

SGD-10. GROUND RULES FOR BRAINSTORMING*

1. Every contribution is worthwhile.
 - Even weird, way-out ideas
 - Even confusing ideas
 - *Especially* silly ideas

2. Suspend judgment.
 - We won't evaluate each other's ideas
 - We won't censor our own ideas
 - We'll save these ideas for later discussion

3. We can modify this process before it starts or after it ends, but not while it's underway.

When introducing the technique of formal brainstorming to a group, spend a little time discussing the value of *suspended judgment*. Then ask each participant if s/he is willing to follow these ground rules. If one or more members are not, encourage the group to modify the ground rules to fit the needs of all members.

*The inventor of brainstorming as a technique for stimulating creativity was Alex Osborn. His classic, *Applied Imagination*, New York: Charles Scribner & Sons, 1953, has spawned more than one hundred variations of brainstorming.