

# Taking Notes In a Brainstorming Session

## The Importance of Quality Notes

The notes from a Brainstorming session are a critical: They provide a record of the ideas generated and act to help drive the development of great concepts. As well, the very act of scribing during the session provides a kind of validation of the ideas (offers) made by session participants.

## Your Role As Scribe (Notetaker)

Being a good scribe requires your full attention. Think of your role as that of court stenographer, capturing all of the ideas offered by participants. Do not try to gauge what ideas are good or bad; be impartial in your notetaking.

## Before the Session

1. Make sure you have at least 2 sturdy easels and sufficient flip chart paper.
2. Pre-cut masking tape into 1 inch pieces to hang flip chart paper on the wall, and stick these pieces of tape to the edge of the easel for easy access.
3. Have a variety of new, firm-tipped colored markers. Watercolor (non-permanent) markers are easiest to work with.

## During the Session

1. Capture a brief headline of each offer made. Start writing the moment you hear the beginning of the headline.
2. Do not edit, even if you disagree with an offer made.
3. Use the words and phrasing of the offerer—their syntax is what makes the offer unique.
4. Number each headline separately.
5. Try and write legibly and large enough to be seen by everyone in the group. (6 to 9 headlines, depending on their length, should fit well on a flipchart page.)
6. Alternate ink color with each headline. (Holding pens in the V of your non-writing hand allows you to switch pens easily.)
7. If you did not hear the offer, ask for the idea offerer to repeat him/herself.
8. If you are not sure you captured an idea correctly, check with the offerer to make sure it is correct.
9. If need be, have the session facilitator ask the offerer to elaborate a little after the headline, which will give you additional time to capture the headline in its entirety.
10. If a session participant offers a build to an earlier offer, number the build separately, and note the number of the earlier offer to which the build refers. (e.g. "42. BUILD on 41: blah blah blah")
11. At the end of the session, clarify any abbreviations or shorthand in your scribing to make typing the notes easier.
12. Number the pages to make end-of-session collation easier.

## At the End of the Session

1. Collate the notes in the correct numbered sequence.
2. Indicate within the notes any additional material (presentations, reports, participant notes, etc.) that should be included in the typed notes.
3. Create a cover page that provides information on the name of the session, where and when it was held, and the names of the facilitator, session "owner," and your name as scribe
4. Pass notes on to appropriate person for computer input.
5. One or two people from within the session (often the scribe and the facilitator) should copy edit the notes to make sure that headlines make sense and their meaning was not inadvertently changed by the typist.

