

## Stage: Ideation - Substage: Brainstorming and generating ideas KJ Ideation

*References: Digital Society School's Design method toolkit, IDEO.org (2015), Kawakita, J. (1967), Ohiwa, Hajime, et al. (1997), Scupin, R. (1997)*



### What is it for?

This technique is one of the most popular brainstorming variations for design, team, retrospective, and project meetings and it could be used throughout the complete social innovation process. The KJ Technique includes the following steps: individual brainstorming, grouping or clustering, and voting. It is a prioritizing method that emphasizes the most important ideas and actions by prioritizing the efforts. The tool represents a starting point for a design solution and a priority list for actions and directions.

### How to use it?



1. Set up a group meeting and a room. You need at least 5 participants to generate a sufficient amount of ideas.
2. Select a moderator. This moderator frames the design challenge.
3. Participants generate many ideas and write them on post-its.
4. Collect the idea post-its, shuffle them, and hand them out. No one should get one of their ideas.
5. Read out the ideas as the moderator transcribes them on flipchart pages. During this phase, anyone can ask for clarification of any ideas brought up and recorded. Ideas are categorized in groups (put the post-it notes on a wall or whiteboard). No more than 10 groups.
6. Vote up the best ideas so that each group has clear winners. Discuss the insights.
7. Individuals take ownership of ideas and take responsibility for implementing or further developing each on a deadline.

**Design challenge:** (challenge statement).

## Discover

### Share

**Instructions:**  
Share with the group the stories, information, and observations coming from your research. Each participant should write down interesting aspects on post-it notes. One post-it for each point of interest. This is a divergent phase of discovery so the focus should be on noting interesting elements rather than trying to already form insights on the information being presented.

#### Sharing rules

1. Be specific
2. Be descriptive
3. Follow reporting rules (5ws and how)

## Define

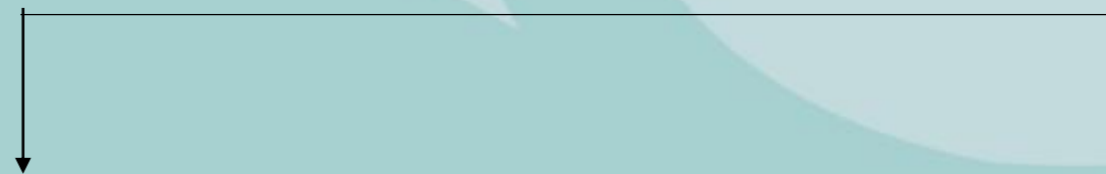
### Find Themes

**Instructions:**  
Identify patterns in the research and cluster them together. Move the post-its to the this frame in organized groups or buckets. Name each cluster to define a theme.

#### Instructions:

Find a framework to organize the themes and the evidence (e.g. Venn diagram, cluster maps, process maps, relational map, matrixes, etc.). This will help re-frame the problem and understand what the focus of the challenge is.  
This step is not mandatory if it doesn't fit with the research.  
The objective is to find an opportunity area within which to design a solution. There could be more than one. This could also be simply developing a theme and translating it into a question.

### Frame



Opportunity Area: (How might we...).

## Design: K/J Ideation

### Ideate

**Instructions:**  
Each participant should ideate solutions to the question(s) developed in the framing phase (how might we...).  
One idea per post-it.

#### Brainstorming rules

1. Defer judgement
2. Encourage wild ideas
3. Build on the ideas of others ("yes, and..." approach)
4. Stay focused on topic
5. Be visual
6. One conversation at a time
7. Go for quantity

### Cluster Solutions

**Instructions:**  
Identify patterns in the ideas proposed and cluster them together.  
Name each cluster to define the core concept of the group.

### Vote

**Instructions:**  
Each participant votes on the best ideas with a set number of "dots".  
The concepts with the most dots wins and should advance to the prototyping phase.

