

"THIRTY-FIVE"- SELECTING THE BEST IDEAS

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Give each team member a 3" x 5" index card. Ask them to write the most potent idea they can think of for improving their circumstances. The ideas with the most impact will rise to the top.

Step One: Idea Generation

- Everyone writes a strategy on an index card (no more than 3 sentences)
- Write legibly so that everyone else can read it (give them 90 seconds)
- Then say: "Look at the card and note how brilliant your idea is".
- "Now detach yourself from your idea and send it into the real world."

Step Two: Shuffle the Deck

- Ask all participants to stand in an open space in the room
- When the whistle blows, turn the card face down and exchange cards with somebody else
- Continue exchanging cards rapidly until they are all mixed up

Step Three: Compare Ideas and Assign Relative Value

- When you hear the whistle blow again, stop and find a partner
- Each pair of people compares the two ideas on their cards (45 seconds)
- Distribute 7 points between these two ideas and write the point values on the back of the cards
- 6 or 7 points = very useful; 1 or 2 points = not very useful

Steps Four through Seven: Four More Rounds of Idea Comparison

- Swap cards as before
- Next time the whistle blows, form partners again
- Compare two ideas at a time for a total of five different rounds
- At the end of the fifth round, each card will have five numbers on the back

Step Eight: Identify Top 5 Ideas

- Have class members add up the numbers on the back of their cards and start counting down from 35 -- the maximum score an idea can get
- You keep counting down until someone has a card with that number of points, (e.g.: 27) and that's the top idea generated and evaluated by the group of people
- Keep counting down until you have identified the top 5 ideas

This activity lasts for about 20 minutes. The whole concept behind it is that participants bring their own ideas to any change effort. If you can structure the situation so as to get out of their way, they can learn a lot from each other.