

Business Decision-making Improves with Brainstorming

By Ann N. Gatty, Ph.D.



Whether you are entering the market as a new business or thinking of expanding an existing business, your business decision-making is greatly enhanced by using the technique of brainstorming. Through brainstorming, business professionals can generate new ideas.

While many associate brainstorming with generating new product ideas and communication strategies, the technique also is useful in improving process efficiency, team building, and refreshing a company's brand.

Brainstorming is a collaborative process. The technique requires time to bring necessary individuals together, generate ideas, consider alternatives, and ultimately make a business decision. There are other ways to make a business decision, so why bother with brainstorming?

Here are three reasons to use brainstorming to improve business decision-making.

- Business decision-making is strengthened by considering divergent points of view. The last thing that business leaders want is to get trapped by groupthink. Groupthink is a phenomenon in which people will set aside their own personal beliefs to adopt the opinion of the rest of the group—even when knowing that the group decision is poor. Individuals participating in a business decision-making meeting arrive with their own ideas. By considering divergent points of view, brainstorming is forcing them to examine other people's ideas and invites a variety of solutions rather than relying on the first solution offered.
- Business decision-making is improved by encouraging critical thinking. Brainstorming is a technique used to solve problems. Critical thinking relies on objective analysis and evaluation of alternatives before forming a judgement about a solution. In the business arena, there are many variables to consider before making a decision. Brainstorming, when approached in an orderly way provides the leader with confidence that the group has arrived at the most appropriate decision.

- Brainstorming builds more cohesive teams. Brainstorming is, by its nature, a collaborative experience. The results are owned by the entire group. The members of the team have agreed on the best solution, based on considering divergent points of view and by engaging in critical thinking.

How to conduct a brainstorming session.

1. Establish a goal: Identify the problem that will be solved from the session.
2. Establish the members who will participate. Since you want divergent points of view, make certain that different voices are present to objectively represent possible solutions.
3. Establish a timeline that allows for everyone's input, time to reflect, and the criteria for making the decision.
4. During the meeting, create a dialogue where no idea is considered a bad idea to be discarded.
5. Don't allow reasons why the idea won't work at the initial stage
6. Only after all the ideas have been presented do you begin analyzing the pros, cons and options of each.
7. Require buy-in by all the members of the brainstorming session.

Brainstorming is an effective technique for business decision making when urgency is not present. Employees are more satisfied when they know that their opinions matter, when their work is consequential and when they can be part of the business decision-making process. Allowing opportunities for shared problem solving strengthens the company culture. Employees are experts at their jobs. Use that expertise to create the best solutions for building a stronger competitive business.

About the Author

Dr. Ann Gatty is a business development strategist. She helps her clients clarify the vision for their businesses, boost their leadership capabilities and add quality talent to help the clients reach their goals. Through a collaborative mentoring process, she and her clients create workable strategic business plans and success initiatives, while improving their workplace processes. Dr. Gatty is a frequent writer and contributor www.AllBusiness.com, www.MarketInsiders.com, and www.WomenOnBusiness.com. Her interactive speaking engagements assist participants in discovering new-found talents and skills that they can immediately apply in the workplace. Join her [Facebook Group, Strategic Thinking Summit Elites](#) for strategies you can implement to grow your business success and enjoy camaraderie with others entrepreneur members.