



Facilitating Groups: Nominal Group Technique

The nominal group technique is a widely used small-group process whose purpose is to produce a large number of ideas in a short period of time. The process encourages contributions from everyone by allowing for equal participation.

Supplies Needed

- Flipchart paper with sticky back for posting. (Large paper and tape will also work.)
- Work tables
- Paper for participants to write on
- Pens or pencils for participants
- Markers for each table

Steps for Nominal Group Technique

- Divide the group into small work groups of five to six members each. Each group will need someone to lead the discussion and record the ideas. Each group will need flipchart paper and markers.
- A question is posed to the group. Individually and silently, each member writes down his/her ideas. Allow for four to five minutes.
- Each participant reads aloud one idea, and it is recorded on the flipchart. Continue this process until all ideas have been listed.
- After all the ideas are recorded, the person who suggested the idea is asked to explain the idea. Questions can be asked by the group about the idea. Note: Duplicate ideas may be combined.
- The group prioritizes the top three or four ideas, lists them on the flipchart paper and shares them with entire group.

References:

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 Tague, N. (1995). The Quality Toolbox. Milwaukee, WI: ASQC Quality Press.
 Witkin, B., & Alschuld, J. (1995). Planning and Conducting Needs Assessment: A Practical Guide. Thousand Oaks, CA: Sage Publications.