

# The alternative to time-wasting, inconsequential meetings!



## Brain-Pool Workshops

### How to make meetings productive?

Despite the accessibility of information today, we still depend on *meetings* to build relationships, turn information into knowledge, and take collaborative decisions. Meetings include brainstorms, project groups, conferences and 'virtual events'. Getting real value depends on defining outcomes, selecting the right design and tools, and effective knowledge-sharing and analysis. In practice, meetings often fail because organisations simply 'sleep-walk' through these stages.

It has been calculated that if the average £30,000-a-year manager spends one hour a week in meetings where they don't pay attention, the total cost to British industry is £7.8bn a year. Source: Henley Management College 2004

### How does Brain-Pool help?

**Brain-Pool Workshops** dramatically improve the productivity of meetings. We plan them properly and employ special tools. We use innovative collaboration technology to capture information more quickly and more completely than is ever possible in traditional meetings. We prepare a distilled synthesis and a crisp set of recommendations based on all the inputs.

We provide a complete service covering design, facilitation, analysis and reporting (see box overleaf). We assemble all the skills required, substantially relieving clients of the burden of looking for the necessary expertise and time internally. We run each Workshop as a partnership project.

Our Workshops can be 'real', in one place at one time, or 'virtual', using **Distance Brain-Pool** to bring people together over the internet from different places and at different times.

### What are the benefits?

Brain-Pool Workshops transform not only the experience of a meeting but also the outputs and the follow-up action. They deliver a step-change in extracting value from collaborative working.

Brain-Pool Workshops provide a unique and powerful approach to tackle some of the biggest challenges facing businesses, public bodies and not-for-profit organisations in the areas of **Strategic Change, Innovation Management, Networking, and Consultation and Engagement** (see overleaf).

### Benefits at-a-glance

- Intense interaction and sharing of knowledge - *not 'speakers and listeners'*
- All talking the same language - *shared understanding of key concepts and terms*
- All contributions are captured simultaneously - *dramatically saving time*
- Equal 'air-time' for all - *not 'who shouts loudest'*
- Everyone can contribute - *without having to catch the Chair's eye*
- Contributions made anonymously - *greater honesty*
- Inputs reviewed, built upon, categorised and rated within the workshop
- Parallel syndicate sessions - *but without the need for break-out rooms*
- Highly focused and stimulating - *through use of structure and tools*
- Guided by independent impartial, expert facilitators and analysts
- Inputs can be labelled - *for later analysis by interest or stakeholder area*
- Verbatim output ready at the end of the session - *total transparency*
- Total knowledge capture - *no-one need take notes*
- Expert synthesis report with crisp recommendations - *facilitates follow up and action planning*
- Effective with groups of up to 100+ - *enabling a greater diversity of contributions*



Sharing inputs from participants at a Brain-Pool Workshop



Brain-Pool Workshop capturing views



New Game-Plan analyst synthesising views in a workshop

## What is the Workshop experience?

Brain-Pool workshops are not loose brainstorms, but structured and creative, focused on delivering key outputs. Participants experience a mix of presentations, discussion, individual work and group exercises. The distinctive element is the use of special laptops, linked by a wireless network, to input and read contributions. No special skills are required.

Participants enter their own contributions (e.g. 'My research priorities'). Others then read and review these. Comments, builds or questions are used to refine contributions (e.g. from a list of 100 'one-liner' priorities, to develop 30 substantial proposals). Participants can respond through the laptops to points made by others - the interactive discussions can be very productive! All this is done anonymously.

The refined inputs are then categorised and assessed - from a simple 'satisfaction' score to sophisticated ratings against multiple criteria (e.g. 'How far are each of the 30 proposals strategic, innovative, practicable, affordable?'). Everyone shares in shaping the outcome. All the initial contributions, refined proposals and comments are retained for subsequent reflection and analysis.

### The Brain-Pool Workshop service

At the **scoping** and **design** stage, we:

- Focus on achieving sharply-defined outcomes
- Ensure we understand the organisational context and language
- Develop participation, structure, content and tools
- Check whether the aims require a real meeting or 'Distance Brain-Pool'

During **facilitation** we:

- Guide the Workshop process
- Promote intense information-sharing by working at individual, group and plenary levels
- Use short presentations to create shared understanding of concepts and issues
- Provide a hard-copy workbook to help structure contributions
- Independent facilitation and analysis ensures total impartiality

We support via **analysis** to:

- Make real-time comments, questions and prompts
- Summarise and report back key findings
- Classify and build on contributions from participants
- Ensure the desired outputs are being delivered

At the **reporting** and **action planning** stage, we:

- Deliver a verbatim report of proceedings almost immediately, ensuring 100% transparency
- Provide a distilled synthesis report, faithful to all the inputs made, with recommendations
- Add intelligent and practical analysis of all raw contributions
- Deliver a report that is a basis for immediate action
- Provide a vivid contrast with the traditional pile of flip-charts and 'Post-It' notes!

## Applications for Brain-Pool

### Strategic Change

- **Road-mapping** Workshops that examine trends, assess their implications, and develop strategies; equally applicable to *Horizon-Scanning, Foresight, Future Planning, and Visioning*
- **Decision-Making** Workshops that transform the quality of decision-making and buy-in to new approaches, through well-structured discussion, greater transparency, and the use of powerful tools
- **Project** and **Programme** Workshops that are valuable, and highly productive, at all stages of a project; including *kick-start, interim review* and *closure*, ensuring buy-in and effective learning

### Innovation Management

- **Innovation** Workshops that go far beyond conventional brainstorms, generating ideas using a variety of creative thinking techniques, and developing and assessing these to generate outputs of real value

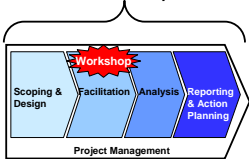
### Networking

- **Customer** and **Supplier** Workshops that enable joint working within supply chains to raise standards, improve productivity and innovate in areas of collective interest
- **Corporate** Workshops that forge effective networks among people from diverse functions, geographical locations and cultures

### Consultation and Engagement

- **Stakeholder** Workshops that are equally effective with groups of experts or members of the public, capturing diverse views, questions and contributions from up to 100+ people at a time; independent facilitation and analysis ensures total impartiality; a verbatim report delivers transparency for participants and a synthesis report makes sense of all the inputs while remaining faithful to them

#### Brain-Pool Workshop Service



### Please contact us:

**New Game-Plan Ltd**

#### Website

www.new-game-plan.co.uk

#### e-mail

info@new-game-plan.co.uk

+44 (0)1428 661517

© New-Game-Plan Ltd 2005

Ngp1brainpool V5.2

### About New Game-Plan

We build value by catalysing Strategic Change, Innovation Management, Networking, and Consultation and Engagement. As most sectors need these services, our experience is broad. We work with leading global companies, public bodies, and stakeholder groups. Our distinctiveness comes from our Fusion:

