

## BREAKTHROUGH BRAINSTORMING SAMPLE SESSION RUNDOWN

### Welcome, Introductions + Setting the Stage (5 minutes)

- Introduce host, facilitator (if different than host), guests
- Share enthusiasm for the diverse range of input from all participants, and encourage everyone to bring their whole selves—they are here and valued for all of their expertise, experiences and perspectives
- Share the high-level goal for the day in the form of a “How might we...” question, and display the goal on a large screen in the room, or as a handout for each participant.

### REMOTE TIPS:

- *Post the “How might we...?” question on a large screen in the room, or provide a printed copy for each participant to use as a touchstone throughout the session. If gathering online, share the “How might we...?” in the chat.*
- *Be sure everyone is displaying their first name, to make it easy for the facilitator to call on participants throughout the session, and invite them to put their name and location in the chat.*
- *Add a few minutes to make sure people are ready to navigate the online tool.*

### Grounding Guidelines (1 minute)

- Welcome ALL ideas
- Encourage WILD ideas
- BUILD on your ideas and ideas of others
- DEFER judgment or discussion
- HEADLINE ideas, one per post-it
- Go for QUANTITY over quality
- CHALLENGE the status quo

### WARM UPS (8 minutes)

#### **Space Launch (Warming up your imagination, getting ready to think big!)**

*Participants stand up and shut their eyes. Facilitators asks them to imagine they’re standing in a big open field beneath a blue sky. In 3 seconds, they’re going to blast off, headed for the moon!*

*Facilitator counts down, aloud: “3-2-1-Blastoff!” Participants spend 15 seconds imagining themselves blasting around the moon, and landing back on earth. Facilitator asks a few questions about the experience, for example:*

*Were you wearing a spacesuit or something else? Were you in a rocket ship? Did you have your hands up like superman or superwoman? Did you land on the moon or circle it? What did you see from outer space?*

**Yes, and... (Flexing the generative ideation muscle, practicing building on our own and others' ideas!)**

*In this warmup, people will imagine a new and wildly innovative version of a common household object that they choose (e.g. a blender, a broom). The facilitator starts the reinvention with a new product benefit, like “this new blender will be self-cleaning. He/she/they then “tap” the next person, who will enthusiastically agree with that innovation and adds their own, “yes and...! (e.g. “yes! And... the new blender also will remember my breakfast smoothie preferences for next time.”) And so on, until everyone has had a chance to contribute. Notice how the new product benefits start to address sometimes unspoken needs of the user (e.g. the new blender is self-cleaning, helping me gain more time back in my day!)*

**REMOTE TIP:** *If gathering on a video platform, the facilitator calls out the name of someone who has not yet added a new feature to go next.*

## **BREAKTHROUGH BRAINSTORMING**

### **Round 1: “10 in 5” (5 minutes)**

This round helps get the creative juices flowing, and ensures every participant contributes ideas. Working individually and silently, participants jot down as many ideas as possible (trying for 10) in 5 minutes, and places the individual idea on a wall, easel pad or digital canvas. One idea per post-it note, and a focus on quantity over quality.

**TIP:** *If people are feeling stuck, encourage them to consider questions like “who, what, why, when, where or how?” to spark ideas.*

### **Round 2: “Yes, and...” (7 minutes)**

Facilitator calls on individual participants to read each of their ideas aloud, and all participants are invited to “yes, and...” add new ideas. One per post-it note, adding to the wall, easel or digital canvas. This is an opportunity for people to build on others' ideas. One idea per post-it, and a focus on quantity over quality.

***TIP:** Be clear about the amount of time for this brainstorming round and remind people that the goal is to create a LOT of ideas, so moving quickly is better than overthinking. Let people know when the round is halfway done and when time is close to expiring to help keep things moving.*

### **Round 3: “Celebrity Takeover” (5 minutes)**

Ask participants to call out the name a famous person—an actor, artist, historic figure, scientist, political figure, corporate leader, living or dead, real or fictional. The facilitator will choose one name and ask everyone to adopt the mindset of that person. Instead of imagining how *WE* might solve a particular challenge, we imagine how [*this famous person*] might solve this challenge. One idea per post-it, with a focus on quantity over quality.

***REMOTE TIP:** Ask people to put the name of the famous person in the chat.*

### **Optional Bonus Round: “WWYMD?” (5 minutes)**

*If time and energy permit, this is a great way to generate one final round of ideas that come from the heart of the participants. This time, ask the question “what would your mom do?” Or, “how might your MOM” solve this challenge? One idea per post-it, with a focus on quantity over quality.*

### **CELEBRATE (1 minute)**

Take a moment to celebrate the creativity in the group! Take a sip of water, catch your breath and invite everyone to review all the ideas so far.

***REMOTE TIP:** For people who have been seated at their computer the whole time, this is a great chance to stand up and stretch, too!*

### **SORT + CLUSTER (15 minutes)**

Participants move each individual idea to the prioritization grid, placing each idea in the quadrant where they think the idea best fits. If the idea seems easier to implement, with potential to have great impact, place that idea in the upper right-hand quadrant. If the ideas seems like it will be hard to implement, but has potential to have great impact, place it in the upper left-hand quadrant. And so on. Place all ideas in the grid, clustering similar ideas together as you go.

### **PRIORITIZE (5 minutes)**

Each participant gets 3-5 votes. They have 5 minutes to review all the ideas, individually and silently. They “vote” by placing 1 (or more) of their stickers on the ideas they think will do the best job helping the organization achieve the goal outlined at the beginning of the session. It does not matter where that idea is on the grid—participants should vote for the ideas they believe in most.

***REMOTE TIP:** In lieu of placing stickers on highest potential ideas, and depending on which online platform you choose, participants can vote by putting their favorite ideas in bold. If more than one person would like to vote for an idea, duplicate the idea and list it in bold, also, to show the additional vote.*

**CLOSE + THANK (1 minute)**

Facilitator thanks everyone, and shares what will happen next with all their ideas and how this session contributes to the mission of the organization.

***TIP/REMOTE TIP:** Photograph each canvas to capture an image of all the ideas. If working with an online collaboration tool, download the canvas, or save/download the document as an artifact and archive of all the ideas from the sessions.*