

*Spend two hours well rather than one hour poorly, and you'll reap efficiency, productivity, and positive attitudes as your reward.*



Taking in and absorbing information to be used for brainstorming is a different mental process than using that information to generate ideas.

The first calls for orderly organization of facts to allow the mind to sufficiently understand the objective, resources and parameters for the assignment.

The second calls for “combinatorial play” – Einstein’s term for seeking relationships among various elements of information.

To learn about the three principles and five phases of Think Inside The Box, visit [www.thinkinside.biz](http://www.thinkinside.biz).



**Contact:**

John Armato  
Sacramento  
916-492-5320  
[john.armato@fleishman.com](mailto:john.armato@fleishman.com)

## Before you Brainstorm, Pre-storm

*It's as important — and powerful — to separate the briefing from the brainstorm as it is to separate generating ideas from judging them.*

*Here are four steps to making that happen:*

- 1. Identify, invite, insist.** Select a productive cross-section of thinkers. Collaborate to schedule the best times for both the pre-storm and the brainstorm. Make it clear that people can't participate in one without participating in the other. **Benefit** ➔ Elevates perception of importance of the project and greater personal involvement. The person who attends the pre-storm won't want to feel like they've wasted their time by not seeing it through to the brainstorm.
- 2. Separate the sessions.** Schedule the pre-storm for one to two days in advance of the brainstorm. The time in between is critically important. **Benefit** ➔ Focuses on one mental process at a time. Allows the challenge to sink in. Encourages the subconscious to start working on the problem between sessions.
- 3. Get organized. Get thoughtful. Get military.** Decide on a very specific focus for the brainstorm. Write a concise brief, providing essential information. Deliver your briefing with military-like economy and precision. Make the distinction between the purpose of the pre-storm and the purpose of the brainstorm. Separate the presentation from the question and answer period. **Benefit** ➔ Participants can focus on listening actively and worry only about understanding and absorbing information, without trying to synthesize and convert it into ideas at the same time.
- 4. Make three simple assignments.** Conclude the pre-storm by telling participants to (1) Re-review the written brief before the brainstorm. (2) Raise additional questions that occur to them before the brainstorm. (3) Come to the brainstorm prepared to share at least one idea, observation or insight. **Benefit** ➔ Allows brainstorm to be focused exclusively on idea generation, and provides rapid-fire way to get things started.