

Effective Questions for Effective Brainstorming

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Below are 4 words and sets of questions to lead your team in brainstorming. The words and questions aren't "magic". They are simply a strategy for getting some effective brainstorming questions in front of the group to draw out the conversation.

Reflect on the current circumstances.

1. What went wrong?
2. How did it happen?
3. What's the damage?
4. Who is impacted?
5. How much did it cost us – in capital, momentum, morale and reputation?
6. What are the long-term and the short-term ramifications?

Recalculate based on our current scenario.

1. How can we improve?
2. How do we keep it from happening again?
3. What's the best way to recover?
4. Who are the right players in our recovery?
5. What are the immediate, mid-range and long-term decisions we need to make, as a result of this?

Recharge ourselves from our loss.

1. Why are we doing what we do? (Our vision should drive us.)
2. What's our motivation to begin again?
3. Why are we needed? (If we weren't here, who would miss us – and why?)
4. What are some of our examples of success? (We can build from those.)
5. What can we do to spur new momentum?

(Don't skip this set of questions. Regardless of the issue, this type thinking is needed every time. You'll be tempted to ignore them, because you assume you know these, but you always need the energy this type dialogue produces. Depending on the issue, you can't usually do this immediately as well, because the previous issues are usually clouding people's minds.)

Reignite the team to move forward.

1. How soon can we begin again?
2. Do we need a relaunch or do a complete overhaul?
3. What's our strategy moving forward?
4. Who is our spokesperson?
5. What are some short-term, "low hanging fruit" wins we can have?
6. Who needs to do what to get things going?
7. Where are we healthy enough to build upon?

Asking the right questions may determine the success or failure in the days ahead. But don't miss asking effective questions for effective brainstorming.