

Lotus Blossom

What is it?

The Lotus Blossom Technique, also known as the “Japanese Approach to Generating Ideas,” is a structured problem-solving and brainstorming technique that helps individuals and teams break down complex ideas into manageable parts. It encourages creative thinking by visually mapping out ideas in a structured way.

When to use it?

It can be used when trying to find a way to address a situation or problem through brainstorming possible solutions.

Benefits at a glance....

- Everyone is given an equal opportunity to contribute
- Encourages you to ask critical, incisive questions about the main topic, generating new ideas for discussion



Figure 1: Example Lotus Blossom template



How to use it?

1. Begin by identifying the question or situation you want to address – put this in the centre of your grid (yellow post-it in example above)
2. As a group identify eight things that you think could be a challenge to addressing the question or situation. Arrange these around the central theme. This is your 1st Lotus flower.
3. Copy each challenge to the centre of its own flower.
4. Individually identify solutions/mitigations to address any of the challenges – up to 8 per challenge.
5. Discuss/review ideas as a group

Many teams benefit from using a lotus diagram template, mainly because it gives a twist to a regular brainstorming session. Here are a few advantages of using the lotus diagram:

Have better brainstorming sessions

Lotus diagrams encourage lateral thinking. If people get stuck, you can return to the diagram to generate ideas that might be tangentially related to your main topic.

Promote logical thinking

In using a lotus diagram, you're constantly filing topics according to their relationship to the main topic. That makes it a helpful tool for keeping your meetings focused and on task.

Break down complex ideas

Lotus diagrams can be useful for discussing complex topics with many moving parts. By uncovering related ideas, you can better understand the main idea at the centre of the diagram.

Tips

You can also use the tool to collect/organise causes for an issue rather than solutions. This could be useful where different people involved in a process have different understandings of what is causing the issue.