



## Full-Spectrum Brainstorming and the IPS™ Model

Brainstorming is an exceptionally powerful tool for personal and organizational transformation, but is rarely used to its full potential because it is viewed in terms of outcome rather than process. An integrated Ideation/Problem/Solution model – IPS™ – will harness the creative imagination to maximum effect while still retaining brainstorming’s greatest benefit – the generation of myriad possibilities.

In the **Ideation** stage, individuals or groups use a series of structured questions to clearly articulate the goal and purpose of their brainstorming. This step, which is often overlooked or poorly identified, serves as the foundation for future work. These questions are: What is the generic topic? Why is this topic important? What was the inspiration for further thinking on this topic? What, in general, could be gained by brainstorming on this topic? What specific goals, if any, do I/we have for brainstorming on this topic? These questions are iterative and can be continuously revisited as the brainstorming continues.

In the **Problem** stage, individuals or groups use the results of ideation to generate problem statements that identify issues for consideration. While many people strive to “find the *real* problem” in an attempt to take quick and effective action, such an approach negates the power of brainstorming and fuels the illusion that a topic contains only one key problem. By contrast, IPS stresses the generation of as many problem statements as possible, guided by such questions as: What are the tensions present in this topic? What are the areas of agreement or harmony in this topic? What values and beliefs are associated with this topic? What critical information about this topic is unknown? What is unknowable? What is known, or knowable?

In the **Solution** stage, individuals or groups move freely through the problem statements generating the widest possible array of high-level suggestions for each. This is the stage where judgment and preconceived notions of what is creative, practical, or politically feasible are most likely to stifle the process. Therefore, participants are guided by a single precept – the creation of as many solutions as possible in the time allotted. Participants tentatively assign solutions to specific problem statements; later research may reveal themes within problem sets, or solutions that address a variety of problems.

Due to its highly structured nature, IPS works well in both spontaneous sessions and sessions where significant preparatory work has been done. Additionally, it works well in a classic “flipchart and markers” environment, as well as settings where data is initially captured and shared on computers.

Would you like to see an example of IPS in action? Please schedule a free, no-obligation consultation. I look forward to working with you to determine how Full-Spectrum Brainstorming can serve your needs!

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