask participants to write their input on the self-stick notes, one OFI, cause or solution per note
4. Place all notes on flipchart, board or wall
   * Defer discussion until all ideas are shared
5. Proceed to group or collate the responses according to similar topics, categories or themes (also called an affinity diagram)
   * One or two people (preferably the facilitator and/or team lead) to begin reading and organizing the notes
   * Group similar notes – forming groups with similar themes
   * Clarify any ideas not clear
   * Capture any new ideas that are stimulated as the ideas are shared
   * The team may be asked to assist in the titling of the groups
   * Count & note the number of notes in each group
6. Ask the participants about their reaction to the ideas generated
   * Any surprises in the responses?
   * Agreement with the most mentioned ideas?
   * What actions, if any, will be generated?
7. This activity can provide inputs toward creating:
   * Opportunities for Improvement (OFIs)
   * Cause & Effect Diagram
   * Impact Effort Grid

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| **TIPS**   * Encourage all to participate with at least one note per person * Encourage as many ideas/notes as possible * When working on solutions, encourage unfettered thinking that may be “outside the box”, innovative, big, impossible, or audacious ideas * Do not criticize or dismiss any idea * For ease or organization, use a different color self-stick note to title the affinity groups so ideas and corresponding numbers of notes (votes) can be seen by the team |

**Associated Tools:**

Cause & Effect Diagram

Impact-Effort Grid