

Lightning Workshop: Priority Alignment

Facilitation Script

2 hours

5 min Introduction

Welcome participants and set context. Explain the session goal and the process. Establish psychological safety by noting all ideas are valid and that disagreement is healthy.

OPENING

"Thanks for being here. In the next two hours, we're going to move from a scattered list of potential priorities to a focused set of 3-5 things we're actually going to commit to. By the end, we'll know not just what's important, but who owns what and what happens next week."

PROCESS OVERVIEW

"We'll start with silent brainstorming so everyone's voice gets heard equally. Then we'll cluster similar ideas together, plot them on a matrix to see what's truly high-priority and achievable, and finally vote and discuss to land on our commitments."

10 min Silent Brainstorm

Give each participant a stack of sticky notes and a marker. Ask them to write one potential priority per note. Encourage quantity over quality. No discussion during this phase.

PROMPT

"Think about what our team should focus on in the coming *[timeframe]*. What's important? What's urgent? What would make the biggest difference? One idea per sticky note, as many notes as you want. Work silently for the next 10 minutes."

20 min Affinity Clustering

Have participants post all stickies on the wall. Ask the group to silently organize them into clusters of similar themes. Then collaboratively name each cluster.

TRANSITION

"Now everyone post your stickies on the wall. Once they're up, let's silently move them into groups of similar ideas. If you see two that belong together, move them. If someone moves yours and you disagree, that's okay, we'll discuss."

NAMING

"Now let's give each cluster a name. What's the theme here? Let's capture it on a blue sticky at the top of each group."

25 min Importance/Difficulty Matrix

Draw a 2x2 matrix with Importance (low to high) on the Y-axis and Difficulty (low to high) on the X-axis. Have the group place each cluster on the matrix through discussion.

SETUP

"Now we're going to place each cluster on this matrix. The vertical axis is importance: how much does this matter to our success? The horizontal axis is difficulty: how hard is this to accomplish with our current resources and constraints?"

FACILITATION

"Let's take *[cluster name]*. Where would you place it on importance? *[Discussion]* And on difficulty? *[Discussion]* Okay, I'm placing it here. Anyone want to adjust?"

10 min

BREAK

30 min Dot Voting + Discussion

Give each participant 5 dot stickers. Ask them to vote on items in the high-importance zone (top half of matrix). Then facilitate discussion on the top vote-getters to select 3-5 final priorities.

VOTING

"You each have 5 dots. Place them on the items in the top half of the matrix, the high-importance zone, that you think should be our priorities. You can put multiple dots on one item if you feel strongly."

DISCUSSION

"Looking at the votes, *[item]* has the most. Let's discuss: Does this feel right? What would it mean to make this a top priority? Any concerns?"

10 min Commitment Round

For each selected priority, identify an owner and one concrete next step due within the next week.

OWNERSHIP

"For each of our selected priorities, we need an owner. This isn't the person who does all the work, just the person who makes sure it moves forward. Who's willing to own *[priority]*?"

NEXT STEPS

"What's one concrete action that can happen in the next 7 days to move this forward? Who will do it?"

10 min Wrap-up

Photograph all outputs. Do a quick checkout. Confirm how outputs will be shared and when the group will reconvene.

CHECKOUT

"Let's go around quickly: in one sentence, what's your takeaway from today?"

CLOSE

"I'll photograph everything and send a summary by *[date]*. We'll check in on progress at *[next meeting]*. Thank you for your focus and honesty today."