

Tech-free meetings improve ideation

More and more research is surfacing that indicates that technology hurts your ability to understand and process important information.

The next time you conduct a brainstorming or problem-solving session, follow these tips to encourage deep thinking:

- **Unplug.** Forgo the technology and instead hand out pencils and paper, and ask attendees to take notes, sketch pictures, draw mind maps and so on. They will be less distracted by images and sounds and more focused on problem solving and idea generation.
- **Answer a few basic questions.** People can get bogged down by the details. As a team, work together to nail down the most basic aspects of a project or idea. Once you have those figured out, then move on to the details.
- **Focus on the customer.** Ask: “Who is our customer?” Break into small groups and spend 10 minutes answering the question. Then reconvene to compare the group’s answer and write a single description you all agree on.

— Adapted from “[The Benefits of Unplugging as a Team](https://hbr.org),” Zachary First, *Harvard Business Review*, <https://hbr.org>.