New & Improved

Leadership & Governance Meetings: Productive Thinking Process Guide

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ground rules

Divergent	Convergent
Defer judgment	Be deliberate
Strive for quantity	Be affirmative
Seek wild and unusual options	Check objectives
Build on options	Improve options
	Consider novelty

Identify Goal/Wish/Challenge

ANALYSIS QUESTION:

Have all strategic priorities(s) of the moment been identified?

YES ⟶

NO

DIVERGE:

Generate many statements starting with:
> I wish…
> It would be great if…

TOOLS:
① Brainstorming (with Post-its, Brainwriting)
② Divergent Questions:
  - What are some goals, dreams, or visions you'd like to begin or accomplish this year?
  - What do you wish worked better?
  - Who's been on your mind lately? Why?

CONVERGE:

Select the goal/wish/challenge(s) that you want to achieve.
Check for:
  - Ownership/Accountability
  - Motivation
  - Need for Creativity/Imagination

TOOLS:
① Star
② Read it - Write it - Stick it
③ Highlighting

Gather Data

ANALYSIS QUESTION:

Is there a need to share or uncover additional insight or information?

NO ⟶

YES

DIVERGE:

Generate or share information you think might be important to keep in mind related to the goal(s) you've chosen to work forward on.

TOOLS:
① Brainstorming (with Post-its, Group Mindmapping)
② Perspectives
③ Discussion with Divergent Questions:
  - Give a brief history
  - Who's involved?
  - Has empathy been created?
  - Why is it a concern?
  - Why is it an opportunity?
  - What has been thought of or tried already?
  - What's the ideal outcome?

CONVERGE:

Select the most important data to help describe and understand the situation.

TOOLS:
① Star
② Highlighting

Clarify the Problem(s)

ANALYSIS QUESTIONS:

Have you identified all of the obstacles preventing you from achieving your goal?

YES ⟶

NO

DIVERGE:

Generate statements of the problem(s) from all angles, phrased as questions starting with:
> How to…
> How might…
> In what ways might…
> What might be all the…

TOOLS:
① Brainstorming (with Post-its, Brainwriting)
② Rephrase the key data as problems
③ Why/What's stopping you?
④ Perspectives
⑤ Bug List

CONVERGE:

Select the problem(s) that address what really needs to be solved. Check to make sure it's wording is brief, broad and beneficial.
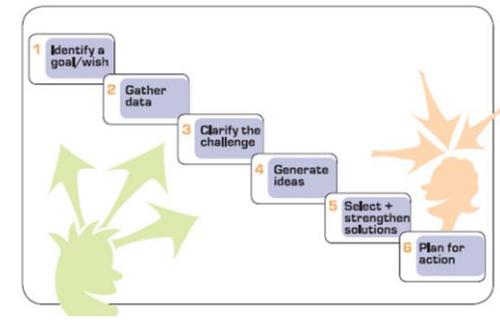
TOOLS:
① Highlighting
② Read it - Write it - Stick it
③ Group Accountability Tool

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1 Identify a goal/wish
2 Gather data
3 Clarify the challenge
4 Generate ideas
5 Select + strengthen solutions
6 Plan for action

Generate Ideas

ANALYSIS QUESTION:

Do you have all of the ideas needed in order to move forward?

YES ⟶

NO ⤷

DIVERGE:

To increase likelihood of breakthrough innovation, generate lots of possible ideas. Stre-e-e-e-etch for as many as you can, then generate even more!

TOOLS:
① Brainstorming (with Post-its, Brainwriting)
② Perspectives
③ Forced Connections
  • What ideas can you get from other objects, words or pictures?
④ Divergent Questions (SCAMPER)
  • What can you substitute, combine, adapt, modify, put to other uses, eliminate or rearrange?

CONVERGE:

Select ideas that are workable, innovative and that solve the problem.

TOOLS:
① Highlighting
② Star
③ Read it - Write it - Stick it

Strengthen Solutions

ANALYSIS QUESTION:

Do you need to perfect the solution(s)? Are you evaluating someone's proposal?

NO ⟶

YES ⤷

START BY:

Generally a rough solution starting with, "What we see ourselves doing is…" then:

EVALUATING ONE SOLUTION:
▸ Praise First:
  • **P**luses
  • **O**pportunities
  • **I**ssues (phrased as questions: How to…How might…or in what ways might…)
  • **N**ew **t**hinking: to overcome concerns

CHOOSING AMONG MULTIPLE SOLUTIONS:
▸ Evaluation Matrix:
  • Generate & select criteria
  • Evaluate each option against each selected criteria

FINISH BY:

Selecting ways to improve the solution and generate an improved solution with "NOW what we see ourselves doing is…" or "In order to (solve concern) we will…"

Plan for Action

ANALYSIS QUESTIONS:

Does everyone know the "what, who and when" for making it happen?

YES ---Engage with a Project Manager

NO ⤷

DIVERGE:

A solid, refined solution (output from last stage) starting with, "What we see ourselves doing is…"

TOOLS:
① Brainstorming (with Post-its, Brainwriting)
② Divergent questions:
  ▸ Who might assist?
  ▸ Who needs to be convinced?
  ▸ What resources are available?
  ▸ How can you get acceptance & enthusiasm for your idea?
  ▸ How might you pre-test the solution?

CONVERGE:

Select the necessary steps and create a plan for action that describes:
▸ What is going to be done?
▸ Who will do it?
▸ By when will it be done?
▸ Who'll check or who needs to know when it's done?

TOOLS:
① Star
② Group Accountability Tool