

Brainstorming

By Colin Bates

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Brainstorming is a much used, and much abused process. "Let's have a brainstorming session" someone says, and before there are 4-5 ideas out on the table everyone is arguing about the merits of each, evaluating and judging every comment made.

It drives us mad, and it should drive you mad too. That's because there are fundamentally two different types of thinking:

The first is 'divergent', creative, imaginative, playful, fun and great for generating ideas.

The second is 'convergent' analytical, judgmental and a terrible basis for generating ideas (but good, of course, for evaluating ideas).

The point is that you can't do both at the same time. Brainstorming is about 'divergent' thinking. It is about being creative, playful, imaginative and having fun, while generating LOTS of ideas very quickly. After you have finished the brainstorming, and after you have 'cooled down' you can put your analytical hat on and evaluate the ideas.

During a brainstorming session the basic ground rules should be:

Don't criticize

Don't interpret

Do build on others ideas

Do be creative

Sounds simple doesn't it!

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