

## Additional Reading & Resources

### Resource: Brainstorming #1

#### **What is brainstorming? What are some tips and guidelines for effective brainstorming?**

The brainstorming and creative thinking that you and your team will be encouraged to do in **Action Step 1: Tactics Team Brainstorming Session** can be fun and energizing.

Brainstorming is an individual or group idea-generating activity where people are encouraged to think in a more free and creative manner to come up with solutions to a challenge or opportunity.

#### **Tips and guidelines for effective brainstorming**

- **Ideal group size:** A small group of 4-8 people is ideal for a brainstorming session. In this case, you'll be involving your Marketing Plan Team members.
- **Facilitation/capturing all the notes:** The Marketing Coordinator (or someone else designated in the group) should facilitate the Team Brainstorming Time, gently enforce the guidelines listed below, and write down all of the ideas shared. Ideally, self-stick easel pad sheets could be used for writing down all the ideas, so that when a sheet is filled it could be hung in the room for later reference throughout the brainstorming session.
- **Make it comfortable and fun:** As you're planning this session, consider where you'll be brainstorming (a relaxed, comfortable and quiet space is ideal), what food/drinks you may want to offer, and what "creative toys" you want to have on hand. Some items to consider might be modeling clay, paper/crayons/markers, yo-yos, a slinky, etc.
- **Make it purposeful:** Focus the brainstorming team before and/or at the beginning of the session by communicating about the purpose of the brainstorming session and clearly state what the opportunity is (reaching our target audience through new tactics).
- **Brainstorming "rules":** Throughout the brainstorming time, gently, but confidently, enforce these guidelines:
  - Encourage everyone to share all throughout the session. Intentionally ask anyone who is more quiet or reserved to share his/her ideas. (You can even go around the room in a more organized manner to allow everyone to share.)
  - Keep the team positive and focused on generating fresh ideas, as many as possible.
  - Avoid criticizing any ideas, asking questions about how that idea might be accomplished or other negative comments. There are no bad or wrong ideas in brainstorming! If people start to criticize the comments, it puts a significant damper on the session. You want everyone to freely offer their ideas. There's no telling how when a variety of ideas are discussed, more and new ideas are developed.

- Encourage participants to listen to one another and “piggy back” (or add on to) other ideas offered.
- Keep the brainstorming focused on the specific opportunity and purpose for today’s session. (Your session doesn’t need to discuss the church’s leaky roof or the need for a different color of carpet throughout the facility!)
- The brainstorming discussion shouldn’t go too deep into discussing any details. Once an idea is presented, the group doesn’t need to figure out who, what or when this idea would be implemented. That is planning for another time.