

If you are new to brainstorming, or have had limited experience with using it, we recommend that you visit our [website](http://creativity.ofzi.com) (creativity.ofzi.com) and click the 'About Brainstorming' link, before reading this article. If you do not find it there, send us e-mail to info@ofzi.com

What is CAB ?

CAB stands for Computer Aided Brainstorming. It is a software solution which helps us get ideas, or 'brainstorm' in an efficient and productive manner. CAB is intended to assist users in getting ideas, whenever they are needed. The basic method used is the well-known 'Brainstorming' method. In addition there are several other methods that can be used at will for further encouraging the idea flow.

The main benefits of using CAB over conventional Brainstorming are:

- ✓ **It is faster**
- ✓ **No blackboard / whiteboard**
- ✓ **You can easily work further with the ideas (i.e. after the brainstorming session) without re-typing them**
- ✓ **You have extra input (other creativity techniques)**
- ✓ **You don't have to worry that the facilitator writes bad or slowly**
- ✓ **Easy to use – Simple – Everybody can brainstorm**
- ✓ **Built-in evaluation tool**

CAB combines creativity and IT in a simple and practical way. Brainstorming meetings often take place in a meeting room, with one designated writer, writing the incoming ideas onto a black- or whiteboard. In the end the ideas have to be evaluated and selected for further use.

The CAB IDEA

- ❖ **You are driving in a cab.**
- ❖ **Sometimes you talk with the driver.**
- ❖ **Sometimes you talk with yourself.**
- ❖ **Something you think.**
- ❖ **Sometimes you WISH for something**
- ❖ **Sometimes you look outside the window,**
 - **you see neonlights/signs,**
 - **you get input to your thoughts and discussion**

How does CAB work ?

In order to get the most out of the session, there are some basic rules to go by. For a CAB ride to successfully reach its destination we set the following guiding rules:

"Rules"

- Suspend judgement
- Every idea is accepted and recorded
- Be silly and have fun

Preparing the CAB ride

The session should be carefully prepared. The brainstorming team could for example start by coming up with what would make an ideal session. Say that somebody desperately needs to have coffee while going through a session, then the ideal session for that person would include coffee. Everything that makes the team members happy, makes them have fun and perhaps smile a little bit, is helpful.

- Have a good and friendly space
- Build good atmosphere
- Have a warm up
- Have someone assigned to write down all the ideas as they occur
- Use the right mix of people, background
- Assign a facilitator to help enforce the "rules" and facilitate the proceedings
- Select criteria for an idea to be considered good

To best prepare for the CAB session it is helpful to put yourself in the following mindset:

You start by getting into a CAB. You are going to sit in it for a while, so there will be plenty of time to sit back, relax and let the mind wander.

Actual Brainstorm - the CAB ride

Once you are in the CAB the Driver starts by saying 'What should the CAB session be named?' Here you should pick an appropriate name for the CAB Session. This gives you focus. The name of the session should accurately determine what you are going to brainstorm about, but still be open enough to encourage 'crazy' and 'out-there' ideas.

- Define the problem explicitly
- Make a clear problem statement and use as a headline
- Get as many ideas as possible
- Encourage people to build on the ideas of others
- Encourage way-out and odd ideas
- Have numbers on all the ideas
- Don't write everything down - Don't lose yourself in detail
- Stop when the idea flow slows down

When the CAB has started moving you start telling the driver your ideas. When you need inspiration, you can look at the neon signs passing by. They provide random input for you; some with a random word, some a random question. Other signs have posters which provide random pictures.

Follow-up

The work is not done when the idea generation has taken place. Following up and evaluating the ideas is an essential part of brainstorming. The results of the session should be taken seriously, otherwise the effort is of little point.

- Go through the results of the meeting
- Evaluate and criticise each idea with respect to each chosen criteria
- Think of ways to connect ideas
- Select the ideas with the best total potential and build on them

The evaluation could for example be carried out by using Six Mood Cabs. Remember that some ideas may fail to be evaluated according to the chosen criteria. Don't discard any ideas on account of this. Rather put them under a 'special ideas' category and try to evaluate them on their own premises.

Brainstorming in CAB

Brainstorming is the fundamental method used in CAB. The program can be used by one person, sitting by his computer, or it can be used for traditional brainstorming by projecting the screen image onto a wall. One person, a facilitator, is assigned to writing the ideas down, by handling the keyboard. The number of participants in the session is up to the users, but they should bear in mind the laws of group dynamics. Too many participants might lead to that some will get lost and not come forward with their ideas, and the meeting becomes a waste of resources. The best ideas do not always come from those who speak the loudest. On the other hand too few participants might lessen the diversity of input, and the flow of ideas.



Other methods in CAB

In CAB there are several creativity methods that can be used alongside brainstorming, in order to give the session a kick forward.

Random Word (see www.ofzi.com/creativity/cabhelp)

Random Picture (see www.ofzi.com/creativity/cabhelp)

Random Question (see www.ofzi.com/creativity/cabhelp)

Six Mood CABs (see www.ofzi.com/creativity/cabhelp)

Evaluation – in Excel and for further work with ideas

WISH – Coming Soon

3 Angry Police – Coming Soon

Timer – Coming Soon

For more information on these methods, visit our website:

creativity.ofzi.com

or contact us at:

info@ofzi.com