

## TOOL DESCRIPTION

# Imaginary Brainstorming



## Imaginary Brainstorming allows you to collect highly creative ideas in a group setting.

This method was developed by Arthur F. Keller as a targeted creativity method. It belongs to the group of brainwriting methods.

This innovative tool is used to generate highly creative ideas that promote classic "out-of-the-box thinking". Its use is based on the idea of placing a question in an imaginary context, which allows approaches to solutions to be developed and later applied to the original question.





The use of this tool inspires the creative thinking process by leaving behind the limitations of reality. In the process, innovative approaches to solutions emerge that are often overlooked in a conventional thinking framework. Imaginary brainstorming can be extremely helpful, especially when people are faced with recurring challenges. The method enables you to create an open and encouraging environment for the development of ideas. The result is a collection of sometimes unconventional approaches and ideas that pave the way for creative breakthroughs.

**Duration**  
60–90 min

**Participants**  
ideally 4–8 persons  
(divided into 2 groups)

**Facilitation**  
questions on A4,  
1 flipchart per group

# Imaginary Brainstorming | Process

<b>Preparation</b> 10–15 min 	<b>Defamiliarize the problem</b> 15–20 min 	<b>Idea generation</b> 20 min 	<b>Translation</b> 20 min 
<p>The questions/problems that ideas will be collected for need to be very clear.</p> <p>In order to be able to formulate ideas with as little bias as possible, it is advantageous not to know the real question. Therefore the ideal set-up is to work in 2 groups: One group develops the imaginary question, and the other group develops ideas, and vice versa.</p> <p>In order for the method to be easily understood, it is important to start with a good example, which should be prepared in advance.</p> <p>Example:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Real problem: How can I find time for a project while keeping my business running at 100%.</li><li>• Imaginary problem: How can I fit my feet into shoes that are too small?</li></ul>	<p>The first step is to rephrase each original question into an imaginary question. The core elements of the real problem should be preserved but are changed radically to create a new starting situation (“imaginary problem”). Only the group that alienates the real problem should know the real problem.</p> <p>If there is a lack of creativity or thinking blocks in the team, thought-provoking ideas can help (e.g., think about the world of animals or children). If necessary, it can also help to think of an imaginary question as a facilitator, since this step is the most difficult.</p>	<p>In the next step, the 2 groups exchange their imaginary questions (but the real problem/original question is unknown). Each team is now asked to find solutions to the imaginary problem and list them on the flipchart. As a facilitator, emphasize and encourage openness to creative ideas. All ideas (especially oblique/unconventional ones) are allowed and should be noted without criticism.</p> <p>Example:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Enlarge the shoe.</li><li>• Cut of toes.</li><li>• Don't wear socks.</li></ul>	<p>In the final step, the teams now swap their ideas. Each team translates the other team's ideas and applies it to the original real-world problem:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Which connections to the real-world problem are recognizable?</li><li>• How can we use the imaginary ideas to develop a solution?</li></ul> <p>Facilitation note: An imaginary idea can and may trigger several ideas to solve the real problem. Have participants write all of them down.</p> <p>Example:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Extend the work day.</li><li>• Delegate work packages.</li><li>• Remove distractions.</li></ul>