



# The 11 Best & Updated **FUN** Strategy Planning Ideas



# The

## Best & Updated **FUN** Strategy Planning Ideas

### When You're Planning a Strategy Meeting

1. Select spacious, fun, and safe spaces
2. Prep boring stuff before strategy meetings
3. Turn participants into successful strategists

### Activities to Start Strategy Meetings

4. Use a humorous ice breaker and introduction
5. Don't bore people with dreary presentations
6. Give the thumbs up to outrageous thinking and possibilities

### Fun Exercises and Activities During a Strategy Meeting

7. Provide structure to help people succeed
8. Accelerate a meeting's speed and variety
9. Rearrange working groups
10. Create an interactive competition
11. Introduce frequent breaks, add fun food and drinks

**BONUS:** Designing a Fun Hybrid Meeting

**BONUS:** Fun Strategy Planning Checklist

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# Q: CREATING A FUN STRATEGIC PLANNING ENVIRONMENT? ARE YOU BEING SERIOUS RIGHT NOW?

A: Yes, 100% serious! It's doable, regardless of whether your team is in-person, virtual, or both.

## Raise your hand if you enjoy strategic planning meetings.

If you raised your hand, you're in the right place. If you didn't, you're in *exactly* the right place.

I routinely tell people that I'm a strategic planner, and even I think most strategic planning is boring and unenjoyable. That's why Brainzooming focuses on *making strategic planning fun*, whether in-person, virtual, or hybrid.

## Fun strategic planning? We're not kidding!

Let's first define what we mean by *fun*. Fun strategic planning involves an experience that:

- Is mentally stimulating
- Creates dynamic, collaboration among highly engaged participants
- Engages people so they want to participate now and in the future

The fun in strategy planning comes through re-imagining the process as:

- Inclusive
- Rapid
- A blend of analysis and creativity
- Focused on innovation and results

## What happens when it's fun?

Through fun strategic planning, people with important perspectives and information eagerly engage and share ideas. A fun experience that's stimulating—both mentally and for business—makes participants eager to dive into future strategy activities.

That's why Brainzooming specifically designs and facilitates strategy planning for collaboration and outstanding results!

## Didn't virtual meetings ruin fun and productive strategy?

The scramble to get to virtual meetings certainly pushed planners for new approaches to make strategy planning lively and productive. The pandemic's video conferencing explosion simply took the bad

aspects of most in-person strategy meetings and moved them online.

That's why we recommend tailoring your approach based on the setting:

- **Meeting in person?** The 11 ideas in this guide are ideal for creating the right environment.
- If your team is meeting **virtually or in a hybrid setting**, we've included updated tips to adapt the 11 ideas.
- You can also go deeper with our accompanying eMagazine: *The Ultimate New Formula for Making Strategy Planning Fun and Productive*. It spells out how our distinctive approach to collaboration creates the same results of a typical 8-hour meeting in 30 minutes!

## Now's the time for a fresh approach to strategy planning!

Sure, strategy planning is serious stuff. But that's no reason to tolerate deadly strategy processes. We'll show you proven techniques to enliven strategy for your executive team and your entire organization.

Brainzooming is dedicated to making strategy planning engaging and fun. That's why executives just like you visit our website every day, seeking creative ideas for strategy activities that create impact and real results.

If you're here, you are our people.

Let's go!



Handwritten signature of Mike Brown.

Mike Brown  
Founder  
The Brainzooming Group

# When You're Planning a Strategy Meeting

Set the stage for fun and productivity before you gather your strategy team.

## 1. Select spacious, fun, and safe spaces

Since Brainzooming started, we've been recommending moving strategic planning into different meeting spaces.

The key?

Each person gets at least 40 square feet of space. That's way more than any conference room or hotel meeting space recommends. While we never called it *social distancing*, from day one we knew that giving people more physical space and a different setting translates into freeing their minds for more innovative thinking. That applies to outdoor meeting spaces, too.

**Virtual Tip:** When you are incorporating online access into strategy meetings, push for something beyond the standard video conference setting. We recommend online collaboration platforms that provide over-sized virtual space. These allow people to share

ideas and see what others are thinking at all times. And when you introduce anonymity into the responses, we predict you'll realize an amazing dose of new authenticity and aspiration in the ideas people imagine.



Learn more about  
saving big hours and  
thousands of dollars  
with online collaboration.

## 2. Prep boring stuff before strategy meetings

Get as much homework and other prep work as possible done before any strategic planning session. This is especially true for work that individuals can readily complete themselves. This includes gathering all the data you'll need ahead of time. Making this happen bypasses the frustrating, unproductive time when everyone waits for one person to track down or share information. If you have some people participating online, they *may* be in a better position to grab information than in-person participants. Even still, keep group interaction frequent and active during a strategy workshop. This provides more opportunities for fun engagement though interactive



### Virtual and Hybrid Tip:

When there's an online component to a meeting, the list of boredom-inducing and productivity-crippling issues multiply. Think ahead and rehearse how you'll eliminate or adapt for:

- Technical issues while people log in or participate during the meeting
- Focusing too much on in-person or virtual participants to the detriment of others
- Allowing too few breaks from the screen
- Limited ways to express ideas
- Challenges for virtual participants in gaining attention to share their perspectives

## 3. Turn participants into successful strategists

Most people pulled into strategic planning aren't strategists. They have no formal training in how to develop successful strategy. Yet, many strategy processes hand people complex templates without any guidance on developing strategic ideas! In contrast, fun, productive planning lets people contribute their real-world experiences and expertise via mentally stimulating exercises. Employing online interactions can remove typical participation barriers, allowing you to increase the size of a strategy group. Engaging more diverse participants further heightens the importance of developing ways for non-strategists to immediately contribute.

# Activities to Start Strategy Meetings

**Break from three mainstays of strategy meetings to boost engagement!**

Start on a light note with an ice breaker that eliminates boring self-introductions. We love a novel ice breaker where everyone BUT the person being introduced speaks. Here's how it works.

Give everyone a single question to ask of as many people as possible. Then, during each person's introduction, have everyone quickly share the answer that they learned about that person. This exercise is great with people who already know each other since they'll discover new things. It also shortens introductions. For even more fun, ask a person that's good at improvisation to make up all the answers they share about others.

## 4. Use a humorous ice breaker and introduction

**Virtual Tip:** When collaborators are remote, try simple questions to prompt sharing: How are you doing? What good things are happening?

## 5. Don't bore people with dreary presentations

Q. Why do so many strategic planning meetings begin with long presentations about what the latest research, the SWOT analysis, or the business conclusions say about the company and the marketplace?

A. *Because it seems strategic and informative.*

Instead, it's typically mind-numbing; immediately following an info dump with expectations for big innovative strategies doesn't go together.

Instead, send out data-heavy updates ahead of time. Even better, design your meeting flow around key insights so that the experience itself conveys critical information. At the meeting's start, share how the implications from all the analysis are shaping what you'll explore during the strategy workshop. This demonstrates a focus on putting insights into action ASAP.

## 6. Give the thumbs up to outrageous thinking and possibilities

No matter the venue, large strategy meetings frequently discourage disruptive thinking—deliberately or not. If participants are personally expected to implement the ideas they generate, they share easily achievable ideas that don't rock the boat. Asking only for big ideas creates hesitation among participants: who wants to share an idea you think is big, only to be told you were very mistaken?

One alternative is to encourage outrageous thinking, using big questions that feature unheard of permissions, severe constraints to using familiar approaches, or tremendous freedom to explore possibilities in new ways. Introducing creative questions and anonymity into idea sharing (an easy twist with some online collaboration platforms) catalyzes outrageous thinking.

If the thinking becomes too extreme or disruptive, you can dial incredibly bold ideas back to realistic levels. Look for what parts of an outrageous idea could most quickly progress toward implementation, then you can move forward with the partial, yet still innovative, idea.



**Access your team's best ideas  
online without a single,  
"Sorry, go ahead!"**

**[info.brainzooming.com/blast](http://info.brainzooming.com/blast)**

Blast! is an innovative online experience where you and your team answer questions that propel you to impactful breakthroughs. Proven questions, candid responses, and your team's imagination create amazing results. There's no software to download. And it all gets done in 30 minutes. Yes, really. It's a whole new way to collaborate.



# Fun Exercises and Activities During a Strategy Meeting

Breakthrough strategic thinking and laughter *can* go hand-in-hand.

## 7. Provide structure to help people succeed

People enjoy feeling immediately successful when performing a new activity. Using structured strategic thinking exercises and questions take participants off the hook right away for developing strategy from scratch. Great questions lead to productive strategy conversations because they place everyone on equal footing. When considering which exercises to use during a meeting, realize that you'll need to adjust for in-person, virtual, and hybrid settings. Each environment provides different flexibility levels and opportunities to improvise. Do your thinking (and practice) upfront to create the right flow filled with productive strategy exercises.

Fun exercises generate energy in any meeting, even if it's late in the day. These two exercises are proven to help a fatigued group both imagine amazing ideas and get a second wind for more strategy work.



### Pin Prick Your Competitors

In this strategic thinking exercise, participants target a pesky competitor and imagine every way possible to become a complete nuisance for them. This could involve ideas related to making outrageous claims, sharing their dirty little secrets, or implementing new strategies simply to frustrate them.

Ultimately, the ideas you choose must be legal and ethical. Before that point, though, anything is fair game and lots of fun!

### Try Some Shrimp

Brainzooming uses an exercise called *Shrimp* to turn what seem like puny ideas into big stars. Shrimp is perfect for further developing overlooked ideas well into a strategy meeting. First, people select their favorite *weak, bad* or *ignored* ideas from the meeting. We then guide them to exaggerate the ideas in ways that would be sure to offend any and all relevant authority figures. From this extreme point, we pull the ideas back to find the seeds of incredible new ideas participants wouldn't have envisioned otherwise.



**Virtual Tip:** When you move an exercise online, look for ways to simplify the questions so that participants can better focus their ideas. Also, consider multiple steps to complete an exercise that might be only one or two steps when you use it in person. With multiple steps, you can simplify the instructions and tasks participants must complete.



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**Disrupt Your Brand Before Someone Else Does**



THE ULTIMATE NEW FORMULA FOR  
**MAKING STRATEGY PLANNING**  
**FUN AND PRODUCTIVE**



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This new Brainzooming strategy magazine shares all the secrets for making strategy planning fun and productive!

[info.brainzooming.com/fun-productive-strategy](http://info.brainzooming.com/fun-productive-strategy)



# CREATE VARIETY THROUGH DISRUPTION

Dramatically change a traditional strategy meeting's flow to create new and fun ideas. The next page includes our go-to, productive disruptors to spur innovative experiences and thinking.

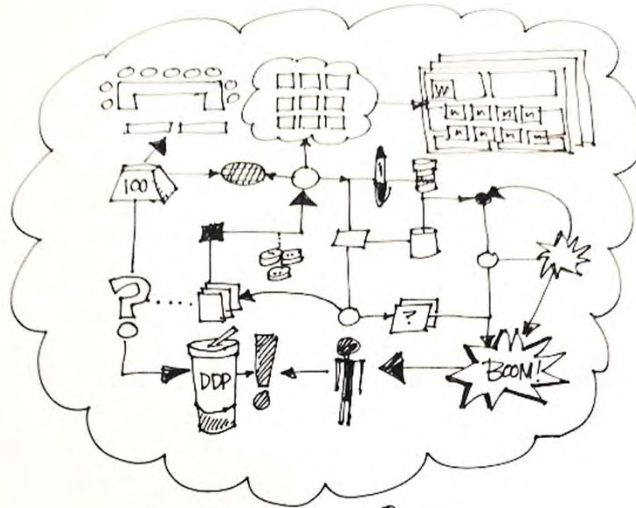
## 8. Accelerate a meeting's speed and variety

Spending long periods thinking about the same strategies from the same perspective leads to a deadly meeting. Make strategic planning exercises fun and more impactful: spend only five or six minutes with an exercise before varying the creative perspective. For the next round, address the same issue from a different customer, competitor, or industry view. Then repeat. You can later let groups build on a previous group's ideas to create more possibilities.

**Virtual Tip:** Put space between rounds of activity when collaborating online. While a group works on a different exercise, organize the output they just completed. This lets them address it more efficiently when they return to it.

## 9. Rearrange working groups

Breaking a large group into smaller groups offers an opportunity for everyone to participate more actively. As things progress, keep varying small groups. Ensure every person has a chance to collaborate with every other person present. Interpersonal variety breaks up the monotony of a boring strategy meeting.



**Hybrid Tip:** In hybrid meetings, anticipate how remote participants can most productively collaborate without technical frustration. When a hybrid meeting is required, look for a common platform that everyone uses to share ideas, whether part of the in-person group or remote.

## 10. Create an interactive competition

Split your whole group into smaller groups and turn strategy work into a competition. Challenge each group to do more than the other groups of whatever it is you need – ideas, variations, scenarios, whatever. Cheer for the winning team, then give everybody another chance to triumph with the next exercise.



**Hybrid Tip:** Some activities are better suited for in-person or virtual settings. If your meeting is hybrid, match the exercises to the right setting. Design for the best participant experience; not everyone has to do the same exercises at the same time!

## 11. Introduce frequent breaks, add fun food and drinks

Schedule short, frequent breaks so people can stand up, move, and even do jumping jacks, stretches, or relaxation techniques. Order fun food for an upcoming break. Anticipating something enjoyable at a break can alleviate tedium and make boring questions seem like stimulating strategy exercises.

**Virtual Tip:** For remote participants, arrange for a special care package of treats to be sent to them in advance and opened at break time.

# Planning a Hybrid Strategy Meeting?

Here Are the Keys to Design It  
for Success and

# FUN

The [sudden imperative in March 2020 to foster collaboration among remote individuals](#) was challenging. Hybrid meetings, where some individuals are together (and expecting in-person dynamics) and others are remote (and *absolutely* needing virtual ways to engage) are even more challenging to make successful.

In our decade-plus in business, Brainzooming clients have requested that we facilitate strategy and innovation collaborations with in-person participants and others joining through phones, video conferences, a laptop computer moved around the room, and a robot navigated by the remote participant.

They all posed challenges for everyone. The main reason? None of these options offered a common platform for all participants to engage in the same way. While extended reality tools emerge all the time, they are still out of reach for most business collaborations.

Determining the right, readily accessible platform for hybrid collaboration is vital. While our previous advice to clients was to avoid hybrid meetings because of the difficulties that are inevitable. Productive hybrid collaboration strategies are essential for strategic and innovative success in group settings.

## 3 Keys for Developing Successful Hybrid Collaborations

What's critical to making hybrid interactions engaging and productive? Here are three important elements to account for:

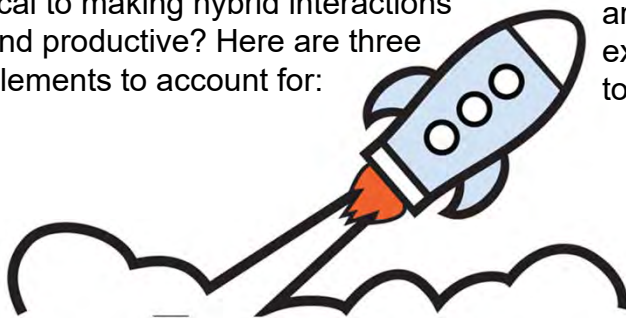
1. A [collaboration platform that puts participants on equal footing](#), disadvantaging neither remote nor in-person participants
2. A way for everyone to gain real-time visibility to the most important inputs and perspectives shared within the collaboration activities
3. Follow-up opportunities for everyone to review, edit, and add to the individual and collective input on their own time

## Designing Cross-Platform Activities

Within a hybrid collaborative meeting, there are other possibilities to vary activities for each group of participants:

- Have in-person and remote participants collaborate separately. The key is for each group to address activities of equal importance and impact that are independent of the other group's simultaneous contributions.
- Create structure for the two groups to work in sequence. When the in-person and remote groups complete their work, the other group works with the output.
- Provide a common format for each team to share overviews of work product. This helps strengthen understanding and the collaboration experience.

Yes, successful and fun hybrid strategy meetings are possible. It's crucial, though, to address the extra thinking, planning, and coordination needed to make them productive and fun, ASAP.



# Question:

## Why IS Brainzooming FUN?

### Answer

**Brainzooming is about abruptly halting the ridiculous cluster that so many business meetings are and actually getting new stuff done innovatively and productively.**

**Plus, you'll feel smart and won't regret coming to work that day.**

Brainzooming explores your situation in targeted, collaborative ways, producing innovative results that turn strategic discussions into marketplace success. The tested Brainzooming Method adapts the right array of strategic and creative tools to:

- Expand your business vision and possibilities
- Quickly turn great ideas into straightforward strategies and tactics
- Clarify and focus your implementation efforts for results



# Your **FUN** Strategy Planning Checklist

Use this checklist to track how you are incorporating fun strategic planning ideas into your meeting. The more ideas you integrate, the greater the opportunities for productivity, time savings, active participation, innovative strategy, and fun.

## Before the Strategy Meeting

1. Find a **meeting space** that is large enough to give people room to move physically and mentally
2. Before the strategy meeting, we're **completing** all the **boring activities** (data lookups, analysis, soliciting opinions, etc.)
3. The meeting agenda is **designed for participant success**, including exercises that invite everyone into strategic thinking and exploration

## Starting the Strategy Meeting

4. The initial activities are **engaging and create fun interaction** among participants
5. We've figured out **alternative ways to share information** without resorting to long, boring presentations.
6. From the meeting's start, exercises and ongoing reminders will **encourage and support bold thinking**

## Throughout the Strategy Meeting

7. The meeting's structure is designed to invite **active collaboration for all participants**
8. We'll be looking at strategic opportunities from **multiple perspectives in short bursts** of activity
9. **Multiple combinations of small groups** are identified to create interaction and accelerate progress through simultaneous participation
10. If it makes sense, use **competitions** to stimulate and incent more thinking and idea sharing
11. The agenda features **plenty of breaks** every 60-to-90 minutes, along with plenty of fun food and beverages

## For Hybrid Strategy Meetings

12. The meeting format, agenda, and collaboration opportunities all **account for productive participants in multiple locations**

If you're struggling to translate these ideas for strategy planning in your less-than-fun culture, email me your questions at [mikeb@brainzooming.com](mailto:mikeb@brainzooming.com). I'm always happy to point you to other resources or share other strategies that we've used successfully. - Mike



# Seriously, are you ready to develop a new corporate or brand strategy?

If you want helpful, results-oriented input on how you're thinking about approaching your organization's strategy, let's schedule a FREE, thirty-minute strategy chat. You'll walk away with a stronger sense of which next steps make the most sense for your organization.

Visit [info.brainzooming.com/lets-chat-about-strategy](http://info.brainzooming.com/lets-chat-about-strategy)

We'll reach out to schedule a time that works for you.



# What is Brainzooming™

THE BRAINZOOMING GROUP

Since launching in 2009, Brainzooming has been consulting to clients across industries. We design and implement engaging, productive, and fun strategy processes; they lead to successful collaborative plans and results.

Clients most frequently ask Brainzooming to develop strategies for their important opportunities in:

- Organizational transformation
- Innovation
- Branding
- Leadership

We offer Brainzooming services and content through:

- Custom engagements in-person, online, and hybrid
- Blast! online collaborations delivering ideas and impact in thirty minutes
- Speaking and training programs, both in-person and online
- Digital books, magazines, courses, articles, and tools that translate the Brainzooming method into DIY resources

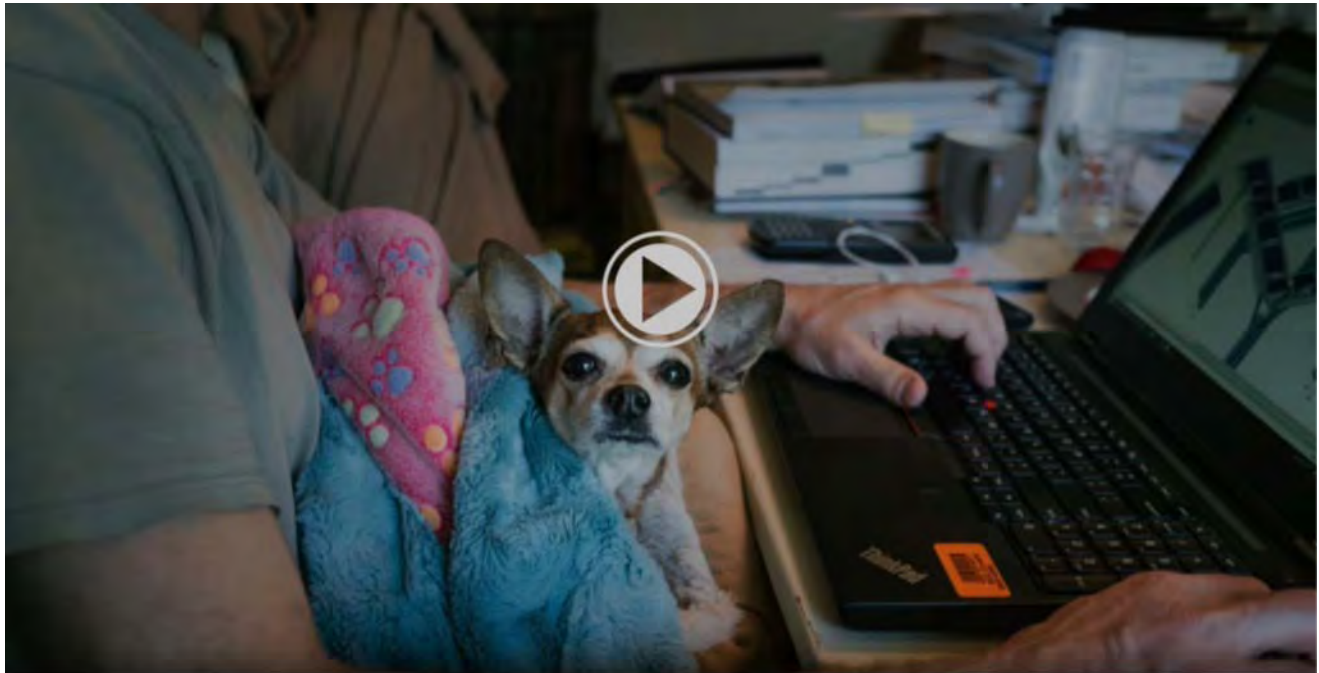
## The Brainzooming Approach to Collaboration

The Brainzooming method and tools emerged from inside a Fortune 500 organization. The result? Our approach makes us the collaborative, results-focused type of partner that you want as a client.

From our first conversation with you, Brainzooming translates your objectives and aspirations into a collaborative process. We are tenacious in delivering your most important outcomes. Through inviting and supporting diverse participants, we'll empower them to positively shape your strategy, implementation, and results.

If you have been searching for a partner who prizes collaboration, diversity, flexibility, learning, results, and fun as much as you do, your search is over. You are ready for Brainzooming!

**brainzooming.com**



There's a new, productive way to collaborate,  
no matter *where* your team is working from.



**Brainzooming**<sup>TM</sup>   
THE BRAINZOOMING GROUP

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