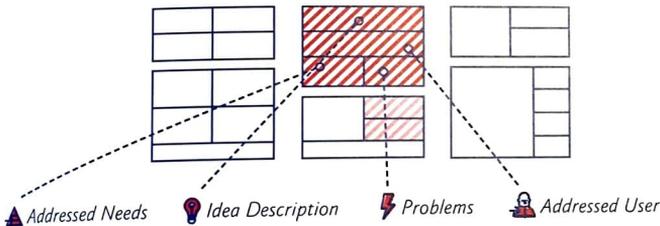


2

Traditional Brainwriting



WHAT AND WHY?

Traditional brainwriting is nothing more than silent brainstorming; however, it is not done in solitude but in a team setting. Sometimes capturing and sorting ones own thoughts quietly can work wonders. As in brainstorming, there are also no limitations on the ideas. We write down everything: the obvious, the trivial, the dreamy and the stupid. Criticism is only done after brainwriting.

We recommend combining this method with others as it does not provide the same dynamic for developing ideas as traditional brainstorming. With brainwriting, our possibility space is limited by our individual knowledge horizon because we do not develop our ideas in the team. This method is thus well suited as a prelude to proper brainstorming (method 1).

MODUS OPERANDI

1__ We set up our team space

We need at least four people, a team spacer, one poser table, sticky notes and pens, a work wall, a brainstorming question and the persona. Preparation is done in the same way as with brainstorming.

2__ We spout as many ideas as possible (on our own and silently)

A brainwriting session usually lasts for five to ten minutes. We note one idea per sticky note. It is our goal to generate as many raw ideas as possible. Everyone writes in silence. When the time is up, we can speak again.

3__ We move on to traditional brainstorming

After a brainwriting session, we conduct a brainstorming session (method 1). We shift up a gear so to speak and use our brains, which are still in idea mode, to further develop our individual raw ideas collectively. We only use the most promising ideas from the brainwriting session as a foundation for brainstorming; otherwise we would thwart our efforts.

4__ We share all brainwriting ideas after the brainstorming

The remaining brainwriting ideas that we have not refined in the brainstorming can be explained to the team after the session. If applicable, we may even incorporate some of them in the pool of ideas with a potential.

5__ We sort and cluster

We are already familiar with this process from other methods: At the end, we cluster our ideas according to topics.

HOW DOES IT FEEL?

Sometimes, traditional brainwriting can slow down the development of ideas instead of inspiring it. We may fall in love with an idea that we have made up on our own and further think about it to make it perfect, while in lively brainstorming, things may get tough. We have to relinquish our claim of ownership. An idea becomes really valuable only when it is examined from all view points and refined by the team.

In principle, we can also do brainwriting as required between brainstorming sessions or at the end of a brainstorming session. However, all our ideas are usually already exploited after

a traditional brainstorming. For this reason, we use a preliminary brainwriting phase to come up with our first ideas.

People are different. Some prefer spontaneous brainwriting sessions when they get stuck during solution development. Some combine brainwriting with a period of relaxation, e.g. a stroll or something similar. If we want to conduct brainwriting sessions repeatedly during a longer period, we can combine this approach with the use of a collective notebook (method 4).

GOOD TO KNOW

»Brainwriting« is the generic term for several methods that each have a given set of rules to develop ideas by means of silent group work. One of them, the idea tower, will be introduced next (method 3). Like the brainwriting variants »idea pool«, »ring ideas« and »6-3-5 brainwriting«^{*1}, the idea tower is subject to its own set of rules.

¹ Bernd Rohrbach:
»Kreativ nach Regeln – Methode 635, eine neue Technik zum Lösen von Problemen«, in: *Absatzwirtschaft* 12 (1969), issue no. 19, pp. 73–76.