

## Tips and tools for meetings to create something

When you're working to create something (a plan, a guide, a process, a service, etc.), it's essential to have multiple minds at the table. An effective meeting makes all the difference.

### **Essential Guidance**

#### **Know what you're aiming to create.**

It seems obvious, but too often, these meetings begin with a lack of clarity regarding intended outputs – and people end up having different expectations and pulling in different directions.

#### **Give extra thought to the meeting flow, and build the agenda accordingly.**

It typically works best to follow a progression in which meeting-goers do the following in this order: generate ideas, share and synthesize, reach consensus, add detail, and plan out next steps.

#### **Don't try to jam too much into one meeting.**

The creative process can move only so quickly. You might need two or more meetings to do this right.

### **Additional Recommendations**

#### **Set a collaborative tone from the start and throughout.**

Encourage open dialogue and active participation. When you're meeting face-to-face, set up the room so everyone feels included and part of the group.

#### **Leverage the power of breakout groups.**

By dividing the full group of meeting-goers into subgroups at certain points, you can prevent groupthink and potentially get breakthrough thinking.

#### **Make ideas visible.**

Ideas are best communicated when they're made tangible and visible. That's why whiteboards, flip charts, and sticky notes are so useful. Encourage people to write down and draw things out.

### **Tools and Techniques**

- Brainstorming
- Brainwriting  
(Silent Brainstorming)
- Affinity Diagram
- Carousel Process
- Nominal Group Technique
- Mind Mapping
- Six Thinking Hats

Go to [sc.edu/excellence](https://sc.edu/excellence) for step-by-step guidance on all these tools.



Use the **Meeting Time Calculator** to see how much time you spend in meetings – and how much time you could save.

### **For ALL meetings**

**Involve the right people.** Invite those who are essential to the purpose of the session.

**Get the group ready.** Send the agenda and any pre-meeting materials in advance.

**Stay on track.** If discussion starts to stray, guide people back to the agenda.

