



## STRATEGY 152

# Brainstorming: Assessing the Situation (Step #1)

*The first step in brainstorming a problem is to assess the situation. In one word it is research. You can not properly move to the second step, defining the problem, until you have completed this assessment.*

SITUATION	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. What are the known facts?</li> <li>2. No ideas are wanted here.</li> <li>3. Avoid seeking opinions.</li> <li>4. Don't become opinionated.</li> <li>5. Seek – questions, questions and more questions.</li> <li>6. You assume that there is at least one area in which you do not have the sum total of all current knowledge.</li> <li>7. Assume a posture of intelligent ignorance and do not produce ideas.</li> <li>8. Search for key factors.</li> <li>9. Personal investigation.</li> </ol>	<p>Keep this to yourself. Do not seek advice.</p> <p>Become one with the problem.</p>
RESEARCHER	<p>Researcher trained a flea to jump when he said jump. Removed one of the six legs &amp; it still jumped on command. Removed one more leg &amp; it still jumped on command. Did this through the first five legs. Removed sixth &amp; last leg &amp; it did not jump on command. Researcher wrote his conclusion: <b><i>When all six legs of a flea are removed it loses its power of hearing.</i></b></p>	<p>If you do your research incorrectly you will not get the situation properly defined, and that will lead to the wrong conclusion.</p>



## STRATEGY 153

# Brainstorming: Defining the Problem (Step #2)

*The second step in brainstorming is by far the most important step.*

**Steam Shovel-type problem:** *This is the entire picture of the problem which includes the client, the vehicle (property) and all the surrounding circumstances.*

**Spade Problems:** *These are the multitude of small isolated problems within the steam shovel problem. Many times by solving the majority of these smaller problems the big problem disappears.*

SITUATION	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. With a feeling of finality.</li> <li>2. With a sense of irrevocability.</li> <li>3. If you define the problem wrong you will solve the wrong problem. Whenever a broker or principal presents a creative offer that is designed after a brainstorm and it is not acceptable, it means that the person defined the problem wrong (or circumstances have changed).</li> <li>4. One researcher felt that this section was so important that he suggested that all problems should be defined up to 77 different ways. His purpose was of course to emphasize the importance of this step.</li> <li>5. If defined wrong a good idea will die because it was born in the wrong world.</li> <li>6. In defining stay away from habits. Just because you solved a similar problem one way, don't presume that this one will work out the same way.</li> <li>7. Keep reworking your definitions until you are positive.</li> <li>8. Check each word for meaning. Stay away from adjectives. Get a clear definition of the problem.</li> </ol>	<p>Treat the definition as though you were creating something new. You are defining all the reasons why someone could object to the solution that you would bring to the table.</p> <p>If A is true then so is B.</p> <p>If there is no objection to your definition, then what you bring to the table will be an acceptable solution to the problem.</p>
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**STRATEGY 154**

**Brainstorming a Problem (Step #3)**

*This is the real fun of brainstorming. Business meetings are okay and individual ideation is great, but if you have an association with others who know how brainstorming works and you can find yourself in a group brainstorm milieu, you are most fortunate.*

<p>SITUATION</p>	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. You have completed steps #1 and #2: Assessing the Situation &amp; Defining the Problem.</li> <li>2. The normal step at this point, within a company, is to have a business meeting about what to do with this situation. The standard things you know how to do would be explored and normal decisions would be reached.</li> <li>3. If you are versed in brainstorming, this is the point where it comes into play.</li> </ol>	
<p>POSSIBLE SOLUTION</p>	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. It costs you nothing but time to brainstorm the situation. If you use individual ideation (the ideas from only one mind), I can guarantee that you will generate countless other ideas to go with those you thought of at the business meeting.</li> <li>2. If you have a group that affords you the opportunity to utilize group brainstorming, you can get a plethora of ideas that you could not get either through the business meeting or individual ideation.</li> <li>3. This is the uniqueness of the real estate exchange business in that it can provide this group brainstorming opportunity, in which members of the group give freely of their time and knowledge to help each other solve situations. Some problems are extremely complicated.</li> <li>4. It is obvious that the first two steps of brainstorming need be completed prior to taking the time for the group. It is also obvious that a property or vehicle that is only on the cash sales market does not have to go through these steps. If, however, there is no cash sales market or other problems exist that make the property not readily saleable, then exchanging, including the brainstorming, come into play.</li> </ol>	<p><b>IMO (In My Opinion):</b></p> <p>A nice brainstorm can be had with as few as two people if they know how it works.</p> <p>Three to five can give you a great brainstorm.</p> <p>15 and up to 20 can be Utopia if they know what they are doing.</p> <p>Above that the effectiveness seems to fade.</p>



## STRATEGY 155

### Brainstorming:

## Use of the Subconscious in Creativity (Step #4)

*To maximize the benefits of the creative process, the subconscious needs to be brought into play. With the assessment of the situation, the definition of the problem and the actual brainstorm behind us, it is now time to let the process work in our subconscious.*

SITUATION	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. You have garnered many ideas and possible solutions to the problem from your business meetings, individual ideation and brainstorming.</li> <li>2. With the problem fresh in your mind, as are the many ideas developed to this point, it is time to let the subconscious do its work.</li> <li>3. Soak – let the problem soak in your mind.</li> <li>4. Relax – think about something else.</li> <li>5. Simmer – let the problem and the new ideas simmer.</li> </ol>	<p>We hardly ever consciously use our subconscious mind. It just may be the best tool we have.</p>
RESEARCHER	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. File Clerk – imagine your mind has a file clerk and you have instructed him to search through your mind files for other ideas that could be used in solving this problem. As these come up add them to your brainstorming list.</li> <li>2. Fantastic computer – One of the authors said it would take a computer the size of the Empire State Building to house all the information that is in your mind.</li> <li>3. Having faith in the power of the subconscious will build over time. The information that you seek is probably already there. One example of this hidden power that I saw in the studies was as follows:               <ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>a) People were placed in a strange room.</li> <li>b) After they left they were asked to list the things that they had seen in the room.</li> <li>c) The average listed was 20 to 30 items.</li> <li>d) Later they were placed under hypnosis and they listed 200 more items. The subconscious picked up 10 times more than the conscious mind.</li> </ol> </li> </ol>	<p>Creative thinking gives us a marvelous chance to actually witness it in operation.</p> <p>You will get ideas coming out of the subconscious pertaining to the problem you are working on for about a week.</p>

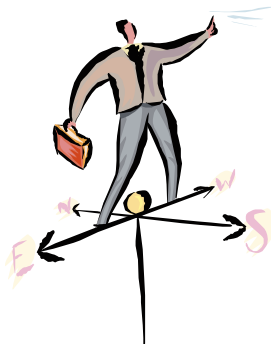


## STRATEGY 156

# Brainstorming: Using Judgment in Creativity (Step #5)

***Through the first four steps of the brainstorming process you have deferred judgment. Now you have a long list of possibilities in the form of ideas and embryo ideas. Now is the time to use judgment and select the best idea and activate.***

SITUATION	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. You now have before you a list of perhaps 100 ideas and it is the time to select the best idea.</li> <li>2. Initially you will find this task a little daunting, but as you learn more about the process from usage, the first part of the judgment process can be completed rather rapidly.</li> <li>3. Many of the ideas may be acceptable as they were the consequence of aiming at a single target, but one of them is best. Your search is now to find the best idea and activate it.</li> </ol>	<p>It only takes one idea to unlock a problem.</p> <p>Sometimes, if the problem has multiple spade problems, then you need to watch for more than one idea</p>
RESEARCHER	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. Many times you can combine two or more ideas to develop a prime thought.</li> <li>2. Play percentages.</li> <li>3. Group pressure can sometimes be wrong. If you are convinced that your idea is sound, then proceed.</li> <li>4. Look for the good and bad effects of the idea at the same time.</li> <li>5. It's choosing and using the ideas that really count.</li> <li>6. While you are in the conscious mode and using judgment, you will find that as you read ideas they will germinate other ideas that are perhaps a modification of the one you are reading. Write the new idea down as it may be the one you are looking for.</li> </ol>	<p>Really be critical at this stage and be analytical.</p>



## STRATEGY 157

# Brainstorming: Signs Following (Step #5)

***Will you get signs that you have made the right decision? Yes!  
Are you sensitive enough to read these signs? Hopefully, yes.***

This is a process that I have developed for my own usage and it has proven to be very helpful. There needs to be an awareness concerning thinking—linear (sequential) vs. non-linear (non-sequential). Non-linear tends to be more creative and freer. In general I have found this most beneficial.

Even though you have completed all segments of your brainstorming and you have implemented your plan, you are not yet finished. This is probably the most sensitive time. As soon as you have implemented the plan, actions and reactions begin. There are a lot of old sayings about this like, “The proof is in the pudding,” or as stated above, “For every action there is a reaction.”

There will always be signs following your implementation, 100% of the time. Are you sensitive enough to pick up on them and/or are you so bull-headed that maybe you plow ahead when the signs come back negative?

As an example, here is a current one I am working on as an example. Market conditions at this time are mostly frozen in my business of real estate. In concert with an associate, I have been developing strategies to free up equity in land that is good but has no market. I brainstormed using different formulas and ideas and came up with creating soft paper and trading the paper rather than the land. I used interest only, 10 years or longer and at a low interest rate of 1 or 2%. This was based on TIGRS, STRIPS (bonds), and low interest CDs. I took two listings at \$1 million plus and had them entered into the marketplace along with other test listings.

Example of signs following: Three months later offers are still coming in on the paper. I got another one yesterday. Initially people were trying to negotiate on the terms and conditions, but that has stopped now. In Chase Bank yesterday I saw a sign quoting and promoting a CD at 1.6% interest.

I am considering these as signs following. This low interest rate paper is acceptable in the current marketplace even though I have never seen this low a rate on a TD or mortgage in 40 years of real estate. We can now use the equity in this land during the down market via the Creation of Wealth formula (see Vol. #1).

After you have implemented your creative idea, stay cognizant and watch for signs following showing that you are right.