



Evaluate Options | Stormdraining Tool

The inverse of Brainstorming, Stormdraining aims to reduce a large collection of ideas, activities, or components to a smaller collection of the most valuable or promising ideas.

WHEN

Use Stormdraining:

- After a brainstorming session or when a team confronts a high level of complexity
- When a team has a lot of ideas and no clear sense of direction.
- When a team's activities lack prioritization or focus.
- When a team has conflicting ideas about the project's priorities.

WHY

- Provide clarity and build consensus about the problem to be solved.
- Facilitate prioritization and focus.
- Reduce wasted effort and misaligned, unproductive activities.

HOW

As a group, assemble a large collection of ideas, requirements, design components, process steps, or other design elements. This may be an existing collection or the result of a fresh brainstorming session.

Invite the team to distill the large collection into a smaller, more focused set. Remove items from the collection by using the following Five Rules of Stormdraining:

RULE 1. *Everything Is on the Table.* No sacred cows, please. Every single item is fair game for going down the drain.

RULE 2. *Delete Is the Default.* Turn the pencil around and make liberal use of the eraser. Not sure if something should be deleted? Only one way to find out...

RULE 3. *Build on Other People's Deletions.* Your teammate's suggestion to remove one thing likely points to other parts to remove. The objective is to reduce quantity and hone in on the essentials, so practice "Yes, and..."

RULE 4. *Make It Fun.* Celebrate and encourage the deletions. Compliment people's creativity and courage when they propose sending something down the drain.

RULE 5. *When You Delete Something, Really Delete It.* Don't set it aside and save it for posterity. Don't take a photo to preserve the moment. Erase it. Drain it. Make it go away.

