



Description

KJ Ideation is a brainstorming technique, or 'idea-generating' method developed by Japanese anthropologist Jiro Kawakita (from which its name derives) to collect, sort and find meaning in qualitative data. As such, it facilitates abductive reasoning that provides rigor to the process of sorting out chaotic ideas and insights to form a hypothesis to confirm or reject. While mostly used in Western countries as an ideation tool, it has been used in Japanese companies as a method for collective decision-making. By creating an open and collaborative method for collective brainstorming, the tool helps challenge owners bring in different perspectives and knowledge of the issue in order to push past the symptoms and get to the root of the problem. This is done not only through collaboration but is also accompanied by ethnographic research and observation during the inspiration and discovery phase. The process thereby facilitates collective decision-making and will formation, while addressing specific challenges (whether external to the organization or internal).

The activity is best done in a small group composed of main representatives of the different stakeholders and value creation areas. It can also be done by a small group or project leader who consults with different actor groups through interviews and ethnographic observation. The activity has the potential to create new relationships and connections (of mental models) between actors while working

How to conduct



Duration: 60 - 180 min

Resources:

- Challenge to be tackled

Material: Pens, post-its

Participants per team: 4 - 10

Instructions:

1. Set up a team of participants and introduce the challenge and the challenge question.
2. Ask each participant to share knowledge on the problem from: lived experience, observation and field notes, interviews, best practices, etc. (also the PESTEL tool can be used for this). Then all team members should brainstorm on ideas for solutions for the problem. Only one insight should be written per post-it. The post-its should be placed in the left column of the template / a common board.
3. Clustering: Study the post-its looking for similarities and patterns to create clusters. This process should be led by "feelings" and intuition. Some ideas may not be part of any distinct cluster and be "lone wolves". They should not be discarded as they might fit into larger family of clusters to for a team of teams. Once the clusters are complete, the team should give a title to each one to help make sense of the data and give order to the research. When appropriate, clusters should be grouped into families to create a higher order team of teams. Sense-making: The family of clusters should be visually arranged in a way that gives order to the data and that tells its story: indicating patterns, trends, cause and effect relationships, order of occurrence, interdependencies, connections or contradictions. The visualization should be explained, verbally and possibly in a written form, in an effective and simple manner that presents the emerging insights in a logical and precise way, reducing complexity to give form to potentially new interpretations of the problem space.
4. Voting: Participants should vote on the concepts or ideas that are the most feasible and effective (the Impact and Feasibility Matrix Tool can be helpful for this) and move these forward to the next phase of development.



IDEATE

Brainstorm collectively on solutions, write the single ideas on post-its and stick them in this area

CLUSTER SOLUTIONS

Take the single ideas from the previous column and try to find clusters of ideas and concept by grouping similar or related ideas together

VOTE

Vote for the idea cluster that seems most effective and feasible to you and could bring real value when implemented

