



STRATEGYFINDER
For BRAINSTORMING
MANUAL

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Strategyfinder for Brainstorming

Background - this manual assumes (other manuals for Strategyfinder are listed in the Appendix):

The process will be most often used with participants who have already used *Strategyfinder* before. Thus, they will be already registered Users with a login email and password.

It will be a quick process – 30-60mins.

The facilitator/manager will be collecting ideas and not necessarily using the workshop to build an action plan (although this can be done¹).

Quick setup required – the facilitator/manager might simply phone around team members available.

There are many ways to do brainstorming using *Strategyfinder*, but this process/method works well. We recommend you start with this process and adapt as you wish after experiencing its use.

Preparation

Task 1. Setup ‘welcome’ statement on default view

As with any workshop using *Strategyfinder*, it is common to use the default view to welcome participants. However, its main purpose is to allow everyone to see who has connected to *Strategyfinder* and allow new users to easily learn how to enter statements and links. Regardless of whether Users are familiar with *Strategyfinder*, it is still very helpful to use the ‘welcome’ view.


Thus, in advance, or at the beginning, of the workshop, setup the following:

- Statement 1 on the default view: “Welcome – please double click somewhere on the screen and type your name, hit ‘enter’”
- Create a new view and rename it: for example, ‘starter’ or ‘gather’

Task 2. Decide on a starter question


Such as “what ideas do we have that could use some of our left-over budget this year?”

On a new view called ‘starter’, put the starter question in middle of screen.

Rename the model – use the ‘gold Sf’ icon and to .

Task 3. Set model ‘setting’ if required²

In particular, decide whether submissions from participants are to be anonymous to the facilitator. This decision is partly an ethical issue and the SuperUser will need to decide whether to inform

participants. Go the ‘gold Sf’ icon and select the ‘Model settings’ cog .

¹ The manuals ‘*Strategyfinder* for Systemic Risk Management (SRM)’ and ‘*Team Solutionfinder* (TSF-2H): a 2hr workshop – ad hoc to work on a complex/messy problem’ each have sections on developing implementation plans and project management.

² Go to the ‘*Strategyfinder* – the basics’ manual for more detail on the ‘gold Sf’ drop-in menu.

Brainstorming workshop (30-60mins)

Task 1. Invite participants to add their name to the default view (3mins).

Purpose: Allow the facilitator to i) establish whether participants have logged on to *Strategyfinder* and the model and ii) that they have experience entering a statement on to a view.

Once they have entered their name, invite them to move their name/statement around the view.

Remind them that they can edit their own statements but not those entered by other participants. They may like to try editing their own name.

Facilitator notes: Beware that, for first time users of *Strategyfinder* and without a familiarisation session, then some participants might mis-type the URL or their email address and so take more time than expected to get going. Thus, without familiarisation, from attending previous *Strategyfinder* workshops, task 1 might take 10mins.

Task 2. Introduce the topic – shown on starter view

Gain ideas to achieve....

Task 3. Gather an initial set of ideas

Use 'blind gather' for getting ideas from the participants. Look for around 40-50 ideas, so divide number of ideas by number of participants to set maximum number of statements in blind gather setup.

Facilitator clusters similar or related ideas by moving ideas around the screen as they appear. Each cluster is a topic.

Stop blind gather when group is running down (usually after ~20mins), or screen is full (>40 ideas)

Task 4. Summarise clusters to facilitate 'listening' and encourage additions

Stop gather to summarise: ask participants to look at, for example, the 'top-right' of the view briefly present it, noting the topic it covers.

Note that the clusters are very rough, and it will not be worth arguing about whether they are correct – looking at clusters is a simple way of getting a view of the material.

Task 5. Additions.

Ask participants for any new thoughts that come to mind now they have seen an initial set of ideas. These can be added using 'open gather' where all can see the new ideas as they are entered. Ask participants to locate their idea close to the cluster appropriate or start a new cluster.

Task 6. Initial Evaluation – narrow down the number of ideas

Ask each participant to select the 3 ideas they think are excellent and note the statement number – they cannot select one of their own.

Ask each participant, in turn, to state ONLY one of their three – choosing their top one first. The facilitator adds an asterisk to the end of the chosen statement, and while doing so the facilitator hovers over the statement to check that it does not belong to the person offering it (providing authorship is turned on).

After doing 3 rounds there will be a maximum of number of participants X 3 statements with an asterisk. Change the category of these to 'central' (RED).

Task 7. Focus via Evaluation – ‘preferencing’³

Select all the REDs. Got to ‘Evaluations’ menu and select ‘Setup Preferencing’. Remove the ‘blue’. Change ‘green’ to ‘good’ and ‘red’ to ‘bad’. Allocate a 7 green and 3 red resources.

Brief preferencing: “allocate green on what you regard as good ideas – all of the 7 green blobs can go on one idea, or they can be spread around (for example one blob on each of 7 ideas that equally good, or 3 on one idea and 4 on another, etc). The red blobs need not be used, but if you think an idea is a bad idea then place 1 red blob on it, if it is an extremely bad idea then you may place 3 red blobs on it.

Start preferencing.

As preferencing results show on the SuperUser screen keep an eye on the degree of consensus emerging: hover over the blobs.

Task 8. Report on Preferencing results

Go to Evaluations menu and ‘Display Preferencing’, and choose the preferencing shown (only one will be there).

Use presentation mode so that all can see the results.

Look for high number of green blobs, with no red blobs, and high degree of consensus.

Note red blobs, if any, and ask the whole group why the idea might be thought to be bad – do NOT point to the person who submitted the red blob (although they do often volunteer their reason, but others also now think of good reasons why it is a poor idea).

Facilitator note:

If using ‘share screen’ in Zoom/Team/etc then beware that if you have authorship turned on in model settings then everyone will see the author if you accidentally hover over a statement.

Task 9. Focus on best ideas

Change the style of each top preferred idea to ‘option’ (green).

Display all the options on a new view: go to ‘Categories’ menu, go to ‘Select by Category’, tick ‘Option’. Go to ‘Views’ menu, ‘Bring selected to new view’, name the new view.

Task 10. Consider causal links between best ideas.

Gather links - Ask group to insert links where implementing one idea would help achieve another idea.

Task 11. Re-Prioritise, bearing in mind links.

Use preferencing with all tails (no in-arrows) selected: go to ‘Analysis’ menu and select ‘Heads and Tails’, select ‘Show Tails’ on view.

Use the 2 dimensions of impact and practicality: with impact (7xblue) and practicality (7xgreen) resources. Ask participants to now consider the consequences (out-arrow paths) as they make their judgments.

Remind the group about what is supposed to be impacted – as presented at the beginning of the workshop through the initial question on the ‘starter’ view.

³ See ‘**Strategyfinder – the basics**’ for more detail about setting up Preferencing.

Task 12. When Re-Prioritising is complete discuss the outcome:

Look for high practicality AND high impact.

Report any apparent consensus – where all the participants have placed at least one blob on the option

Where there is high impact but low practicality – discuss whether the idea can be made more practical.

Facilitator note:

Inspect and report where these might be dominated by one person (i.e., one person has placed a lot of blobs and so distorted any consensus).

Appendix

There are a series of other manuals, some of which provide guidance in different facilitated workshops. (Those marked ** below are in development and those marked * have useable notes/drafts sometimes on PowerPoint format)

'USING STRATEGYFINDER' MANUALS

Strategyfinder - Theories and Concepts

Strategyfinder - the basics

Strategyfinder - Analysis Tools

A Method for Identifying *Strategyfinder* Participants

Strategyfinder - familiarisation session for Users

Strategyfinder - familiarisation session for participants for SuperUser with Users

Strategyfinder – ideas for presenting a strategy/actions programme

Strategyfinder – help managing strategy implementation

'STRATEGYFINDER WORKSHOP' MANUALS

Strategyfinder - Team Solutionfinder: a 2 hr workshop – ad hoc to work on a complex/messy problem

Strategyfinder - Team Strategy Finding: a 1-2 day workshop – to develop a first draft of a strategy

Strategyfinder - Systemic Risk Management

Strategyfinder for Estimation: using Delphi

Strategyfinder for brainstorming [this manual]

****Strategyfinder*** - Stakeholder Analysis and Management

****Strategyfinder*** - Discover and Exploit Competitive Advantage

****Strategyfinder*** - SWOT to Action

*****Strategyfinder*** for Conflict Management