Tool: Lotus Diagram

The lotus diagram is a visual graphic organizer used as an analytical tool for breaking broad topics into components. These components or subtopics can then be subdivided. While it is similar to a mind map, it is more linear and structured and uses a numbering system for the subtopics.

The lotus diagram process is used when teams or individuals need a process for organizing and prioritizing components of a larger whole—for example, when solving a problem, when conducting research, or when analyzing a topic.

Examples:

• Preparation for starting a project or research
• Analyzing major components of an article, book, video, or other media
• Devising strategies for implementation

Template:

For individuals, lotus diagrams work best on an 8 1/2" X 11" worksheet. A larger version is necessary for teams so that everyone can see and participate in the formation. These include large chart paper or whiteboards. If they are used digitally for distributed teams there are various options online including using color-coded blocks.

Tasks and Techniques for Using the Lotus Diagram

1. Choose a topic and clearly state it.
   “What are the main components of project XYZ?”

2. Use any of the following techniques to focus and prioritize the major topics: brain writing, affinity clustering, nominal group technique, or multi-voting process, focus and prioritize the major topics.

3. Write the main topic in the center rectangle of the lotus diagram. Sometimes this can be in the form of a question.

4. Place each of the subtopics (or responses to the question) in the rectangles surrounding the center rectangle. The lotus diagram can take up to eight subtopics.

5. Transfer each of the subtopics to its corresponding numbered rectangle and brainstorm more subtopics or applications.
**Tips for Using the Lotus Diagram:**

Once you have the initial outline with the two levels, subtopics can become main topics on a new lotus diagram if further analysis is needed. It is suggested to use a numbering system to clearly show the subtopic connection—for example when subtopic 2 is the center label then subtopics become 2.1, 2.2, 2.3, and so forth.

**Takeaways for the Lotus Diagram:**

- They work well for individual or group projects.
- They are spatial and interactive.
- They promote logical, creative thinking.
- They promote prioritizing for action.
- It requires active brain writing and analysis from all individuals involved.
- It creates an automatic recording device for information.
- It provides an effective communication tool.

**References for Lotus Diagram:**


Video: [https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=uw3_Qs3HAGE](https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=uw3_Qs3HAGE)