

Borrowed Brilliance for Individuals

Exercise Owner's guide

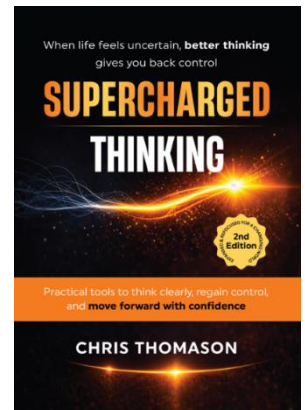
Your role

You are the Owner of the question. Your role isn't to gather opinions, but to engineer better thinking on something that matters to you. You define the question, select the people, structure the thinking, and decide what to do with the output. This is an engineered thinking process and should be treated as such.

Step 1: Select your Brilliance Group (5 – 7 people)

Choose people who think differently, will take the task seriously, and are capable of independent thought. Avoid relying only on the usual voices. Aim for a mix of roles, levels, and perspectives, and consider including one or two unusual thinkers – if that would strengthen the range of thinking.

Each participant needs their own copy of the *Supercharged Thinking* book – which is the thinking toolkit they'll use repeatedly for you. It's best for them to buy it themselves and you refund them, as this increases their commitment to the process. Share the downloadable Participant Thinking guide with them in advance.



Step 2: Define a meaningful question

The quality of the outcome depends on the quality of the question you pose – the toolkit gives more guidance and refers to these as *killer questions*. Choose something important, specific, and worth thinking about. If the issue doesn't matter, the thinking won't either.

Sometimes, phrasing a question that is slightly ambiguous allows participants to interpret it in different ways – which can be valuable for providing you with completely fresh perspectives.

If you have a killer question that is really big and bold, consider breaking it down into a series of sub-questions and pose those as separate processes, then combine the answers to address the main issue at hand. At the end of this guide are some example killer questions for you.

Step 3: Set the conditions

Be clear that this is not a meeting and there's no group discussion during the thinking phase. Each person works independently, using their own best thinking time and environment. Set a clear timeframe, typically three to five days.

Step 4: Assign thinking approaches

Each person should use a different thinking mechanism from the Supercharged Thinking toolkit. This is useful to ensure you aren't collecting similar views, but instead deliberately creating cognitive diversity through structured approaches. To allow latitude, you can allow participants to use the tools they feel most comfortable with.

Step 5: Define the output

You're looking for fresh thinking and don't need the obvious ideas that you've considered before. So, ask each participant to submit ideas that are different, yet practical to do. You may ask for their top three ideas only, including one uncomfortable insight, and one action they would take immediately. You can vary this to suit your needs as the owner but keep submissions concise – but clear. You aren't looking for business cases here!

Step 6: Review and respond

This is where value is either created or lost. Review all inputs properly, identify patterns and standout ideas, and decide what you'll act on. Then respond to the group by acknowledging contributions, sharing what you'll use, and explaining what you won't use and why. This creates a psychological return on their thinking effort.

Step 7: Make outcomes visible

Where possible, make outcomes visible by showing what ideas are being used, what actions are being taken, and where contributions have made a difference. People should be able to see a clear link between their thinking, impact, and recognition.

Final note

This isn't brainstorming, discussion, or a one-off exercise. Used properly, it becomes a repeatable way to solve important problems, develop your people, and raise the overall quality of thinking in your business.

***When people feel uncertain, they disengage.
When they feel invested in, they contribute more.***

Example killer questions (using a small business situation)

A typical killer question:

- ✓ *How could we increase revenue from our existing customers over the next 6 months without increasing our marketing spend?*

This is specific, commercially relevant, and constrained. It gives people a clear target and focuses thinking on practical outcomes.

An ambiguous killer question:

- ✓ *What could we change that would make the biggest positive difference to our business over the next 12 months?*

This allows interpretation. Different people may approach it from different angles e.g. customers, operations, people, pricing, or strategy. That variation is where the value comes from.

A big and bold with killer question suggested sub-questions:

- ✓ *How could we double the value of this business within the next three years without doubling effort or cost?*

This is intentionally ambitious and shouldn't be attempted directly – so it needs to be broken down into sub-questions that are answered as elements of the bigger question:

- *Where are we currently underperforming our potential, and what would it take to close that gap?*
- *What would we need to stop, simplify, or remove to free up capacity for higher-value activity?*
- *What new opportunities or directions could significantly increase value if we pursued them now?*