



# LOTUS BLOSSOM

Lotus Blossom is a creative thinking technique that will help you to explore ideas beyond your usual way of thinking.

**Suggested time**  
45 minutes

**Materials**  
Lotus Blossom Poster,  
Post-its, pens, flip  
chart

**Participants**  
2-5 (ideally 4)

## GROWTH JOURNEY

1 2 3

Onboarding

Sparring

Innovation

## PERSONAL JOURNEY



The tool helps a group of people to develop ideas in a structured and inclusive setting that allows for mutual inspiration. It offers room for open yet effective brainstorming while bringing a sense of order to the process through its diagrammatic format. Once the brainstorm is finished, it leaves participants with a structured overview of their work. The tool is relevant when you have understood the challenges of the situation your company is in, and formulated these into a question that aim for a new, open direction.

It is of great importance that you choose the right challenge question as a focus of this exercise. Depending on the situation in the company, it can be relevant to explore different dimensions. The importance is that the question contains the challenges and guides us into a world of opportunities. The team who do the poster are ideally mentor, business owner, colleagues, stakeholders (e.g. customer). To reach the highest level of innovation potential, it might be a great idea to separate leaders and employees, if you have invited a team as participants. The two groups work on separate posters, and execute the exercise without interfering each other. After the work is done, the groups share their ideas and reflections. It is also possible to execute this online in the two groups. Eg. using miro where it is possible to import the tool template.

This allows employees to share their thoughts openly in a free way where they do not hold back. Further it allows the leaders to fully listen and explore the minds of their employees. The leaders have the mandate, of course, to choose afterwards, what they prefer.

## STEPS

- 01 | Prepare a large sheet of paper with the Lotus Blossom diagram by printing the template (or drawing it yourself) and hanging it on the wall. Or you can work on it online.
- 02 | Place your central challenge question in the middle. A challenge question always starts with 'How might we...' and turns the problem into a space of opportunities, e.g. How might we ... help patients (the users) to maintain their identity (purpose) while being hospitalised (context)?
- 03 | Choose one person to facilitate the exercise. The facilitator explains the codex of brainstorming and writes it on a flip chart, e.g. (based on brainstorming rules from IDEO).  
Go for quantity  
Defer judgement



Encourage wild ideas

Build on the ideas of others

Stay focused on the topic

One conversation at a time

We are in the open positive modus where critique is not allowed. The facilitator must guide the participants to keep that in mind throughout the exercise to create a constructive and creative work atmosphere.

- 04** | Each participant now approaches the poster on the wall with a pen and a set of post-its. The facilitator must keep the logic of the proposed solutions. Everyone comes up with ideas for the question, writes them down and says them out loud while putting them around the centre.
- 05** | When the 8 squares around the middle are filled, you move the answers to the outer square and rephrase them into questions to dive deeper into the project. Continue until the diagram is full.
- 06** | Now step back and close the exercise by shifting from the open/opportunity-driven mindset to a closed mindset by analysing, evaluating and choosing the best ideas. Sometimes we need shared categories to evaluate the ideas. Choose for instance 3 parameters (e.g. level of value to the company, value to the user etc.) that have to be considered in the concepts. Sometimes a combination of different ideas suddenly appears as the right answer to the question in the middle, hence look for combinations.
- 07** | Revisit the poster another day and start working on the most valuable ideas, e.g. by unfolding the ideas into **Business Model Canvas**, and test them by sharing and getting feedback from different stakeholders, especially the end users.

## FACILITATION TIPS



### SUPPORTING TOOLS

**Business Model Canvas:** To explore the ideas in the context of the company.

**Uniqueness tool:** To test how unique the ideas are.

**Why/Golden Circle tool:** To explore how the ideas fit with the purpose of the company. Or you can find some users and pitch the ideas to collect their early feedback.



### MINDSET

To get everyone in an open modus, and create a space where every voice in the room is equal, it might often be of great value to have each participant spend 15 minutes on their own before meeting in front of the poster.

1. Tell them to individually write down their thoughts on post-its to explore multiple answers to the question.

2. Everyone now gathers by the poster on the wall with their notes in their hand. This will oftentimes increase the quality of the ideas, and especially the introvert people will benefit from having an individual space before starting the group work.

# LOTUS BLOSSOM

Date:

Participants:

