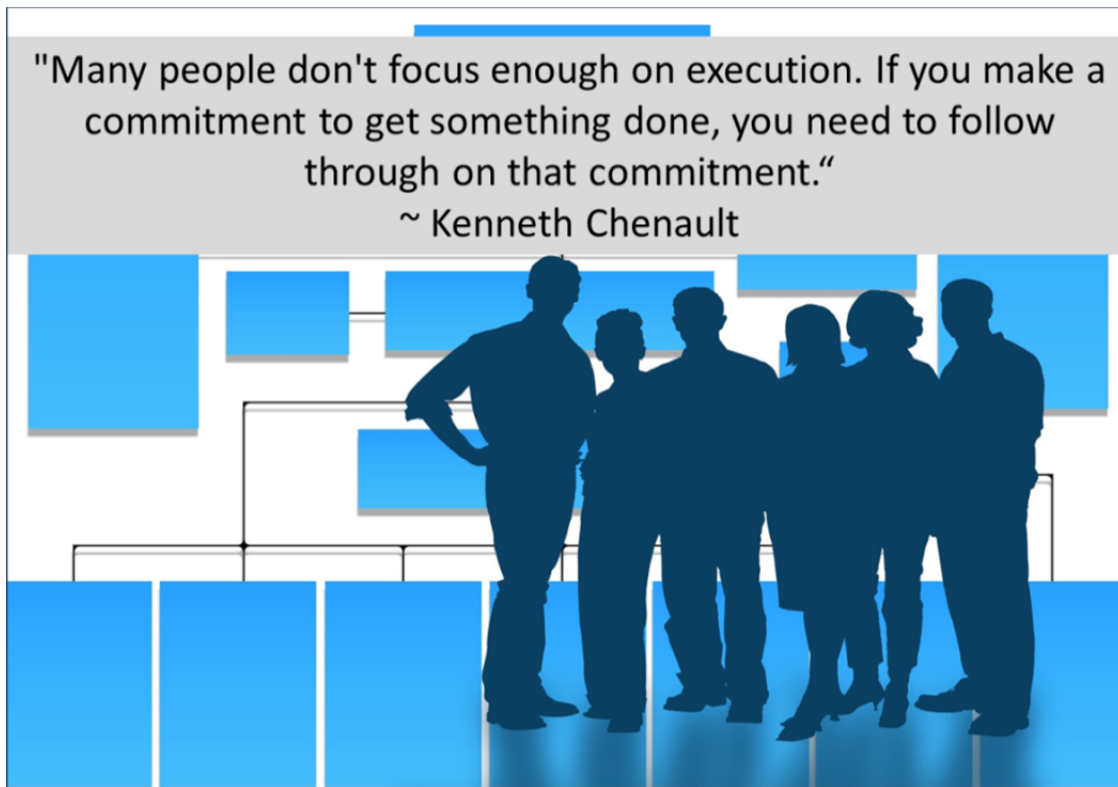# How to Start and Implement Idea MindTeam™ Groups in Your Organization

(The Process – Start-to-Operational)

"Many people don't focus enough on execution. If you make a commitment to get something done, you need to follow through on that commitment."
~ Kenneth Chenault

"Teamwork is the ability to work together toward a common vision. The ability to direct individual accomplishments toward organizational objectives. It is the fuel that allows common people to attain uncommon results."
~ Andrew Carnegie

"The secret is to gang up on the problem, rather than each other."
~ Thomas Stallkamp

How to Start & Implement Idea MindTeam™ Groups in Your Organization

In this overview, we take you through the process of organizing, running, and following-up with Idea MindTeam™ groups should you choose to implement them on your own, using your own resources. Know that we at MindTeam Solutions, Inc. have the complete process, tools, support resources, and facilitator training to implement the Idea MindTeam™ platform in your organization should you wish to avail yourself, your leaders, and your executive team of our experience and expertise, instead.

Organize Your Idea MindTeam™ Group: Choose Group Members

When you decide that implementing Idea MindTeam™ groups is the right solution for employee engagement, retention, and ensuring your staff lives the culture you set in your organization, your first step is determining the right people for the groups.

The ideal number of people for an effective Idea MindTeam™ group is seven-to-ten members per group. These must be people who will be consistent attendees over a term of nine-to-twelve months and beyond. Your Idea MindTeam™ group will be ineffective and doomed to fail if its members regularly drop in and drop out of attending and participating.

Choose people whom you determine will buy-into the process and purpose of an Idea MindTeam™ group. Choose people from across departments rather than from the same department. Choose people initially who have responsibilities such that, when they work through issues they bring to the table or ideas they would like to initiate, they take ownership of taking action and seeing that solutions and plans move forward.

Idea MindTeam™ Group Success Factors
Successful Idea MindTeam™ groups have:
- Structure
- Processes & procedures
- Agreements & commitments
- Core values
- Trained Facilitators as leaders
- Mutual value & trust
- Ideas without judgement
- Honesty…with caring
- Care about others' success
- Repeatability & replicate-ability
- Consistency
- Small number of people in the group
- Flexibility & adaptability
- Not just anyone is in the group
- Top-level organizational leadership support

Idea MindTeam™ group members can have different roles within your organization with different levels of responsibility. During group meetings, positions, egos, and organizational politics must be left at the door. All are peers during meetings with the singular purpose of helping each other solve problems, getting clarity on ideas, promoting the organizational culture, and holding each other accountable to their commitments.

Identify the Leader: Idea MindTeam™ Group Facilitator

An ideal person to facilitate an Idea MindTeam™ group is someone who has – or is slated to assume – a leadership position in your organization. You get to define at what level such a leadership position may be. Our recommendation is to avoid having a mid-to-high-level manager or executive, or someone perceived to control your group members' performance evaluations and pay, lead the group. No matter how much you want group members to feel that hierarchical positions are checked at the door, perceptions matter. The facilitator must engender trust, openness, and non-judgement in the group in order for the group to communicate freely and take risks with ideas and solutions.

What can derail a group setting?
- Politics
- Hierarchical positions in the company
- Relationships
- Feelings
- Inexperience
- Negative experiences
- Personalities
- Diverse backgrounds
- Positioning
- Lack of respect for each other
- Lack of appropriate & applicable facilitation skills
- Poor discipline
- Non-committal participation
- Stress, pressure, and deadlines
- Individual insecurities

Successful facilitation requires leadership and facilitation skills training. If you lack such training within your organization, seek online or offline courses to prepare your chosen facilitators to lead their groups.

The Idea MindTeam™ group facilitator organizes meeting logistics, communicates with group members before and after meetings, secures the physical arrangements or online resources for running meetings, makes sure everyone is prepared for maximum productivity during meetings, manages group interactions, creates positive group experiences, ends meetings on time, and follows-up with group members to ensure accountability for commitments they make.

Facilitating is not coaching, lecturing, preaching, teaching, or otherwise having the facilitator being the expert and the group learning from her or him. Facilitating is organizing logistics, leading the flow of the session, managing interpersonal interactions, and following-up. Facilitation is listening and creating a safe, low-risk or risk-free environment for all members to actively participate and gain value they can apply to their positions in the organization to move the organization – as well as themselves – forward.

Your Idea MindTeam™ group facilitators must have the bandwidth – emotionally, time-wise, available resources, competencies, knowledge, attitude, and management blessing – to manage both the Idea MindTeam™ leadership responsibilities as well as their regular professional responsibilities. The benefits to being facilitators include practicing and perfecting their leadership skills, highlighting their strengths, increasing their visibility within – and possibly beyond – the organization, and potential positioning for professional advancement and recognition.

Prepare for the Idea MindTeam™ Group Meetings

Prior to each meeting, the facilitator prepares the agenda and gathers the materials she or he will need for the meeting. Suggested materials include a printout of the agenda, sign-in sheet, spotlight assignments sheet, education session sheet, accountability worksheet, and any additional books, handouts, media, playback equipment, markers, easel pad or smartboard / display equipment, note pads, and other idea-capturing supplies. We include some of the basic worksheets in this chapter and in the appendix, granting permission for you to reproduce them as needed for your own Idea MindTeam™ group process (not to be sold or repackaged for use beyond your group fair usage).

The Group Meetings in Action

Your Idea MindTeam™ groups are now in session. The ideal timeframe for meetings is 2.5-to-3.0 hours. Determine the timing when you initially implement your group program and stick to the timing for every meeting. Remember…consistency over time is one of the success keys to a long-term, productive group. Stick to the agenda. Manage individual interactions within the group. Ensure fairness in terms of who spotlights her or his issue each meeting. Document action items and commitments. Note anything that comes up during a meeting that needs to be addressed beyond the meeting and/or with management involvement. End on time.

Example: Core Principles for Public Debate
🌐 Pay attention
🌐 Listen
🌐 Be inclusive
🌐 Avoid gossip
🌐 Show respect
🌐 Be agreeable
🌐 Apologize
🌐 Give constructive criticism
🌐 Take responsibility
(Source: Duluth MN Superior Area Community Foundation)

What happens in an Idea MindTeam™ meeting stays in the meeting. Have all group members (yes, all) agree to a mutual framework of behaviors and attitudes at the beginning of each meeting. Begin and end each meeting positively priming mindsets through quotations, short audios or videos, or short activities. Ban external interruptions – electronic or otherwise – for the duration of the meeting. "I don't know", "Let's follow-up to find that out", and "That is inappropriate for our Idea MindTeam™ session" are acceptable statements during meetings when they apply.

Rules of good group behavior and participation apply to everyone involved.

Education Session

Decide whether your Idea MindTeam™ meetings will include short educational sessions. If so, make sure the education directly applies to your group members' professional growth and development. Strive for topics that members can implement immediately when they return to their regular responsibilities or that members can use as they work to expand their horizons. Resources where facilitators can find such content include TED/TEDx talks, podcasts, and video platforms.

You may also have people within your organization who have expertise they can present in short sessions as "Edu-Bites"…bite-sized educational sessions. If you have a training and development department or program, Idea MindTeam™ sessions can complement the subject matter they offer.

After the Idea MindTeam™ Meetings

Before each meeting ends, group members – especially the spotlighters that session – choose accountability partners with whom to follow-up. After meetings, during the time period until the next meeting (typically one month), accountability partners check-in with each other on the progress they make towards their commitments. Accountability partners support each other throughout that time period with encouragement, ideas, suggestions, and referrals to people and tools that may help each other meet their commitments.

The facilitator touches base with each member at least once during the time period between meetings to help where needed, or simply to remind each member of the progress they, themselves committed to. Again, what happens in Idea MindTeam™ meetings stays in the meetings. Neither group members nor facilitators are to report details to managers and leadership teams outside of the meetings.

If a reporting mechanism is required by management to ensure the organization's resources are best allocated for Idea MindTeam™ implementation, balance reporting with confidentiality. Predetermine an effectiveness reporting process and communicate the process to the group members so that they are assured of privacy and feel free to take risks within the group while understanding that fiduciary concerns are addressed for leadership and executive teams.

Support Tools

This is an example of an agenda to which to assign times. The facilitator's role is to ensure that the group adheres to the timing as agreed. Meetings should last no longer than three hours, starting and ending on time.

Time	Meeting Activity
	Opening; commitment to the group process; statement of corporate values
	Spotlight selections
	Spotlight issue processing and ideation
	Commitment and accountability statement
	Education session
	Group business
	Wrap-up and inspiring closing

Rotate the group members who spotlight their issues and ideas over time so that everyone has a chance to process an issue or work through an idea before someone repeats the spotlight opportunity. If a special situation arises where someone needs to have a spotlight experience before "their time", they may request special consideration from the group and ask if a member scheduled for their time that meeting is open to delaying their spotlight until the next meeting.

Instituting an effective Idea MindTeam™ platform in and throughout your organization requires top-down support, trained leaders in facilitation skills, and a structured process with supporting

resources. This ensures that every Idea MindTeam™ group experience, regardless of the number of groups in your organization and whether they are on-site or virtual, is consistent in format and provides value to their group members and to the organization's outcomes and bottom line.

Note: The book *Internal Masterminds: How Smart Talent Leaders Create Engagement and Pivot Organizational Culture*, by Sylvia Henderson and Josh Silverstone (available at InternalMasterminds.com), is the complete source and resource reference for bringing the Idea MindTeam™ platform to your organization.

Journal

Identify whom you believe to be your best first Idea MindTeam™ group members and facilitator for maximum success and greatest organizational value.

List some of the short education session resources you know to be available to use during Idea MindTeam™ group meetings.

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