

Nesta...

Divergence & Convergence diamond

Developing and testing



RESOURCE

What

Successful idea generation and selection requires individuals and teams to switch between two modes. The first - the divergent mode - is about opening up multiple possibilities by suspending judgment. The second - the convergent mode - is about evaluating possible options and making selections and decisions so the project can progress. The divergence and convergence diamond can help teams to be explicit about which mode they need to be operating in at different stages of a project and the attitudes and behaviours they need to adopt in each mode.

Why

Too much time in a divergent mode generates lots of ideas but no action; too much time in the convergent mode may result in other better options being left undiscovered. A lack of clarity about which mode you are operating in can breed frustration as some team members might still be in idea generation mode while others are racing ahead to evaluating and selecting ideas.

How

The diamond can be incorporated into project planning or into teams' operating processes to ensure adequate time and attention is paid to each phase. It can also be used in facilitation exercises to signal when it is time for opening up possibilities and when it is time for making choices and moving on.

DIVERGENCE & CONVERGENCE DIAMOND

Activities

- Open up thinking and suspend judgement
- Explore options
- Involve lots of people
- Generate lots of ideas
- Investigate more than one possibility

Activities

- Agree priorities
- Set criteria for selection
- Assess the quality of ideas and visibility of options
- Make decisions and selections
- Take a select set of options to the next stage

decision gate

Open up possibilities

DIVERGENCE

Attitudes and behaviours

- Exploratory
- Questioning
- Creative
- Open
- Inclusive

Make selections and decisions

CONVERGENCE

Attitudes and behaviours

- Evaluative
- Questioning
- Critical
- Selective
- Decisive

decision gate