



# WHAT IS BRAINSTORMING AND WHY IS IT IMPORTANT TO DI & BEYOND?



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## What is brainstorming and why is it important to DI and beyond?

### What is brainstorming and why is it important?

Brainstorming is used to find a solution to a specific problem whether it be in a conference room, a classroom, or a locker room. No matter the scenario, brainstorming allows new ideas to be gathered and recorded from members of a group in a free-flowing manner without fear of judgement.

Brainstorming is great for team building as the entire group takes ownership over the endgame. Team members can get their ideas from being just a thought to a potential action toward a common goal. Team members become more comfortable sharing ideas even outside of a team meeting.



### Brainstorming and DI

In the case of the DI Challenge program, brainstorming is a crucial step as a team creates the solution to its chosen Challenge. The best solutions will come out of great brainstorming sessions.

### How to get a team into brainstorming mode

Each team member should have a copy of the chosen Challenge and read it in its entirety prior to the first brainstorming session. The team should then read it together before hitting the idea generation process. For younger teams, waiting to read the Challenge together at a meeting may be a better option than having them try to read it at home on their own. The goal is to be sure each team member has a basic understanding of the Challenge.

### Getting started

Using a highlighter, team members should mark up their copy of the Challenge with what the requirements are and what parts earn the points. Take note of the 'check marks' as well as the terms: should, must, must not, may be, will earn points for, etc. Review the scoring section as well.

A great tool is a team notebook or folder where ALL ideas are kept. The team members can take turns writing ideas in the notebook. Another great tool is sticky notes. Equip

each team member with a sticky note pad and pencil so they can jot their own ideas down on the fly. These notes can be placed in the team notebook or on an idea board for future reference. Have the team members take their pads home so ideas that come about outside of meetings can be written down and brought to the next meeting.

### During the brainstorming phase of the DI season:

- 1) **There are no good or bad ideas during brainstorming. Just ideas! Many, many ideas. Write them ALL down no matter how silly or unreasonable they sound.** Crazy ideas are welcome! This is DI after all, and we make the improbable and what seems impossible happen!

*Quantity over quality. More is better. Just keep them coming!*

- 2) **No decisions should be made during this part of the process.** Comments should not be made as whether an idea is deemed good or bad and no idea should be set aside as unusable at this stage. Every idea should stay in the running *unless it is obviously disrespectful or may bring harm to anyone in any form, which goes against the spirit of DI.* The more ideas a team has to choose from, the better the chances for a great and innovative Challenge solution!
- 3) **Brainstorming can occur over several meetings** and smaller sessions are likely to continue far into the season as a Challenge solution comes together. And if a team gets stuck on an element, pull out your original sticky notes and notebook/folder and consider holding a new brainstorming session!
- 4) **Don't rush** While many teams may want to get right to it and start building and writing etc., if brainstorming is rushed, the entire solution could fall short of its potential. Besides, we know from experience, many, many laughs, and great memories tend to come out of these brainstorming meetings! While you don't want to rush, neither do you want to dwell in this stage for too long.
- 5) **Start to separate the ideas into categories** according to which element the idea will fall into such as story, scenery, props, technical, costumes, characters, Team Choice Elements, and so on, keeping in mind that many ideas will likely overlap several Challenge elements.

### Brainstorming beyond DI

Brainstorming is a great way to develop creative thinking and problem-solving skills that are considered two of the most sought-after skills in the 21st century work environment.

In a business or organization setting, brainstorming can help a group get the creative juices flowing when trying to come up with new product ideas, effective advertising campaigns, improved design and efficiency of a current product or piece of machinery, out-of-the box fundraising ideas...

Brainstorming can generate exciting new ideas that can take a team to new levels!  
All the things that DI is designed to do!