

## Barriers Game Frame

This game frame is especially effective for identifying and solving problems. Participants brainstorm possible problems they may face in trying to implement something new. Whether you are trying to switch to a team approach in your company or implementing a new technology, or trying to solve a series of problems related to intercultural conflicts, this game frame can move a group to action.

Problems are prioritized and the highest priority problems are identified. Each problem is described on a separate envelope. The envelopes are passed between teams and the teams generate possible solutions. Finally, the possible solutions are evaluated and the top solutions are selected for each problem. Action plans can then be prepared. The goals for this framegame are:

- to identify and prioritize problems associated with a change or process improvement.
- to suggest alternative solutions for removing or reducing these problems.

<b>Time:</b>	45 – 60 minutes.
<b>Materials:</b>	1. Flipchart & markers 2. Envelopes 3. Blank index cards
<b>Group Size</b>	3-5 people
<b>How many groups?</b>	Same number as problems to be resolved.

**Procedure:**

<b>1. Team formation</b>	Divide participants into teams of 3-5 people each (You need at least three teams to conduct this activity).
<b>2. Briefing teams</b>	This activity is designed to help participants identify and prioritize problems associated with a change - a shift from how things were to a new way - and to develop strategies for removing or reducing these problems.
<b>3. Initial brainstorming</b>	Explain that the teams are to brainstorm and to list other possible problems associated with the shift. Ask each team to brainstorm for five minutes and to prepare a list of five critical problems.
<b>4. Generating a common list</b>	Ask the teams to take turns calling out one of its problems. Prepare a common list on a flipchart. Suggest that the teams avoid redundant items. Continue this procedure until the flipchart contains about 10 problems.
<b>5. Prioritization</b>	Ask each team member to select the most likely problem from the common list and to write down its number. Tabulate by a showing of hands how many people voted for each problem on the flip chart. Check off the top problem. Repeat the process. Everyone writes down the next most important problem. Again tabulate the results and check off the second problem. Continue until your group feels they have their top 3-4 problems. During this process, if there is a tie among problems, do not check off any problem for that round. Ask each team to take a minute to explain its rationale for the choice of that particular problem before proceeding to another round of voting.
<b>6. Generating problem envelopes</b>	Write the top problems on the face of different envelopes. Distribute one envelope to each team. Ask the participants to study the problem statement on the envelope and to come up with criteria for evaluating alternative solutions. Announce a time limit for this activity (3 minutes). Ask the teams to write down their criteria on a separate sheet of paper.
<b>7. First solution.</b>	At the end of the time limit, ask each team to pass its problem envelope to the next team. As the teams to study the problem and to come up with a suitable solution. Announce an appropriate time limit (3 minutes) and ask each team to write down its solution on one side of a 3x5 card.

<p><b>8. Continuation.</b></p>	<p>At the end of the time limit, ask the teams to put the solution cards inside the problem envelopes and to pass them to the next team. Each team now reads the new problem and (without looking at the solution inside the envelope) comes up with its own solution with the prescribed time limit.</p>
<p><b>9. Repeat this procedure</b></p>	<p>until the problem envelopes return to the original teams (which had earlier set up the criteria for evaluating alternative solutions).</p>
<p><b>10. Evaluating solutions.</b></p>	<p>Ask the teams to open the envelopes and to review the solution cards. Each team compares the different solutions to the same problem and distributes 100 points among them to reflect their relative merits. Ask the teams to write the points on the back of each card.</p>
<p><b>11. Final announcements.</b></p>	<p>Ask each team to read the problem statement on the envelope and the solution cards in increasing order of points, ending up with the best solution. When all teams have done this, have them retrieve their solution cards and add up the points awarded to them. The team with the highest score is given an award for being the most creative problem solvers.</p>