



II FUN IDEAS

for Strategic Planning

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Brainzooming™



Catalyzing Your
Innovative Success.

11 FUN IDEAS

for Strategic Planning



by

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CREATING A FUN STRATEGIC PLANNING ENVIRONMENT?

Yes,
it's
possible!

If you have ever participated in a Brainzooming [strategic thinking workshop](#), you've heard me say, "People think strategic planning is boring, and I agree with them. I'm a strategic planner, and even I don't enjoy strategic planning!"

It's true!

Strategic planning is typically serious stuff. And too often, that seriousness means companies carry out planning in a boring, unproductive, and mentally-deadening way. The universal [frustration with boring strategy meetings](#) is likely why so many people visit the Brainzooming website seeking creative ideas for fun strategic planning exercises.

"Fun strategic planning? You must be kidding," you could be thinking.

No. We're absolutely serious about the fun part! Let's first define what we mean by "fun" as it relates to strategic planning. Fun

strategic planning involves an experience that is mentally stimulating, [very collaborative among highly-engaged groups](#), and involves people who want to participate in strategic planning the next time it happens.

When strategic planning is fun, people with important perspectives and information are encouraged to engage. A fun experience that is stimulating both mentally and for business makes participants eager to dive into future strategy planning.

These are all reasons why we consciously design and facilitate strategic planning activities designed to boost results and fun!

To help you bring fun to your team's strategy meetings, here are eleven go-to approaches we use to liven up strategic planning.

While You're Planning a Strategy Meeting



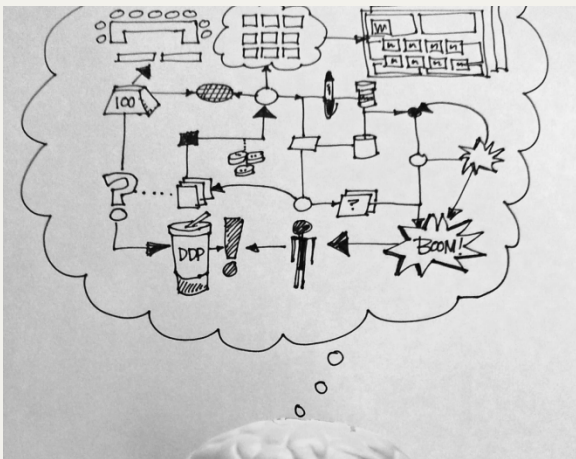
1. Select a spacious and fun meeting place

Reserve a different location or room for your strategic planning meeting. If you always have strategy meetings in the same place, changing the venue to a more lively place adds fun. Go outside. Go to the cafeteria. Go to a meeting room much bigger than you'd ever need for the number of people expected. When you give people more physical space for their bodies, you'll be surprised at how it translates into more mental white space to think about new ideas. Above all, the key is going somewhere different!



2. Prepare not-fun stuff outside organized meetings

Get as much homework and other prep work done before the strategic planning session, especially work individuals can readily complete themselves. That includes gathering all the data you'll need ahead of time. Doing this bypasses frustrating, unproductive time as everyone waits for one person to track down or share information. Keeping the group interaction frequent and active during a strategy workshop provides more opportunities for fun engagement with interactive exercises.



3. Turn participants into successful strategists

Most people pulled into strategic planning aren't strategists and have no formal training in how to develop successful strategy. Yet many strategic planning processes involve handing people complex strategy templates without guidance around developing strategic ideas! Planning is more productive and engaging when it capitalizes on what participants can bring to the work and lets them build on that in mentally stimulating ways to contribute to a sound strategy.

Activities During Strategy Meetings



4. Use a humorous ice breaker and introduction

An enjoyable strategic planning session should start on a light note. Use an ice breaker that eliminates boring self-introductions in favor of ones where everyone BUT the individual being introduced says something. Give everyone a single question to ask of as many people as possible at the strategic gathering. Then, for each person's introduction, have everyone quickly share a fact they learned about that person. This exercise is great with people who already know each other (because they'll discover new things). It also leads to shorter introductions. For even more fun, ask a person that's good at improvisation to make up ALL the answers they share about others.

5. Don't bore people with dreary presentations

So often, strategic planning meetings begin with long presentations about what the latest research, the SWOT analysis, or the business conclusions say about the company and the marketplace. Rather than BORING people with too much information to start, send out data updates ahead of time. If you need input from planning participants, solicit it upfront so you can analyze it and look for themes. Then, at the start of the strategy meeting, simply share how the implications from all the analysis are shaping what you'll explore during that day's strategy workshop. This approach demonstrates how you're focused on putting insights into action as soon as possible. That's a good start for planning!

6. Tell people you expect things to be outrageous

Participants during strategic planning meetings often won't push strategy ideas very far. That's natural. If they feel on the hook to make a big idea happen, they may hold back in sharing it. That's why it's important to let them know boldness is okay. It's even better to clearly and blatantly ENCOURAGE complete outrageousness! Change a typical strategy exercise (say Strengths-Weaknesses-Opportunities-Threats) to have people imagine the most outrageous possibilities for each area. Once you have outrageous ideas, you can always dial extreme ideas back to be more realistic. You can accomplish that by working to find what part of an outrageous idea can most quickly progress toward implementation.

Want to know how to help your team members engage like seasoned strategists? Contact The Brainzooming Group. Let's talk about involving your whole team to develop and carry out your strategy!

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LOOKING FOR
MORE IDEAS
ON BRINGING
FUN TO YOUR
STRATEGY
MEETINGS?

THIS WAY

Strategy Exercises with a Dose of Fun

7. Provide Structure to Help People Succeed

People enjoy it when they feel successful right away with a new activity. You can use structured strategic thinking exercises and questions that both take participants off the hook for starting strategic planning from scratch and allow them to engage in productive strategy conversations based on their areas of expertise. When you couple that with asking people about familiar things in new and unconventional ways, there is a real opportunity to combine fun and bold thinking. Here are two exercises The Brainzooming Group uses to add fun to strategy workshops.



Try Some Shrimp

We use an exercise called “Shrimp” to turn what seem like puny ideas into big stars. This particular strategic thinking exercise is a blast, especially at the end of a long strategy session. We use Shrimp to work with overlooked ideas and exaggerate them so far that they would be sure to offend any and all authority figures what would care about the ideas. From this extreme point, we pull the ideas back to find the seeds of incredible ideas participants wouldn’t otherwise have envisioned.

Pin Prick Your Competitors

This strategic thinking exercise involves targeting a pesky competitor and imagining every way possible to be a complete nuisance for them. Ultimately, the ideas you choose have to be have legal and ethical. But before that point, anything is fair game and lots of fun!



Create Variety through Disruption

There's no reason to do everything the same, all the time. You can disrupt the flow of a traditional strategy meeting to create fun and new ideas.



8. Turn up the speed and variety

Spending long periods thinking about the same strategies from the same perspective is deadly. Create fun strategic planning exercises by taking only five or six minutes with an exercise before varying the creative perspective. For the next round, address the same issue from a different customer, competitor, or industry supplier perspective. Then have small groups adopt a new perspective, and have them successively build on (or tear apart and improve on) ideas the small group before them developed.

9. Rearrange working groups

By breaking a large group into smaller groups, you can provide an opportunity for everyone to participate more actively. After splitting a big group into smaller groups, keep varying the composition of the small groups. Make sure every person has a chance to work closely with every other person in the group. This type of interpersonal variety breaks up the monotony of a boring strategy meeting.

10. Create a competition

Split your whole group into smaller groups and turn strategy work into a competition. Challenge each group to do more than the other groups of whatever it is you need – ideas, variations, scenarios, whatever. Cheer for the team that wins, then give everybody another chance to win with the next small group exercise.

11. Increase breaks, add fun food and drinks

Give people short, frequent breaks so they can stand up, move around, and even do jumping jacks, stretches, or relaxation techniques. Send somebody out to get fun food for an upcoming break. Get milk shakes from a fast food restaurant. Hit up the deli or bakery section at a nearby grocery store for unexpected salty or sweet snacks. Looking forward to something enjoyable at the next break can alleviate tedium and make even boring questions seem like stimulating strategic planning exercises.

Which ideas should you pick?



Please note: We don't advise that you have to use ALL of these fun strategic planning activities in the same meeting. But if you do, please invite us. Or at least send us video, okay?

Regardless of which activities you implement in your next strategic planning session, now you know that it *is* completely possible to have fun, too. And you have an overview of some of the tools The Brainzooming Group uses to bring fun to organizations. We'd love to hear how you introduce these ideas and others to make strategy planning more fun!

If you would like to devote your full attention to developing strategy and reduce your time one planning how to develop it, The Brainzooming Group can help. We'll supply the exercises and the fun activities so you can dive in and strategize. Let's talk about making that happen for your company!

The Answer:

“Brainzooming is about abruptly halting the cluster f%@& that is the modern American business meeting and actually getting new stuff done innovatively and productively. Plus, you’ll feel smart and won’t regret coming to work that day.”

The Question:

“Why IS Brainzooming FUN?”

Want to know more? Without the NSFW graphic?

Let us give you the proper, business speak version of the answer. It’s on the next page. → → →

WARNING

It won’t be nearly as pithy as the answer on this page!

The Safe for Work Answer:

The Brainzooming Group helps smart organizations expand strategic options and create innovative, efficient-to-implement plans for success. We:

- Help generate innovative thinking across diverse environments and teams
- Use techniques your organization can easily and successfully implement
- Offer certainty given we developed our process on the client side in a Fortune 500 organization

The Question:

“Why DOES Brainzooming WORK?”

The Brainzooming Group works with you to identify variables that shape your strategy development process. Via a [free, 30-minute collaboration](#), we'll explore your:

- Most important end results from your strategy
- Intended strategic direction and degree of desired change
- Current and potential strategy team members
- Optimum strategy process dynamics

We'll take it from there. And we'll get back to you with a customized strategic planning approach, tailored for your success.

Seriously, are you ready to develop a new corporate or brand strategy?

If you want helpful, results-oriented input on how you're thinking about approaching your organization's strategy, let's schedule a FREE, thirty-minute consultation call. You'll walk away with a stronger sense of which next steps make the most sense for your organization.

Visit info.brainzooming.com/strategy-consultation and we'll reach out to you to schedule your call!

Get started and request your free call!

