



Mind Spin

Brainstorm as many ideas as possible

TIME

10-20 minutes



MATERIALS

Index cards, writing utensils, tables

TEAM STAGE

Forming, Storming, Norming,
Performing

SUMMARY

In this fun and fast paced activity, individuals and teams brainstorm as many ideas as possible for a particular topic or challenge.

SET UP

- Break participants into small groups of five or six.
- Ask each group to sit at a separate table.
- Place a large stack of index cards in the center of each table (about 100 per table).
- Decide on a topic or idea to be brainstormed and write it on a whiteboard or poster paper. For example, *"What can be done to ...?"* or *"How can we...?"*

INSTRUCTIONS

- Have each participant take five blank index cards. Leave the remaining cards in the center of the table.
- Explain that this is going to be a brainstorming session that will be individual as well as team based.
- Remind participants that within a brainstorming session there are no wrong or right responses and that no (appropriate) idea is off limits.
- Tell participants that they are going to have two, five-minute rounds to write down as many solutions as possible on the index cards – one idea per card. If they need more than the five index cards they can grab more from the center pile.
- **Round One** (Five minutes)
 - Have participants write down as many ideas as they can think of. After an idea is written on an index card, the participant SLAMS the index card down on the table between them and the participant to their right. The SLAM is important – the sound and the vibration of SLAMming the card on the table adds a tangible feeling to the "Mind Spin" that makes the activity more fun!
 - If at some point a participant cannot think of any more ideas, they may grab one card from the top of the pile between them and the participant to their left. They can do one of three things with the card:
 - (1) Simply SLAM it down to their right after reading it and grab another card from their left.
 - (2) Read it, be inspired, SLAM it down to the right, and grab a blank card to write down their own idea.
 - (3) Read it, add to it with a question or comment, then SLAM it down before grabbing another card.
- Ask the participants to continue this process until the facilitator says stop.



INSTRUCTIONS *(continued)*

- Once Round One is complete, gather all the idea index cards (from ALL groups) and shuffle them. Then, evenly distribute the idea index cards among the groups. Ask the participants in each group to distribute the idea index cards amongst themselves and place them face down in front of each participant.
- **Round Two** (Five minutes)
 - Have participants write one idea on a blank card, just like in Round One.
 - This time, if a participant reaches an idea block in which they cannot think of any new ideas, they grab an idea index card from the pile of Round One ideas in front of them.
 - Just as before, they have three options before SLAMming the card down to their right:
 - (1) Simply SLAM it down to their right after reading it and grab another card from their left.
 - (2) Read it, be inspired, SLAM it down to the right and grab a blank card to write down their own idea.
 - (3) Read it, add to it with a question or comment, then SLAM it down before grabbing another card.
 - Once all the cards from Round One in front of a participant are gone, if there is still time remaining, then the participant can grab a card from their neighbor's pile to the left.
 - Ask the participants to continue until the facilitator says stop.
- Once Round Two is done, gather all the idea index cards. The group can review the cards to see what ideas or solutions stand out to them, and discuss what to do next to move forward.

VARIATIONS

- Try starting with a brainstorming activity like [ABC List](#) or [Random Word Game](#) to get participants in the brainstorming zone.
-  **Small Group:** To facilitate this activity for a small group, have the whole group sit around one table and rotate in one large circle rather than breaking up into smaller groups.
-  **Online:** To facilitate this activity virtually, use a Google Jamboard and use digital stickies as index cards. Give each group a slide and have each participant in the group write their name somewhere on the slide to create a circle. Have participants write their ideas on stickies and then place them in between their name and the next participant's name on the Jamboard slide. For Round Two, have participants cut and paste the stickies from their slide onto another group's slide. [\[click here for video\]](#)

DEBRIEF QUESTIONS *(on next page)*



DEBRIEF QUESTIONS

- What:
 - What was that process like for you?
 - What went through your mind when you picked up and read a new idea index card?
 - So What:
 - What is the importance of brainstorming?
 - In what other ways do you feel brainstorming can benefit this group?
 - Now What:
 - What ideas are you most excited about from this activity?
 - What can this group do to move forward with the ideas generated in this activity?
- **Facilitator Note:** These questions can be used to guide your debrief, however, pick the questions that best match your group's experience and add or change questions as needed.