

1 Proper Prior Preparation Over Unstructured Jam Sessions

- ✓ Brainstorming without rigorous empirical preparation degenerates into superficial opinion-sharing and aimless corporate theater.
- ✓ Every participant must arrive having digested the preliminary fact pack, analyzed current issue trees, and formulated initial hypotheses.
- ✓ When team members enter the room grounded in baseline financial realities, creative ideation operates against concrete constraints rather than daydreaming.

2 In a White Room: Stripping Ego and Hierarchy at the Door

- ✓ High-yield brainstorming requires psychological safety: eliminate corporate rank, defer premature judgment, and encourage provocative, unorthodox hypotheses.
- ✓ Senior leaders must deliberately withhold their definitive conclusions early in the session to prevent younger analysts from anchoring on executive dogma.
- ✓ Treating the session as a 'clean white room' allows junior associates to voice radical alternatives that frequently contain the seeds of breakthrough solutions.

3 Boundary-Pushing Exercises: Post-Its and Problem Inversion

- ✓ Break intellectual ruts using structured ideation exercises, such as rapid Post-It clustering, role-reversal simulations, and extreme boundary testing.
- ✓ Problem inversion—asking 'What specific actions would guarantee our client's total bankruptcy within twelve months?'—unveils hidden vulnerabilities that conventional logic overlooks.
- ✓ Clustering raw concepts into MECE categories bridges creative divergent thinking and disciplined analytical convergence, isolating the top three strategic bets.