# One-hour Brain Sprint

A simple recipe inspired by the Design Sprint to get the most out of a brainstorming session and to be concise. Created by Sabrina Goerlich.

**Objectives:**
- Effectively generate ideas while avoiding the common pitfalls of regular brainstorming sessions.
- Be concise and timebox all of the exercises to ideate faster.
- The brain sprint aligns a group of creatives and avoids discussions.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>TIME</th>
<th>NAME</th>
<th>DESCRIPTION</th>
<th>ADDITIONAL INFO</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>09:00</td>
<td>Expert Interviews</td>
<td>The expert interview is an exercise from the Design Sprint where we bring the people with specific knowledge into the room. Usually we have the project manager who has spoken to the client as an “expert”, and we suggest to take the design lead in also.</td>
<td>Choose a time limit between 10–15 minutes (depending on the size of the project) and start the interview. The “experts” then explain the briefing and the background, and the team ask questions for clarification, without discussion as yet. The facilitator writes the facts on post-its and sticks them to a “briefing box” on the whiteboard. (No need to turn these into HMW (‘How Might We?’) questions.)</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
| 09:15| User Insights    | Note the facts and stick them.                                              | The “experts” present any reports they have in order to help the team be more aligned to the user point of view. Questions from the team are allowed but still no discussion. The facilitator takes more notes and sticks them into the “briefing box”.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>TIME</th>
<th>NAME</th>
<th>DESCRIPTION</th>
<th>ADDITIONAL INFO</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>09:20</td>
<td>Lightning Demos</td>
<td>The lightning demo is an exercise from the Design Sprint, which is like a short research session: inspire the team with product or services that they may use as an inspiration during the brainstorming.</td>
<td>Everyone takes post-its to write down the name of the inspiring sites/products and relevant ideas or actions; browse the internet or pull up some examples from experience. Stick them to the wall to inspire the others. It’s advisable to have around 2–3 lightning demos. Each team member has max. of 3 minutes to present the examples to the team. Just short explanations and again: no comments yet!</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
| 09:35| Notes            | Generate an initial round of ideas individually.                            | Put on some nice music to level up concentration. Each participant writes ideas on post-its (one idea per post-it) which are stuck on the wall and read aloud so everybody understands. Give 1 minute to each participant for reading. The facilitator can defer judgements on ideas. Some rules to consider:
  - Go for quantity
  - Build on other ideas
  - Defer judgement
  - Encourage wild ideas |
<p>| 09:40| Notes, second turn| Now it’s time to develop upon other ideas or create new ones.               | Participants again write their ideas on post-its. In order not to lose the momentum of the group, be strict with the timing. Each participant presents their ideas in one minute, reading aloud without comments. |
| 09:45| Vote             | Look at all the ideas and get people voting on the most liked ideas.       | Each team member gets 6 sticky dots to vote on the most liked ideas. Participants can vote on their own ideas and can put all sticker dots to one post-it if they really like it. But still respect the rule: No discussion allowed. If there are 3 or 4 people in the team (usually that’s our case) then 3 minutes will be okay. If there are more participants, then you can add one or two minutes. When voting is finished, the post-its are rearranged in order of popularity like a Christmas tree. The note with the most dots goes on the top. This gives a nice overview of the ideas. |</p>
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>TIME</th>
<th>NAME</th>
<th>DESCRIPTION</th>
<th>ADDITIONAL INFO</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>09:48</td>
<td>Wrap-up -&gt; Execution</td>
<td>By the end of the session, you must decide what to do with the ideas. What's the project? Who will the ideas be presented to? We usually divide up the post-its to all the designers in the group and each of them develops a layout. We use the most voted ideas for that and as many ideas as we need. In other cases, it is also possible to add an extra step: (see Concept Sketching)</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
| 10:00  | Concept Sketching (optional) | This is also an exercise from the design sprint, executed in a very compressed way. | First, decide how many ideas are needed, choose the appropriate ideas and begin sketching:  
- For each idea, take a sheet of paper and put on the top a name for the idea to give it a more important aspect.  
- Then rephrase or just copy the idea from the post-it.  
- Add a rectangle below and sketch the idea in a simple and easy way.  
- If preferred, add another colour to decorate, and if necessary, describe in two or three comments what you have drawn.  
- Now the concept sketchings can be shown to others. |

TOTAL LENGTH: 1h 10m

MATERIALS
- Post-it notes x 4 in Expert Interviews | User Insights | Lightning Demos | Notes
- Timer (throughout the session) in Expert Interviews
- Music in Notes
- Sticky dots in Vote
- A4 papers in Concept Sketching (optional)
- Sharpies in Concept Sketching (optional)
## One-hour Brain Sprint - block details

### Expert Interviews

The expert interview is an exercise from the Design Sprint where we bring the people with specific knowledge into the room. Usually we have the project manager who has spoken to the client as an ‘expert’, and we suggest to take the design lead in also.

**ADDITIONAL INFORMATION**

- Choose a time limit between 10–15 minutes (depending on the size of the project) and start the interview.
- The ‘experts’ then explain the briefing and the background, and the team ask questions for clarification, without discussion as yet.
- The facilitator writes the facts on post-its and sticks them to a “briefing box” on the whiteboard. (No need to turn these into HMW (How Might We?) questions.)

**INSTRUCTIONS**

Notes:

*Why we don’t use the HMWs (How Might We questions)?*

Often we get a briefing from the client with lots of facts and tasks. There is no need to turn these into HMW questions. And we want to keep everything from the briefing, even if this means having a broader starting point.

### User Insights

Note the facts and stick them.

**ADDITIONAL INFORMATION**

- The ‘experts’ present any reports they have in order to help the team be more aligned to the user point of view.
- Questions from the team are allowed but still no discussion.
- The facilitator takes more notes and sticks them into the “briefing box”.

**INSTRUCTIONS**

Typical items the experts may present: a user research project, or research the expert did before the sprint, interview with a UX-researcher or anything else that gives some user insights to the team)

### Lightning Demos

The lightning demo is an exercise from the Design Sprint, which is like a short research session: inspire the team with product or services that they may use as an inspiration during the brainstorming.

**ADDITIONAL INFORMATION**

- Everyone takes post-its to write down the name of the inspiring sites/products and relevant ideas or actions: browse the internet or pull up some examples from experience.
- Stick them to the wall to inspire the others. It’s advisable to have around 2–3 lightning demos.
- Each team member has max. of 3 minutes to present the examples to the team. Just short explanations and again: no comments yet!

**INSTRUCTIONS**

Sabrina’s thoughts about the lightning demos:

“Be confident with your experiences and your previous projects. They can be very valuable. Don’t be too stressed in front of the computer, trying to get the best out of the internet. I also like the very short timeframe of 10 Minutes. In this case everybody in my team is complaining and telling me that this is too short, but guess what? It always works.”

### Notes

Generate an initial round of ideas individually.

**ADDITIONAL INFORMATION**
Put on some nice music to level up concentration.

Each participant writes ideas on post-its (one idea per post-it) which are stuck on the wall and read aloud so everybody understands.

Give 1 minute to each participant for reading. The facilitator can defer judgements on ideas.

Some rules to consider:
- Go for quantity
- Build on other ideas
- Defer judgement
- Encourage wild ideas

Put on some nice music to level up concentration.

Now it’s time to develop upon other ideas or create new ones.

ADDITIONAL INFORMATION
- Participants again write their ideas on post-its. In order not to lose the momentum of the group, be strict with the timing.
- Each participant presents their ideas in one minute, reading aloud without comments.

INSTRUCTIONS
Sabrina’s tip for the note & vote:
"Be creative with the note and vote ideation part. In our team we need ideas, very often. Sometimes daily. Most of these ideas we use for ongoing projects, so we shorten the first part to a 5 Minute thing and start directly with the notes. It’s incredible how many ideas your team can produce in a short timeframe!"

Now it’s time to develop upon other ideas or create new ones.

ADDITIONAL INFORMATION
- Each team member gets 6 sticky dots to vote on the most liked ideas.
- Participants can vote on their own ideas and can put all sticker dots to one post-it if they really like it.
- But still respect the rule: No discussion allowed.
  - If there are 3 or 4 people in the team (usually that’s our case) then 3 minutes will be okay. If there are more participants, then you can add one or two minutes.
- When voting is finished, the post-its are rearranged in order of popularity like a Christmas tree. The note with the most dots goes on the top. This gives a nice overview of the ideas.
- Make a high-five to energize the team! That sounds simple but we found out that this basic gesture has a high impact to the team...

By the end of the session, you must decide what to do with the ideas. What’s the project? Who will the ideas be presented to?

ADDITIONAL INFORMATION
- First, decide how many ideas are needed, choose the appropriate ideas and begin sketching:
  - For each idea, take a sheet of paper and put on the top a name for the idea to give it a more important aspect.
  - Then rephrase or just copy the idea from the post-it.
  - Add a rectangle below and sketch the idea in a simple and easy way.
  - If preferred, add another colour to decorate, and if necessary, describe in two or three comments what you have drawn.
• Now the concept sketchings can be shown to others.