

Affinity Diagram

What The Affinity Diagram is an interactive language data collection method that gathers ideas, opinions, issues, etc..., organizes them into groupings based on natural relationships and identifies the groupings.

When The Affinity Diagram is used when the issues seem too complex to grasp, when break-through thinking is required, or when the only solutions seem to be the same old solutions.

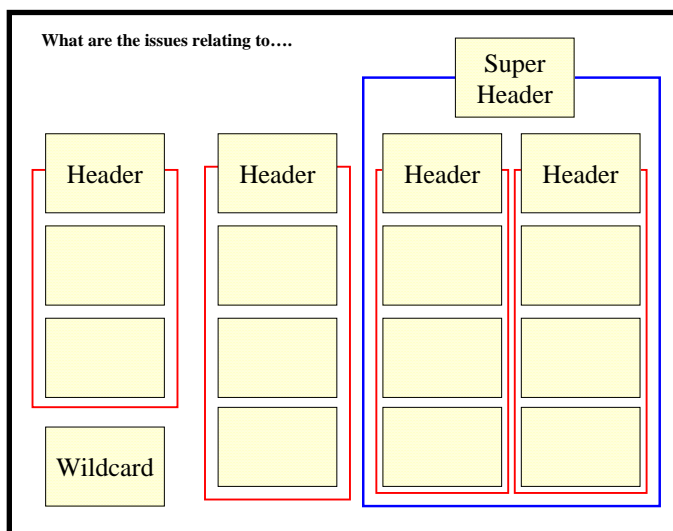
How

1. **Set up the chart:** Use two flip chart sheets taped on the wall so that they touch, or a "Sticky Wall". Develop an issue statement. Keep it neutral so that it doesn't lead participants thinking. A common approach is to lead with the words "What are the issues involved in ...". When you have accomplished this, write the issue statement on top of the page so everyone can read it.

2. **Brainstorm list of issues:** Using the rules for brainstorming, generate a list of issues for the topic. Write the issues individually on 3"x 5" Post-it Notes using a black medium tip marker. Ensure each statement is concise, but a complete thought (noun & verb).

3. **Place and arrange the cards:** Randomly place the issues on the paper. Ensure everyone in the group can gather around the charts to see and participate. Start the placement of issues with those that naturally go together. Once placement starts no talking is allowed until everyone has completed arranging the cards and has sat down. If there is an impasse on placement then reproduce the card and place it in both locations.

4. **Create header cards:** Discuss the groupings and gain consensus on the common thread of each grouping. Write the header card and place it at the head of the groupings.



More Info!

Allow several minutes to generate the issues.

After placement, before arranging, anyone can ask for clarification from the author.

Enforce the "silence rule!"

Everyone must be able to participate all at once in the arranging process. Sitting down is a signal that you are satisfied with the arrangement