



# Ten Tools for Better Meetings

*"Eliminate waste & unlock dramatically better results by activating the intelligence of everyone in the room!"*



Thumb Voting



Stand ups



Talking Stick



Come Unprepared



Working Agreements

Five-Minute



Picture

Timeboxing



Prioritized Backlog



Information Radiator



Brain-Writing



Pair & Share





# Calling all Leadership Teams!

*How effective are your meetings?*



- Take our survey
  - <https://bit.ly/47olv4k>



- If you have too many meetings
  - Give me three hours, and I'll save you three hours per week





# Working Agreements

*Simple agreements with each other to be more effective*



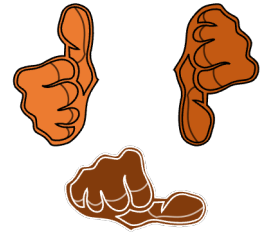
- Informal, yet actionable
  - how you want to work together
  - peer-to-peer
  - never imposed from above/outside
- Create agreements as you recognize inefficient behavior
- Typical topics
  - Start on time, end on time
  - "Vegas" or "Chatham house" rules
  - Use of devices
- Combine with
  - Thumb Voting
  - Talking Stick






# Thumb Voting


*Make decisions with commitment*



 I support / commit to this proposal

 I cannot accept this proposal

- Ask why, then find a better alternative

 Disagree and commit

- "I can live with this solution"

- Watch out for
  - Wobbly thumb ⇒ Lack of commitment

- Useful for
  - Decisions | Working Agreements





# Stand-up

*Recognize issues and who needs to talk to each other*



- A short meetup to recognize issues, prioritize actions, and figure out who needs to talk to whom
- Useful for
  - Self-organization
  - Complex work or chaotic situations
- Not for
  - Reporting | Problem solving
- Combine with
  - Talking Stick | Information Radiators





# Talking Stick

*Ensure that all the voices get heard.*



- How to use
  - Pass the stick around
  - The person holding the talking stick gets to talk
  - Everyone else gets to listen
- Ensures
  - Everyone gets to speak
  - People can finish their sentences
  - Encourages self-organization
- Combine with
  - Stand-ups
  - Timeboxing





# Come unprepared

*Admit it, we all have too much to do.*



- How to use
  - Recognize that it is difficult to find time to read preparation documents
  - Allocate time during the meeting to read the materials
- Why
  - Everyone has time to prepare
  - Reduce homework
  - Reduce bluffing
  - Better decisions, sooner





# Timeboxing

*Because time is your most precious currency.  
You only get to spend it once.*



- How to use
  - Set a short, but not unreasonably short, time limits.
  - When time is up, go on to next step.
  - You can decide to invest more time on the current topic.
- Tips
  - Avoid unreasonable deadlines.
  - Reserve slack time to come back to important topics.
- Useful to
  - Ensure everyone gets a chance.
  - Prevents getting lost in detail or having one person dominate discussion.







# Prioritized Backlog

*Identify the most valuable topics and handle them first*



- Use instead of a fixed agenda
  - Prioritize topics
  - If you don't have time for everything, drop/postpone the least important.
- Tips
  - Handle low-value topics elsewhere.
- Combine with
  - Information Radiator | Timeboxing.





# Information Radiator

*Enable independent yet aligned decision-making.*



- Provide real-time visibility
  - Status, progress, and relevant data
  - For you, your team, or your stakeholders
- Examples
  - Agenda
  - Task board / Kanban Board
  - Release Calendar
  - Defect Charts
  - Real-time KPI or OKR data
- Combine with
  - Standups (to replace reporting meetings)

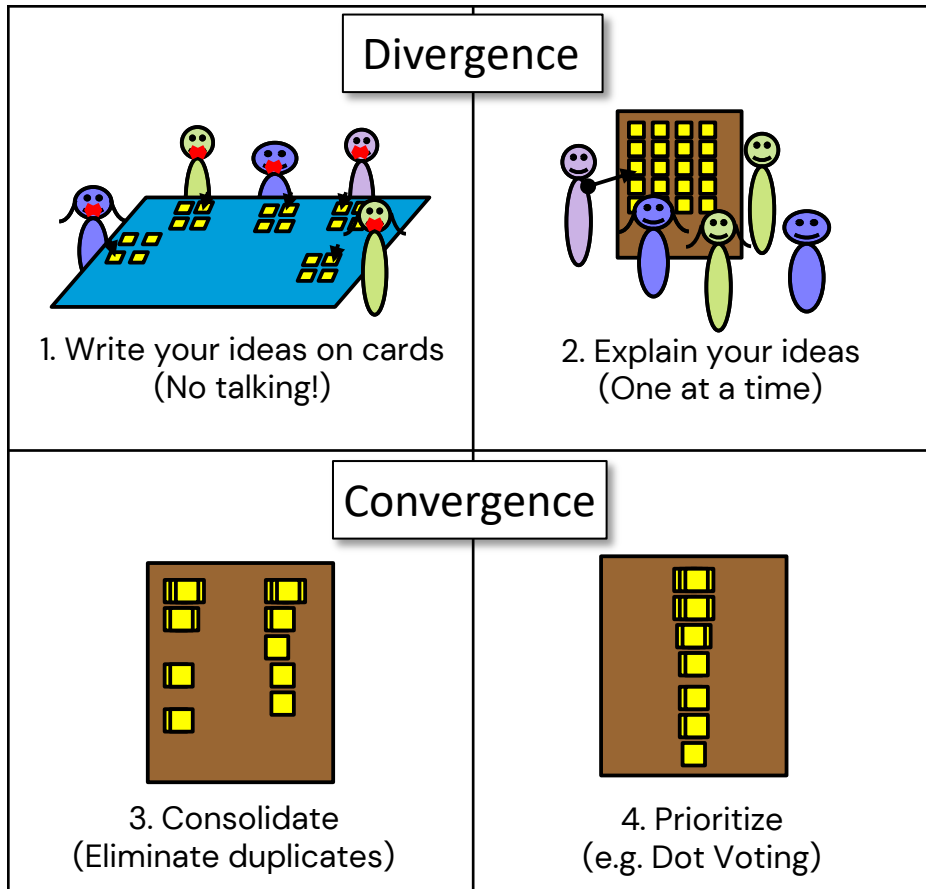


[www.saar-network.ch](http://www.saar-network.ch)



# Brainwriting

*Create many ideas, then pick the best:  
The high-output alternative to brainstorming*



## • Purpose

- Divergence – create a lot of ideas.
- Understand each idea.
- Convergence – identify the best ideas
- Choose – without the need to say no

## • Tips

- Allow clarifying questions
- No debating

## • Useful for

- Creating a backlog
- Envisioning a product or service
- Retrospectives | Problem-Solving

## • Combine with

- Timeboxing (to ensure everyone speaks)





# Pair & Share

*Discuss a problem in pairs or trios, then each group presents results to the whole meeting*



- How to
  - Discuss a problem in pairs or trios
  - Each group presents results to the whole meeting
- Use to
  - Energize the meeting
  - Explore delicate subjects
  - Surface issues
  - Generate new ideas
- Combine with
  - Brainwriting | Five-Minute Picture
  - Timebox (2 to 5 minutes)





# Five-Minute Picture

*Take a few minutes to draw a picture about the topic at hand*



- Draw a picture about the topic at hand
  - Work individually, in pairs, or small groups
  - Create a diagram to illustrate the situation
  - Explain the diagram to the larger group
- Use to
  - Icebreaker / Warm-up
  - Clarify a problem | Explain a solution
  - Build a common understanding
  - Accelerate communication
- Combine with
  - Pair and Share | Timeboxing (5-10 minutes)





# Want more time and better meetings?

*Give me three hours, and I'll save you three hours per week or your money back*



## Accelerate your initiatives



Contact



Agile  
Leadership



[www.saat-network.ch](http://www.saat-network.ch)