

Figure 2.10: Success Tool—Nominal Group Technique

Instructions: Use the following protocol to guide a group meeting on making a decision, such as determining the highest-priority improvement need. What performance factors need to be prioritized?

1. Explain the purpose of the meeting and the goals of equal participation and active engagement for all. For example, to set norms for the group, explain that the purpose is to develop norms that have been co-created by all who will be following them.
2. Request that each participant silently write down their ideas. Encourage at least three or more ideas per person. Ask for short ideas in a verb-noun format, such as "Respect opinions."
3. Guide structured recording by having each participant verbally share one idea at a time, in a round-robin format, without repeating an idea that has already been shared. Post the ideas on a flip chart, whiteboard, or virtual tool. Do not allow discussion of the ideas, but allow participants to ask for clarification. Another option is for participants to write their ideas on separate sticky notes and add one idea at a time to chart paper. If one of their ideas is already there, they should pick another one. This option takes away any apprehension about sharing verbally in front of a group.
4. Facilitate the participants to combine any ideas they see as being similar enough to form a single idea.
5. Allow each participant to contribute three votes by placing check marks, stickers, or other marks by the ideas they rank as most important. They may distribute their votes among three ideas, give two votes to one idea and one vote to another, or give all three to one idea. Direct them to all vote at the same time so they are focused on their votes and not on how others are voting.
6. Tally the votes, posting the number of votes each idea received.
7. Vote again, allowing each participant two votes for the ideas that received two or more votes.
8. Tally the votes, capturing the ideas that received the most votes.
9. Allow one minute per person for anyone who wishes to advocate for an idea, if you desire.
10. Vote again, allowing each person to vote for the ideas on the list with the most votes.
11. Record the ideas with the most votes, eliminating those that received no votes in this round.
12. Present the list to the group, as well as any next steps to be taken.

Source: Adapted from Delbecq, A. L., Van de Ven, A. H., & Gustafson, D. H. (1975). Group techniques for program planning: A guide to nominal group and Delphi processes. Foresman.