

# BRAINSTORMING INFORMATION

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## **Quick Note-Taking Strategies for Capturing Key Points**

When brainstorming or filling out tools like a cause-and-effect diagram, the goal is speed and completeness—don't edit for perfection mid-session. Focus on jotting ideas as they come, then refine later. Here are tailored suggestions:

### **1. Choose Your Method Based on Context**

- **Bullet Points or Lists:** Fastest for linear capture. Use short phrases (e.g., “Training gaps → skill frustration”). Indent sub-points for hierarchies (e.g., main cause → why? → evidence).
- **Mind Mapping:** Great for visual thinkers. Start with the problem in the center; branch out categories (People, Processes) and sub-causes. Tools like pen/paper or apps (XMind, MindMeister) work well.
- **Cornell Method:** Divide your page into sections: Notes (main area for points), Cues (left column for keywords/questions), Summary (bottom for quick recap). Ideal for structured sessions.

### **2. Speed Tips to “Get It Down”**

- **Abbreviations & Symbols:** Shorten everything—e.g., “Env: toxic cult” for Environment/Toxic Culture; use → for cause-effect, \* for priorities, ? for uncertainties.
- **Voice-to-Text:** If digital, dictate via phone apps (Google Keep, Otter.ai) during group talks. Review for accuracy right after.
- **Time-Box It:** Set a 1-2 min timer per category to force quick dumps—avoids overthinking.
- **Capture Non-Verbals:** Note speaker names/emojis for tone (e.g., “HR: 🙄 on schedules”).

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## 3. Tools for Efficiency

- **Analog:** Sticky notes on a whiteboard—easy to group/move. Or a dedicated notebook with pre-drawn templates (e.g., fishbone grid).
- **Digital:**
  - **Notion/OneNote:** Embed tables for prioritization (e.g., columns: Cause | Impact | Fix Idea).
  - **Obsidian/Roam Research:** For linking ideas (e.g., tag #People for quick search).
  - **Google Docs/Slides:** Real-time collab for teams; use speaker notes for hidden details.
    - *Pro Tip:* Always duplicate your raw notes into a “refined” doc post-session for cleanup.

## 4. Post-Capture Polish

- Review within 24 hours: Highlight top 3-5 points per category.
- Quantify where possible (e.g., “70% survey said…”).
- Share for feedback to fill gaps.

These keep you in flow mode—aim for 80% capture now, 20% polish later. If this is for a specific session (e.g., team brainstorm), share more details for customized tweaks!

## Brainstorming & Writing Directions for Cause-and-Effect Analysis

Building on your cause-and-effect form and note-taking setup, here’s a streamlined guide to brainstorming (generating ideas quickly) and writing directions (crafting clear, actionable instructions). This keeps the process collaborative and focused—ideal for team sessions or solo refinement. Aim for 20-30 minutes per phase to maintain momentum.

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## **Phase 1: Brainstorming Techniques (Idea Generation)**

- **Focus on quantity over quality first**—capture wild ideas without judgment. Use your notes from earlier as a springboard.
- **Freewriting Sprint:** Set a 5-min timer. Write nonstop about the problem (e.g., “Why does turnover happen? Training sucks because...”). No editing; let it flow. Review for gems.
- **Round-Robin Prompts:** In a group, go around the circle: Each person adds one cause per category (People, Processes) in 30 seconds. Pass a ball or use a digital timer. Record via voice notes if remote.
- **Reverse Brainstorming: Flip it**—brainstorm “How to worsen the problem?” (e.g., “Fire everyone randomly”). Then reverse to fixes (e.g., “Hire thoughtfully”). Uncovers hidden angles.
- **SWOT Tie-In:** Map to Strengths/Weaknesses/Opportunities/Threats. E.g., Weakness: “Outdated software” → Opportunity: “Budget for upgrades.”
- **Pro Tip:** Use a “parking lot” for off-topic ideas (e.g., a side column in your notes) to stay on track. Target 10-15 ideas per category.

## **Phase 2: Writing Directions (Structuring & Clarifying Output)**

Turn raw brainstorm into polished directions—concise steps for the form, actions, or reports. Make them SMART (Specific, Measurable, etc.) to guide implementation.

### **Template for Directions:**

1. **State the What:** “Address [Cause] by [Action].”
2. **Explain the Why:** “This reduces [Effect] because [Evidence from Brainstorm].”

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3. **Detail the How:** “Steps: 1) [Task], 2) [Task]. Tools: [e.g., SurveyMonkey].”
4. **Assign & Timeline:** “Owner: [Name/Role]; Deadline: [Date]; Metric: [e.g., 10% improvement].”

## **Example for “High Turnover”:**

- **What:** Address training gaps by rolling out quarterly workshops.
- **Why:** 70% of exits cite skill frustrations (from exit surveys).
- **How:**
  - 1) Survey team needs;
  - 2) Partner with external trainer;
  - 3) Track via post-session feedback.
- **Assign:** Owner: HR Lead; Deadline: Q1 2026; Metric: Increase satisfaction score by 15%.

## • **Clarity Hacks:**

- **Active Voice:** “Implement reviews” vs. “Reviews should be implemented.”
- **Short Sentences:** Max 20 words. Bullet for steps.
- **Visual Aids:** Embed your fishbone sketch or a simple flowchart (e.g., in Canva: Cause → Action → Outcome).
- **Iterate:** Read aloud—does it flow? Get a peer review.

Integration with Your Form & Notes

- **Link Back:** In your cause-and-effect form, add a “Directions” column next to prioritized causes. Pull from brainstorm notes (e.g., tag #Action in your digital tool).
- **Common Pitfalls to Avoid:** Overloading with jargon (define terms); Ignoring feasibility (rate ideas 1-5 on effort/cost during brainstorm).
- **Next Steps:** Schedule a 15-min “bake-off” to vote on top directions. Track progress in a shared doc.

*This combo turns chaos into clarity—brainstorm for creativity, write for execution. If this is for a specific scenario (e.g., project delays) or you want examples in a template, drop more details!*

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FORM TYPE 1

