# Brainstorming: Finding the Next Big Idea

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*Fueling creativity and Innovation*

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# Today's Objectives

⌘ Understand the anatomy of a well-facilitated brainstorming session

⌘ Gain an understanding of some of the tools that will assist you in facilitating highly productive & creative innovation sessions
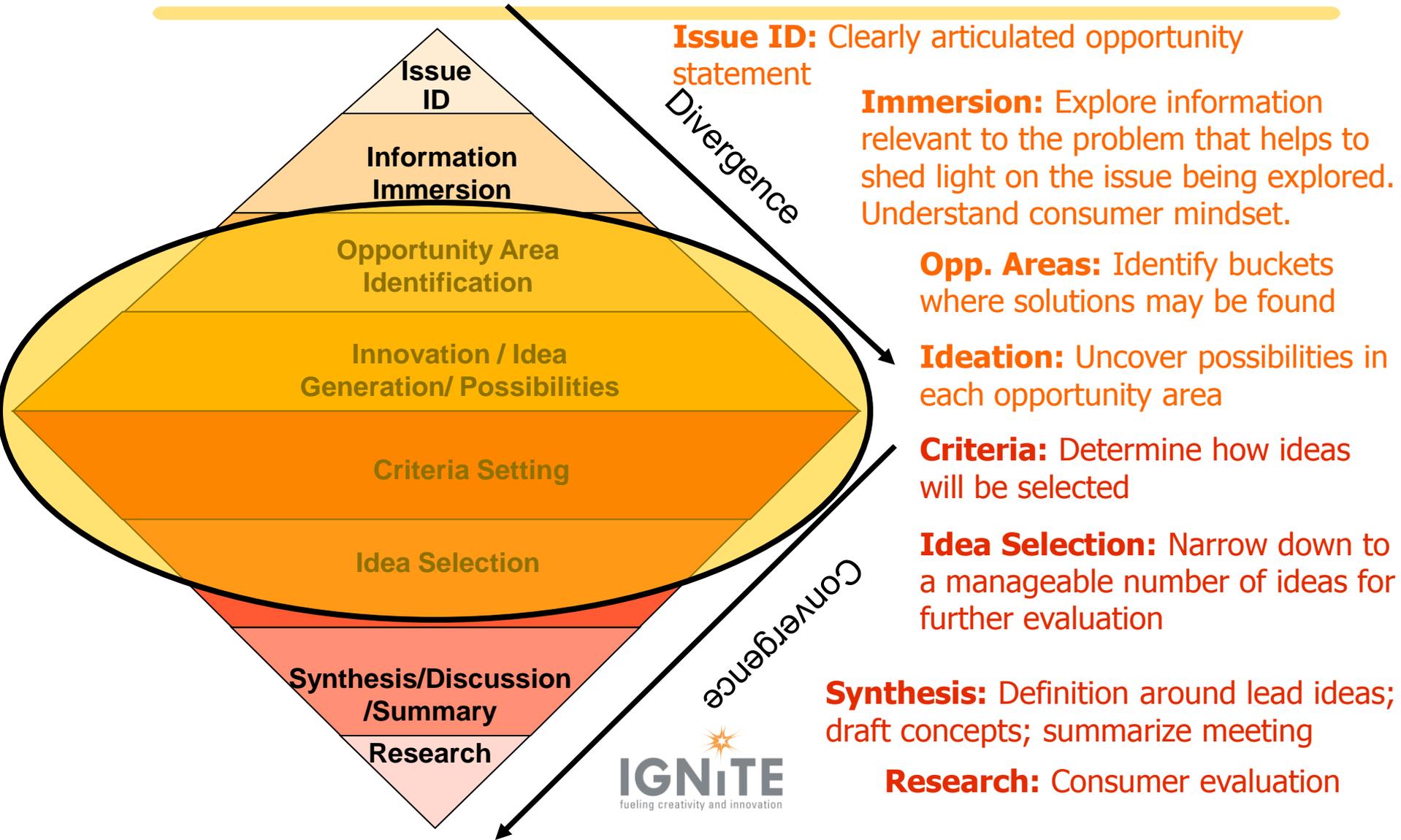
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# Agenda

- The anatomy of a brainstorming session

- Setting the stage for creativity

- Divergence and convergence process tools

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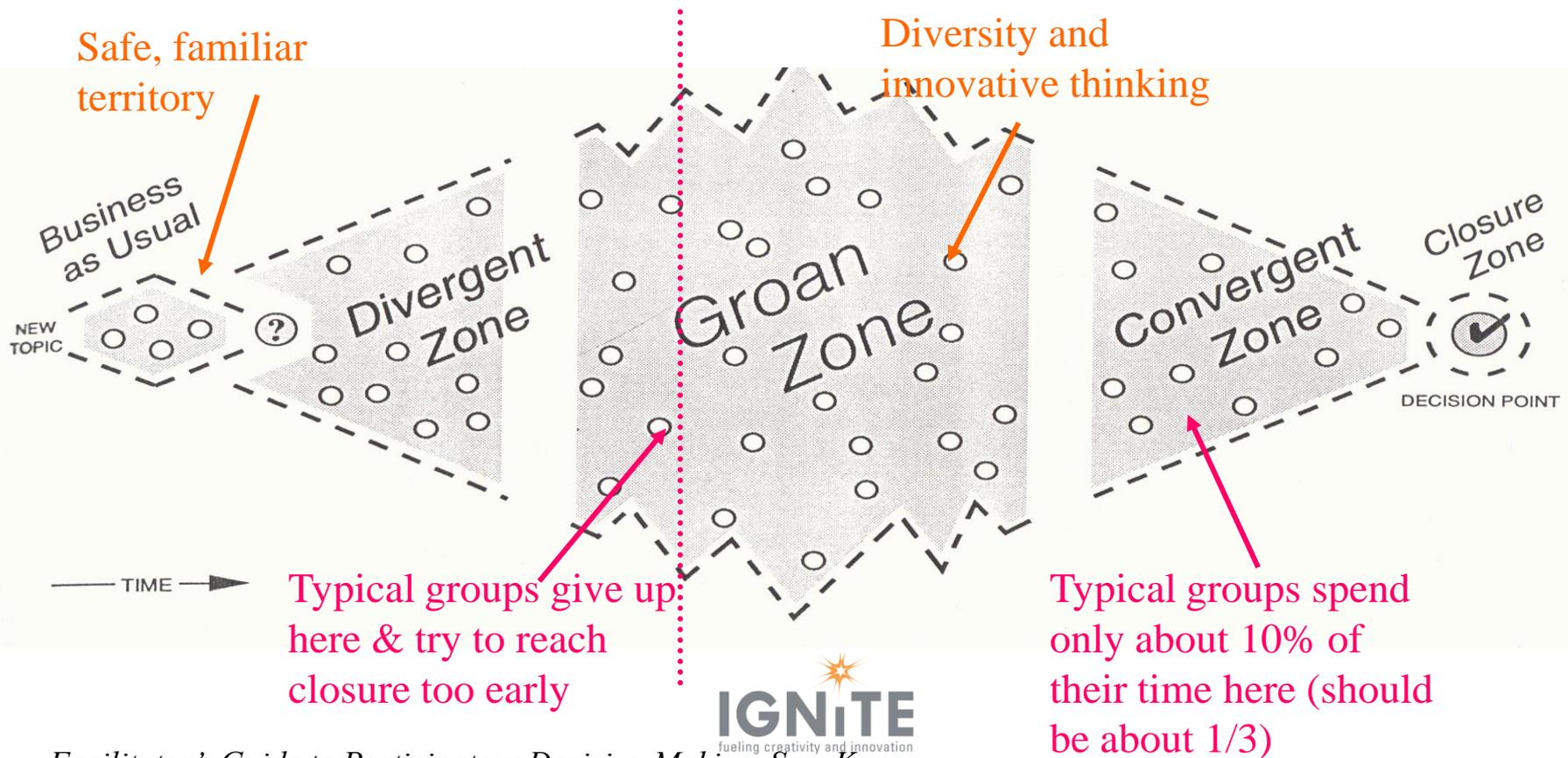fueling creativity and innovation

# The Anatomy of a Brainstorming Session

**Issue ID:** Clearly articulated opportunity statement

**Immersion:** Explore information relevant to the problem that helps to shed light on the issue being explored. Understand consumer mindset.

**Opp. Areas:** Identify buckets where solutions may be found

**Ideation:** Uncover possibilities in each opportunity area

**Criteria:** Determine how ideas will be selected

**Idea Selection:** Narrow down to a manageable number of ideas for further evaluation

**Synthesis:** Definition around lead ideas; draft concepts; summarize meeting

**Research:** Consumer evaluation

Issue ID

Information Immersion

Opportunity Area Identification

Innovation / Idea Generation/ Possibilities

Criteria Setting

Idea Selection

Synthesis/Discussion /Summary

Research

Divergence

Convergence

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# The Anatomy of a Brainstorming Session

## The Dynamics of Group Brainstorming and Decision Making



Safe, familiar territory

Diversity and innovative thinking

Business as Usual

NEW TOPIC

Divergent Zone

Groan Zone

Convergent Zone

Closure Zone

DECISION POINT

TIME

Typical groups give up here & try to reach closure too early

Typical groups spend only about 10% of their time here (should be about 1/3)

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*Facilitator's Guide to Participatory Decision Making, Sam Kaner*

# Dynamics of Group Decision-Making

Examples of differences between the two thinking processes

| DIVERGENT THINKING | CONVERGENT THINKING |
|---|---|
| ⌘ Generating alternatives | ⌘ Evaluating alternatives |
| ⌘ Free-for-all open discussion | ⌘ Summarizing key points |
| ⌘ Gathering diverse points of view | ⌘ Setting criteria |
| ⌘ Creative thinking techniques | ⌘ Sorting ideas into categories |
| | ⌘ Arriving at a conclusion |

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# Setting the Stage for Creativity

## Typical <u>Uninspiring</u> Group Behavior

- Criticizing and inhibiting members
- Shutting people down
- Telling "back stories" which takes up valuable time with unrelated content
- Repeating themselves, holding their ground or pushing for closure
- Leaders often force a decision on the group to avoid the struggle

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# Setting the Stage for Creativity

How do you avoid Typical <u>Uninspiring</u> Group Behavior?

# Set Process Rules!

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# Suggested Ideation Process Rules for Divergence

- Let ideas flow freely – quantity not quality
- No evaluating ideas until later
- Build on the ideas of others – *"I'd like to build on that" or "I wish for . . ."*
- Be humorous and creative
- There are no bad ideas
- Ideas can be triggers or sparks; not every idea needs to be a home run
- No debating
- Everyone participates
- Think in new ways; break out of old pattern
- Keep discussion moving; avoid back stories
- Look at what everyone else looks at but see what no one else sees

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# Benefits of Process Rules

- ⌘ Creates a safe environment so everyone feels comfortable participating.

- ⌘ Allows you (and others) to call-out behaviors that don't fall in line with the rules -- such as launching into a debate about someone's idea.

- ⌘ Gives people permission to laugh, to say what they think and to get out of their functional boxes.

- ⌘ Creates a team atmosphere where an idea isn't owned by a specific contributor, but rather is built and, therefore, owned by the team using hitchhiking and building add-ons.

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# Process Tools

Innovation is 10% Idea Generation and 90% Process

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# **Divergence Process Tools**

Step 1: Clear statement of objective

Step 2: Uncover opportunity areas and prioritize

Step 3: Conduct an ideation exercise against each of the opportunity areas
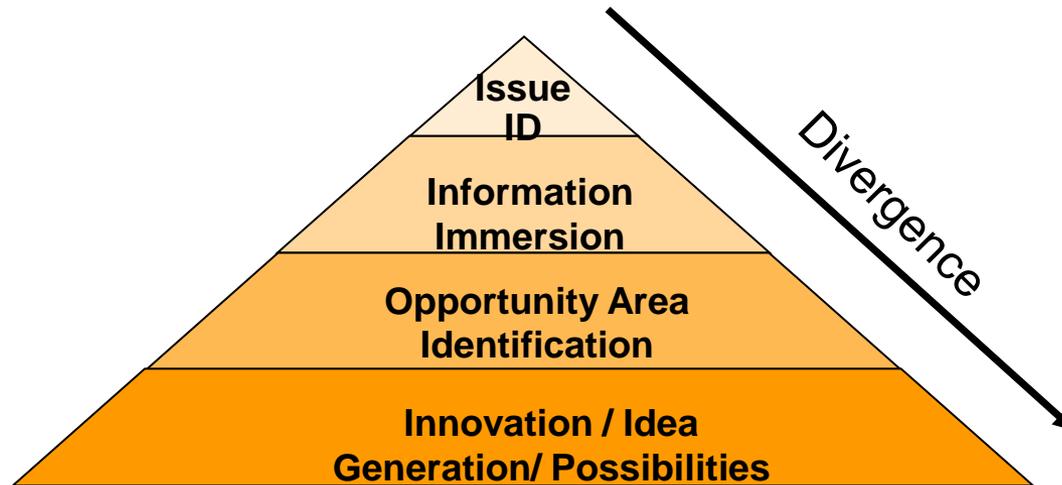
# Divergence Process Tools: EXAMPLE

Step 1: Clear statement of objective

Example: Oral care company

Objective: "To provide every consumer with a reason to use mouthwash twice every day."

Scope: Determine what's in scope and what's out of scope, for example:

- In-scope: A substance used orally, in any form, that combats concerns about oral care
- Out-of-scope: Non-oral products; regulated substances

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# Divergence Process Tools: EXAMPLE

## Step 2: Uncover Opportunity Areas

**Tool: "I wish . . ."**

- ⌘ Ask the group to generate wishes regarding the area being explored
  - ⬙ For example, "what would you wish for in a brand new mouthwash?"
  - ⬙ It is important that the group "wish" from the perspective of the target users of the product or service (immersion creates the consumer mindset).
- ⌘ When all wishes have been contributed, work with the group to categorize and prioritize the wishes.

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# Example: Uncovering Opportunity Areas Through Wishing

*Objective: To provide every consumer with a reason to use mouthwash 2x every day.*

## Generate Wishes: "What do you wish for in the area of mouthwash?

- I wish mouthwash could replace brushing
- I wish it came in capsules or other forms to take with me
- I wish it coated my teeth in whiteness
- I wish it coated my teeth all day to prevent stains and food from sticking
- I wish it acted as an odor-neutralizer rather than a strong scent
- I wish it didn't affect the taste of food afterwards
- I wish it didn't sting my mouth and tongue
- I wish it were less messy …could be swallowed or evaporated, instead of spit out

- I wish it acted as a pre-rinse to loosen my plaque before brushing
- I wish it killed cold germs and other airborne bacteria and viruses
- I wish it promoted the growth of good bacteria and killed the bad bacteria to enhance my overall health
- I wish it motivated my kids to take better care of their oral health
- I wish it protected my teeth from decay as I age
- I wish it were easier for my elderly parents to use

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# Example: Uncovering Opportunity Areas

## Wishes → Opportunity Areas

### ⌘ Convenience

- ⬚ I wish mouthwash could replace brushing
- ⬚ I wish it came in capsules or other forms to take with me

### ⌘ Social / Cosmetic

- ⬚ I wish it coated my teeth in whiteness
- ⬚ I wish it coated my teeth all day to prevent stains and food from sticking
- ⬚ I wish it acted as an odor-neutralizer rather than a strong scent

### ⌘ Usage Experience

- ⬚ I wish it didn't affect the taste of food afterwards
- ⬚ I wish it didn't sting my mouth and tongue
- ⬚ I wish it were less messy …could be swallowed or evaporated, instead of spit out

### ⌘ Therapeutic Benefits

- ⬚ I wish it acted as a pre-rinse to loosen my plaque before brushing
- ⬚ I wish it killed cold germs and other airborne bacteria and viruses
- ⬚ I wish it promoted the growth of good bacteria and killed the bad bacteria to enhance my overall health

### ⌘ Lifestage Specific

- ⬚ I wish it motivated my kids to take better care of their oral health
- ⬚ I wish it protected my teeth from decay as I age
- ⬚ I wish it were easier for my elderly parents to use

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# Example: Idea Generation Tools

## Step 3: Conduct an ideation exercise against each of the opportunity areas

- Conduct creative thinking exercises to populate ideas under each of the opportunity areas

- Creative exercises may include:
  - Open brainstorming
  - Borrowing from trends
  - Lateral thinking techniques
  - Guided imagery

Simplest, more "close in" ideas
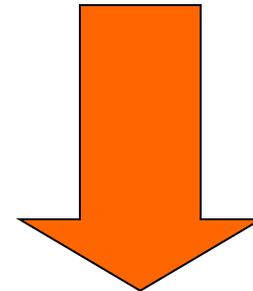
Complex; more "far out" ideas

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# Example: Idea Generation Tools

Step 3: Conduct an ideation exercise against each of the opportunity areas

| Opportunity Area | Ideation Technique | Key Questions |
|---|---|---|
| Convenience | Open brainstorming | 1. What would make mouthwash more convenient?<br>2. Generate & build on ideas |

**Ideas:**

- Make a mouthwash tablet that you can take with you; suck on it or dissolve it in water

- Make a mouthwash that substitutes for toothpaste – make it gritty so when you swish it cleans your teeth

- Make a mouthwash with 'scrubbing bubbles' that cleans between teeth (instead of floss)

# Example: Idea Generation Tools

Step 3: Conduct an ideation exercise against each of the opportunity areas

| Opportunity Area | Ideation Technique | Key Questions |
|---|---|---|
| Social / Cosmetic | Borrowing from Trends & Lateral Thinking | 1. What are some trends occurring in the area of cosmetics?<br>2. What makes those trends appealing?<br>3. How can we take what's appealing and apply it to mouthwash?<br>4. Generate and build on ideas |

**Trends → what makes the trend appealing?**

• Using vitamins and antioxidants topically → easy to get health benefits

• Do it yourself (face peels, pedicures, etc.)→ inexpensive; convenient

• Perfection; extending youth → looking better longer

**Ideas:**

• Do-it-yourself sealants

• A surface whitener.  Does not damage teeth or make them sensitive.

• Mouthwash that kills specific bacteria known to enter the body and cause heart disease

# Example: Idea Generation Tools

Step 3: Conduct an ideation exercise against each of the opportunity areas

| Opportunity Area | Ideation Technique | Key Questions |
|---|---|---|
| Usage Experience | Guided imagery | 1. Assign each person a world (i.e. Space, rock-n-roll, pre-school, high-tech, low-tech, nature, Hollywood, etc.)<br>2. "Take a few quiet moments and think about what's happening in your world" (talk through guided imagery)<br>    "Describe the experience of oral care and using mouthwash in your world? How is it different? What's good about it?"<br>3. Develop mouthwash ideas using the benefits from the experiences in your world<br>4. Generate and build on ideas |

# Example: Idea Generation Tools

| Opportunity Area | Ideation Technique | Key Questions |
|---|---|---|
| Therapeutic Benefits | Association / Lateral Thinking | 1. Forget about mouthwash for a minute and name things that are therapeutic<br>2. Generate a list of attributes asking "what makes those things therapeutic"<br>3. Apply the list of attributes to mouthwash to come up with new ideas<br>4. Generate and build on ideas |

**Therapeutic Benefits → what makes it therapeutic?**
- A warm bath → whole-body experience
- Quiet alone time → total relaxation
- A cool, refreshing drink → refreshes me
- A yoga class → energizes and relaxes me at the same time
- Watching a favorite TV show → a special time you plan for
- Reading a book → It takes your mind to a new place
- A massage → It's not an everyday occurrence. It's special

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# Example: Idea Generation Tools
## Step 3: Conduct an ideation exercise against each of the opportunity areas

| Opportunity Area | Ideation Technique | Key Questions |
|---|---|---|
| Lifestage Specific | Structured brainstorming – "Role playing" | 1. Divide into 4 groups<br>2. Assign each group a lifestage: childhood, teenager, boomers, seniors<br>3. Ask each team to "identify the key issues affecting the oral care of your lifestage and come up with mouthwash ideas that solve them"<br>4. Collect and build on ideas |

## Ideas

**For kids:**
- More of a foam than a rinse
- Spits out in a different color to indicate if it's working

**For Teens:**
- Extreme sports mouthwash with an energy boost
- Addresses weight issues (e.g., appetite suppressant)
- Cool/extreme flavors

**For Boomers:**
- Minerals that will harden my roots to prevent cracking, so I can keep my teeth
- Regenerative ingredient to help repair cracking, boost growth
- Mouthwash with good bacteria -- probiotics
- A mineral wash. Mouthwash that contains calcium and other minerals to harden roots and prevent tooth cracking
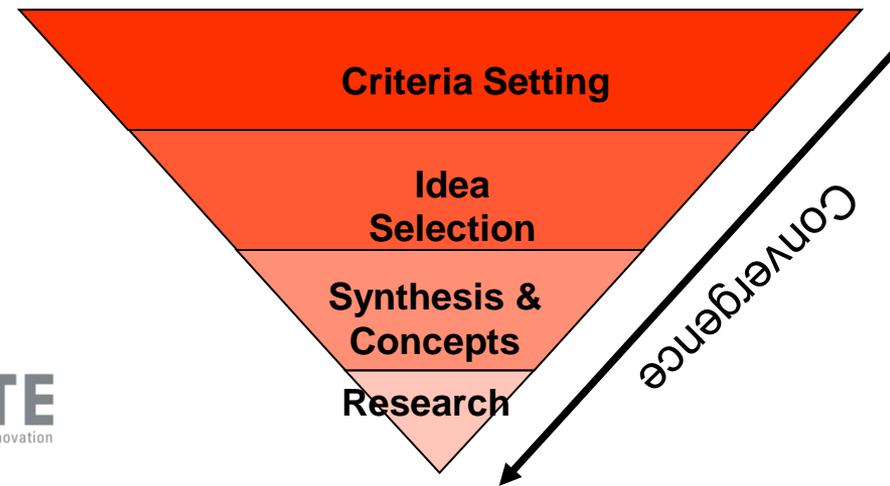
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# **The Convergence Phase**

Step one:     Evaluation Criteria

Step two:     Idea Selection

Step three:   Synthesis & Concepts

Step four:    Research Planning

# Setting Evaluation Criteria

Step one: Set Evaluation Criteria

⌘ Work with the group to set the criteria for which ideas will be selected at the next step.

⌘ Do not allow the group not to narrow too much or you may lose some great ideas before they get a chance to be explored (criteria related to ROI or R&D typically avoided at this stage)

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# Setting Evaluation Criteria

Sample Evaluation Criteria

⌘ Unique vs. the competition — or has the potential to be

⌘ Potential to be category-changing

⌘ Fits with the brand strategy

⌘ Stretch ideas/risky/scary should be considered in addition to safer ideas

⌘ Appealing and motivating to target consumers

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# Idea Selection

Step two: Idea Selection

Purpose: Help the group narrow down the number of ideas to a manageable number

Process: The idea selection process includes:

- Multi-voting

- Championing favorite ideas*

- Combining like ideas

\* Championing favorite ideas is important so that the consensus oriented process doesn't drive out really creative, unique (but sometimes difficult) ideas.

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# Idea Selection

## Multi-Voting

- Give each person an equal number of votes (typically equal to about 1/3 of all the ideas generated)

- Ask each person to vote for the ideas they believe meet the criteria agreed upon

- Ask each person to also vote for any duplicates (this does not count towards their vote allocation)

- The ideas with the highest number of votes will move forward into the next round

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# Idea Selection

## Championing favorite ideas

- Ask each participant to select 1-3 ideas they wish to "champion" – these are your favorite ideas that are unlikely to get voted on by others because they are <u>too far out, too risky, or too difficult.</u>

## Combining like ideas

- Review each of the top vote getters with the group and ask if there are ideas that are similar that should be combined with the idea (may enhance or further describe an idea or simply be duplicate).

The resulting list of top ideas + championed ideas are now ready to be discussed by the group!

# Synthesis & Concepts

Step three: Synthesis & Concepts

⌘ Facilitator works with the team to come to agreement on the ideas that will move forward into concept research or other next steps.

⌘ Group members provide definition around each of the lead ideas -- frequently, at this stage, concept outlines are created.

◇ These outlines are later written into consumer concepts for concept testing research.

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# Concept Writing

**Idea Name:** **Healthy Sensations**

**Target Audience:** Adults

**Consumer Insight**

"I want to know that the products I use every day are actually working for me.  It's hard to wait for improvement long term."

**Product Description**

- ☑ Mouthwash that includes the sensory elements of cooling for invigoration and heating for winding down at night.
- ☑ Dual-chamber bottle for Cooling Day Formula and Warming Nighttime formula.

**Key Consumer Benefit**

Feel invigorated in the morning and calm at night before bed.

**Support/Reasons to Believe**

- ☑ Heat sensation when swished.
- ☑ Cold sensation when swished.

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# Research Planning

Step four: Research Planning

⌘ After the ideation session has been conducted, concepts are finalized and the research parameters are identified

- Key objectives
- Target audience
- Screening criteria
- Survey questions or discussion guide

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# Preparing for your Facilitated Brainstorming Session

Key Tasks

1. Create or obtain a clear statement of objective and desired outcomes for the meeting

2. Collect information on the situation - participants, subject matter, history, research

3. Build the agenda

4. Create the facilitation plan (session process)

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# Thank You!