

‘Operation BrainStorm’

‘Operation BrainStorm’ uses and increases the creative power of large groups. The facilitators reach this goal through the use of interactive techniques borrowed from the theatrical world. They challenge the participants to boost their creative skills:

- Short (often individual) interactive interventions to stimulate the participant’s creative prowess
- Facilitation of large group creative processes (groups ranging between 25 and 4000 people)

The interventions have as purpose to stimulate people’s creative skills and to help break through stubborn patterns. The creative group processes focus on a content based challenge where for which concrete ideas are needed. That way Operation Brainstorm enables participants to view the world in a different way and provides them with new ideas for content based challenges.

Operation Brainstorm consists of unique people ¹ who are all professionally trained to work with groups of people. Their roots lie in both the realm of creative thinking and the theater world. Each team member wears a creativity suit that is packed with post-its, brain twisters, markers, brain storm material and other things that triggers inspiration. They are in fact benevolent secret agents of creativity.

For whom

Events, congresses and large meetings were one wants to stimulate or boost the creative power of the participants. Aside from a relaxed and energetic atmosphere it is also important that the subject of the day gets enough footlight. It is here that Operation Brainstorm helps draw attention to the content that needs to be communicated in a new and creative way that stimulates the participants. Operation Brainstorm combines both content and atmosphere to make any event an unforgettable experience.



¹ They are all ‘Knights of NOW’ in an incarnation that is completely focused on creative thinking. See [Knights of NOW](#) for more information.

What is it exactly 'Operation Brainstorm' does?

Operation Brainstorm makes sure that the participants think out of the box, this through short interventions and large plenary group processes. Often events and congresses are full of speakers which, although the topics they address are very interesting, doesn't use the huge creative thinking capabilities of the participants. As a result a vast source of possibilities remains dormant through the entire event. This is exactly what Operation Brainstorm taps into by stimulating the participants to temporarily leave the trodden path and venture into the new and the unknown, thereby unveiling new possibilities. On top of that Operation Brainstorm helps guarding the energy of the participants by intervening where necessary with either an energizing or relaxing action, based on the needs of the moment.

What follows are a couple of examples of possible interventions en creative methods applied by Operation Brainstorm to large groups. These interventions will vary according to the content of the event, the participants and the ruling atmosphere.



Interactive interventions

Operation brainstorm offers a mix of plenary and small scale personal interventions.

- Start of the event
 - The agents of creativity post themselves at strategic places where everyone passes (parking, entrance to the event, train station , ...) and make sure the participants are welcomed in a warm and innovative, unsuspected manner.
 - Control station at the entrance of the event where the participants are scanned by an 'idea killer' detector. They are invited to leave their idea killers (no time, no budget, has already been tried, ...) at the door and are given a card with a non exhaustive list of idea killers that are not allowed to be used at the event.
 - Plenary welcome and introduction of Operation Brainstorm. The mission of the agents is shared with the participants and they are challenged to leverage their creative abilities during the course of the event, something for which they can always rely on the agents for help and support.

- During breaks and lunch
 - The secret investigation - participants are challenged to solve creativity brain teasers in order to encourage them to think outside of the box.
 - The Oracle - in an oracle like manner participants get answers to their questions.
 - Networking - all sorts of exercises to enhance networking in a creative way (for example idea battles between 2 groups after which contact information is exchanged)

- The agents are also trained to spot and eradicate any idea killers that are detrimental to creative processes (that's impossible, no one would want that, ...)
- During presentations and workshops
 - The agents are vigilantly present to guard the energy and the attention of the participants. Presentations that take too long, after lunch dips, unexpected events (power failure, speaker that doesn't show up, ...) are dealt with. The agents have access to a plethora of tools and techniques to stimulate participants at any given moment.



Facilitation of large group processes

Operation Brainstorm has among its members people who are specialized in facilitating large group (50 up to 1000 participants) creative processes.

Some examples:



World café - method where the space is filled with round tables with writeable table-cloths and markers. Participants are invited to group approximately 10 people per table. Everyone starts with the same central question which all the table groups will discuss. Discussions take place using a 'talking stick' which ensures that only one person at a time is talking, thereby preventing chaos and ensuring everyone is listened to. Notes can be taken on the table-cloth. After about 30 minutes people change tables except for one person per

table who will be the host for that table throughout the entire world café. A world café consists of three discussion rounds and is possible with groups up to 500 people.

Inspiration Wall – at a central, easily accessible spot an inspiration wall is created. This is a place where participants can write or draw their ideas, opinions and suggestions about a determined topic. The Operation Brainstorm agents encourage and stimulate people to add their contribution. The number of participants is unlimited and only depends on the number of facilitators.

Open space - this is a meeting technique which avoids the situation where only a limited number of people have their say and others are just sitting around being bored because the subjects they are interested in are not touched upon. Open space is a format that creates a sort of free market for ideas, experiences and initiatives. Relevant, self proposed subjects (within set boundaries) are discussed in ever changing groups. Afterwards the results of these discussions are centrally recorded in the form of wall-papers. Openness, involvement, shared leadership and self-steering are some of the key qualities of open space. This leads to dialogue and a natural exchange of ideas and experiences in an informal and relaxed atmosphere where everyone is more attentive, energetic and present than in classic meetings. This format is possible for groups up to 800 people.



Large scale-mini-brainstorm sessions – The participants are divided into groups of 15 to 20 people each and each group is assigned a creative facilitator. This can be either a professional facilitator or we can provide training sessions for in house facilitators. Subsequently these groups are guided through short brainstorm sessions about several pre-defined subjects. This technique is possible for groups up to 500 people, depending on the number of facilitators.



Creativity Carrousel – When there are several interest groups present a large creativity carrousel can be made. Each participating party gets the opportunity to define

one specific topic for which they would like to generate solutions. These topics are posted on the walls and the participants go and look at each of the different topics and collaboratively generate ideas around them, if necessary assisted by the agents of creativity. After about an hour each group goes back to their topic and starts working with the ideas generated by the other. The numbers of participants for this technique is unlimited.



Mix and match – These are just some examples of the possible actions Operation Brainstorm can undertake. If needed we can create methods and techniques which are adapted to the needs of the event and the topics that need to be treated on the day of the event.



What makes 'Operation BrainStorm' unique?

- The combination of a theatrical based form mixed with content oriented expertise in the field of creativity and innovation. Through the unique and prominent format an informal and open atmosphere is created which spurs the creative capabilities. The interventions and work methods help to support this creative process.

- *Hundreds of creative ideas and conscious attention to the creative process and attitude.* All interventions are aimed to uncover the basic principles of the creative process to the participants in a fresh and stimulating manner. Hundreds of new ideas can be generated during the course of the day and the participants get introduced to simple but effective techniques to break through long established thinking patterns in order to increase their creative abilities. This also trains the participants in adapting a more creative attitude.

- All Operation Brainstorm members are professional facilitators of groups. They are not animators who come to do an act but they actively and consciously guide the participants through a creative process, challenging and aiding them in order to help them tap into their creative powers. Within the groups there are people who are internationally renowned public speakers and/or day presidents.

- Operation Brainstorm creates an open and informal atmosphere which also positively influences other activities on the day of the event (speakers, workshops, ...)



Operation BrainStorm, powered by new shoes today

New shoes today is a growing group of congenial professionals who strive to stimulate and support people and organizations on the path of creation, innovation and change. This is the reason we, as entrepreneurs, tackle 21st century challenges with our key values: **open - unity - passion - pleasure - care - today**.

We want to contribute today in a world of tomorrow by advising, coaching, creating products, writing articles, **organizing real meetings**, sponsoring special people or ideas and doing all that inspires our hearts and souls.

Inspiration

New shoes today has already supported several organizations on their road to creativity, change and innovation:

- Experiences: <http://www.newshoestoday.com/yesterday>
- References: <http://www.newshoestoday.com/references>

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