



A highly-effective ideation technique for client teams that harnesses the natural gifts and abilities of each participant.

Breakthrough innovation relies on developing discerning insights into complex problems. This challenge demands that those involved generate and utilize their individual perceptions, share them effectively, and shape them into ideas for new-to-world solutions. To this end, StandPoint pioneered an approach to ideation designed to maximize the depth of engagement and the quality of contributions from ideation participants.

Our Quartet method of ideation draws from the principles of Jungian psychology as expressed in the Myers Briggs Type Indicator® (MBTI®). Our methodology derives from a deep understanding of four archetypes and the way each contributes to the ideation process: the Implementers, the Storytellers, the Creatives, and the Problem Solvers.

Research and experience show that the Creative and Problem Solver are best equipped to generate innovative ideas and solutions critical to ideation success. These two archetypes are also in the shortest supply, making up around a quarter of the adult population. Furthermore, within large organizations it's not always practical to limit participation to those who are only the "ideal archetype."

Fortunately, the Quartet process solves these issues. Our approach involves **all four** archetypes in ideation, and it creates the right circumstances where every participant can express creativity and generate ideas.

The Quartet approach begins by archotyping each participant in the ideation workshop. The goal is to harness each person's natural gifts and tailor each session to maximize the most fruitful outcomes based on those involved.

We've also found that profiling and explaining how each person can contribute to ideation yields multiple benefits: (1) it keeps counterproductive behaviors in check, (2) it reassures everyone that they will have something to contribute, and (3) it empowers people to use their natural gifts and abilities.

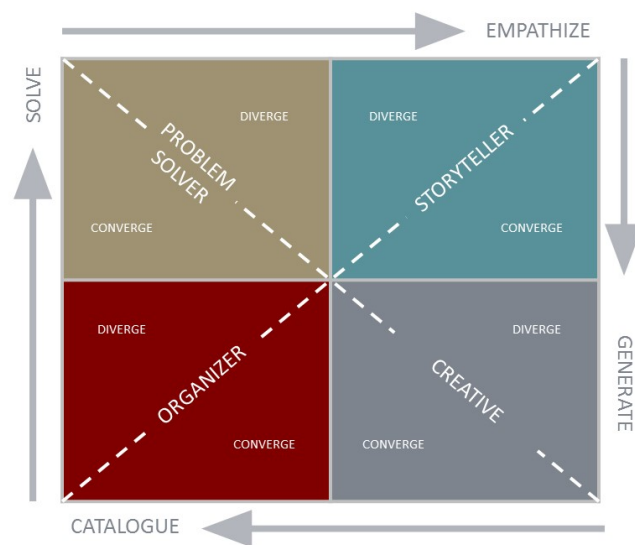
The challenge in orchestrating this kind of ideation session is that each archetype demonstrates a competing set of needs and abilities in a group setting.

For example:

- One of the most counterproductive behaviors we see in ideation is the "shutting down" of certain archetypes during typical ideation. Storytellers will not engage fully in the process unless they immediately see the "human side" of the exercise: how it will help others, what their problems might be, and why they themselves are essential to the process.

- By the same token (and somewhat ironically), because Creatives are often quietly processing during a noisy ideation they sometimes get shut out of the process! We make sure to engage them throughout the group’s work to maximize the value of their input.
- Implementers are highly sensory people, grounded in current reality. They often have a tough time disengaging from their immediate sensory input to imagine something they cannot see, hear, smell, or feel, and are most likely to see the reasons why something won’t work from a purely practical perspective. By keeping their impulses in check and refocusing them on task completion, their overall experience and input improve.
- Finally, the Problem Solver’s natural critical bent must also be kept in check, focused on possibilities rather than on potential fallbacks in thinking.

Quartet’s 4-step framework systematically addresses the needs and gifts of each archetype in a manner that optimizes each archetype’s input and engagement to maximize the collective output of breakthrough ideas.



The four-steps of Quartet’s sequence—**Empathize, Generate, Catalogue, and Solve**—ignite the archetypes in the following order: Storyteller, Creative, Implementer, and Problem Solver. Within each step, both divergent and convergent exercises are utilized to mirror the necessary and natural balance between open-ended thinking and analysis.

- **EMPATHIZE.** We purposefully engage the Storytellers first since they can help build momentum for the entire session. The empathy transfer at the beginning of ideation is essential to their successful participation. The **Empathize** step opens the ideation process with a structured overview of the key insights, beliefs, and conditions that frame up the opportunity. After breakout groups discuss the benefits an innovation can bring to the end user (diverge), high-level benefits are reported back to the larger group

to be organized (converge.) We then ask Storytellers to take on the role as “voices of the end user” throughout the entire sequence.

- **GENERATE.** At the **Generate** phase, we push teams to produce novel ideas based on the high-level benefits generated in the first step. Advance identification of archetypes ensures we identify the Creatives in the room so we can cultivate their contributions throughout this process. By this point, Creatives have already begun to generate possibilities, and we use a number of activities specifically designed to engage others in accessing their own creative energy as well. Teams may go through several rounds of idea generation (divergent), briefly taking stock of what has been generated thus far (converge) before pushing on to another round of divergent thinking.
- **CATALOGUE.** Led by Implementers who naturally group ideas by their purpose or goal, participants pause during the **Catalogue** step to organize ideas into logical buckets (converge), then follow the cataloguing of ideas with an open discussion of those ideas most likely to succeed (diverge). There are several tools at our disposal to aid this process.
- **SOLVE.** Finally, the **Solve** step is the point during the ideation session at which participants move from idea capture to concept generation. Breakout groups generate preliminary concepts (diverge), then report back their first pass ideas for group discussion (converge), repeating the process as time allows. Problem Solvers, with their natural gift of conceptual thinking, shine during this phase of ideation, and we try to ensure each breakout group has at least one Problem Solver.

If the facilitator thinks that additional ideas can be generated, the 4-step process can be repeated.

Defining Characteristics of Quartet

Below is some additional information about how our ideation process works.

TeamBuilder. Each archetype has specific needs to function well within a group setting and excels at different tasks. Knowing the cognitive archetype for each participant gives us additional insight on how to better manage the activities in the ideation session.

We use our proprietary **TeamBuilder** tool to type each participant. The assessment can be completed online in less than 10 minutes. Each person privately receives an archetype classification and a profile identifying his or her primary strengths and preferences. In many respects, this opportunity for self-discovery is an effective way to encourage the most productive behaviors and thought processes for ideation.

Priming Activities. A key shortcoming of traditional ideation is that participants arrive at an ideation session lacking sufficient context and knowledge to contribute optimally. To remedy

this situation, we typically engage participants in advance of the ideation session, “priming the pump” by sharing with them “starter ideas” that may have emerged from our prior research.

When such information and objectives are shared in advance, participants’ brains will naturally begin to process them, and participants arrive ready to engage.

Once participants arrive, and before we begin the first step (Empathize) of the Quartet sequence, we provide an overview of the Quartet model, briefly discuss the four archetypes, and explain in general the roles each archetype has throughout the ideation process. Some archetypes find ideation uncomfortable, and we take this opportunity to explain why this might be so. We also assign familiar roles for each archetype so they feel a part of the process from the beginning, and we also discuss general expectations for participants, thereby alleviating the pressure some may feel to “perform” in ways unfamiliar to them.

Maximizing Processing and Engagement. Having a variety of activities is very important in ideation to activate both divergent and convergent thinking processes in the ideal sequence. Our brains are most activated when we share or teach others what we know. As such, most listening and writing activities are accompanied by both paired sharing activities and group processing.

Achieving a Successful Outcome

Done right, the Quartet framework can result in many ideas (50-100 is common) and a handful of solid preliminary concepts (10-25.) Yet we also know that without proper guardrails in place, the ideation process can “go into left field” quickly.

The Quartet process addresses this challenge directly: first, by initially defining a set of insights and opportunity areas as the basis for the session; second, by consistently balancing the divergent, creative nature of the process with a convergent, analytical element; and third, by making sure that the session concludes by honing preliminary ideas and groups of possibilities into firmer concepts.

From beginning to end, Quartet is a highly-effective alternative to the traditional ideation sessions. We have several case studies that demonstrate the effectiveness of this approach. By using the right people and the right process, we can ensure that your ideation team will perform at maximum potential.

For more information on Quartet, please contact Kip Creel at kcreel@standpointgroup.com or at (770) 270-4800.

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