



# VIS-IT® SOLUTIONS TRAINING DOCUMENT

## YOUR FIRST MEETING WITH VIS-IT HEXAGONS

This training document includes the following sections:

- Preparation
- State the Purpose of the Session
- Focus Thinking and Provide Quiet Time
- Generate and Capture Ideas
- Arrange Ideas in Groupings
- Create a Synthesis Idea for Each Cluster
- Capture Additional Ideas
- Connect Ideas
- Evaluate the Session and Decide on Next Steps
- Implement Ideas

### **Preparation**

Print out THE SIX STEPS summary found on VIS-IT Free Training web page and bring it to the meeting. It provides you with a step-by-step guide to the method.

Have enough hexagons available to capture everyone's ideas. We suggest at least two colors, red to capture "hot" ideas, and yellow or blue to capture all of the others.

An ideal surface for posting hexagons is a clean white board. Flip chart paper on easels works very well, too. Glass windows or the backs of doors can also be used.

Be prepared to write clearly in 1-inch to 1 ½-inch high block letters on the hexagons. Mr. Sketch™ markers work very well.

Conduct the session in a well-lit room, requiring no one to be more than 25 feet from the hexagon posting surface.

Arrange the participants in a semi-circular or u-shaped seating arrangement, making sure everyone can see each other, but leaving room for the facilitator to move easily to the posting surface.

### **State the Purpose of the Session**

Once all participants are together, explain the purpose of the session. It might be stated as: "Our purpose is to arrive at, and understand, ideas that, when

implemented, will improve the performance of our organization.” Then add: “To help us, we are going to use some new idea processing activities, involving these multi-color VIS-IT hexagons.”

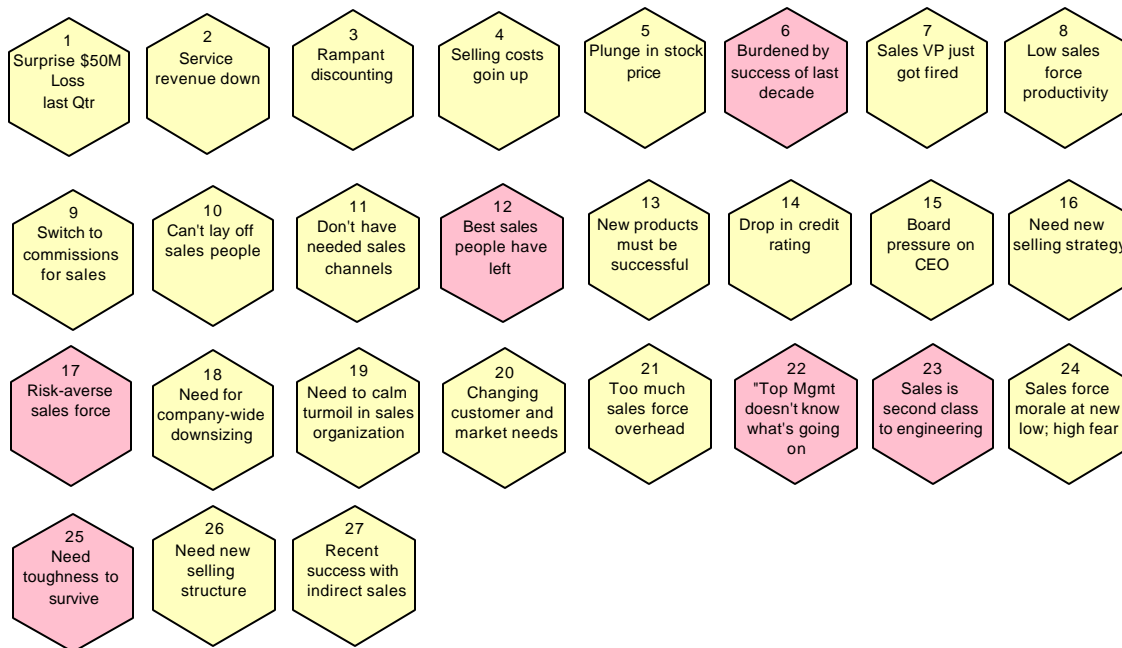
## Focus Thinking and Provide Quiet Time

Near the posting surface, the facilitator writes, and then reads aloud, the Focus Question for the session. For example: “What are the most important issues facing the sales organization today?” Then, the facilitator instructs the attendees: “Take the next five minutes or so to **quietly** think about the question, and then list, on a private note pad, what you believe are the most important ideas or issues related to the question. Do not discuss them with others now.”

## Generate and Capture Ideas

When the quiet reflection time is up, the facilitator will ask each person, in turn, to state **just one** of their ideas that has not already been mentioned by someone else, and to offer a brief (minute or less) explanation of why it is important. Then, after listening to the response, the facilitator will write a “headline phrase” of usually up to seven words that captures the idea as accurately as possible on a sequentially numbered hexagon. If an idea expresses a highly emotional issue or idea, then write it on a red hexagon. Red hexagons offer people the permission to express important ideas that otherwise might not be addressed. Continue in a round robin fashion, capturing just one idea at a time, until all ideas have been captured. See the example below.

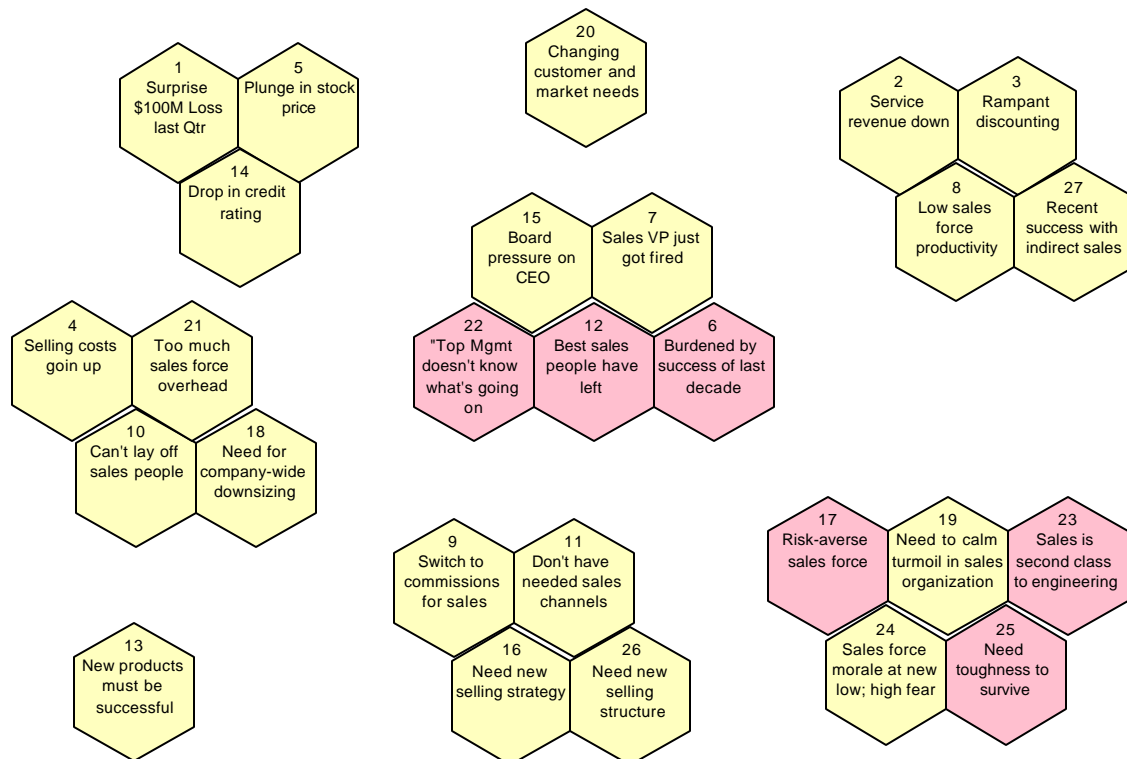
Focus Question: What are the most important issues facing the company today?



## Arrange Ideas in Groupings

Invite the group to take a moment to look over all the ideas that have been posted. You can expect to have about one idea per minute spent in the idea capture process. Then, invite the group to suggest how the ideas should be arranged into groupings of ideas that belong together. The facilitator might say: "Which hexagons do you think should be grouped together because they have strongly associated meanings?" In response, someone might say, "I think ideas 1 and 5 belong together because they have to do with our financial condition." This process should go relatively quickly. The purpose is make a first pass at seeing similarities, differences and relationships between ideas. See the example of groupings below.

**Focus Question: What are the most important issues facing the company today?**



## Create a Synthesis Idea for Each Cluster

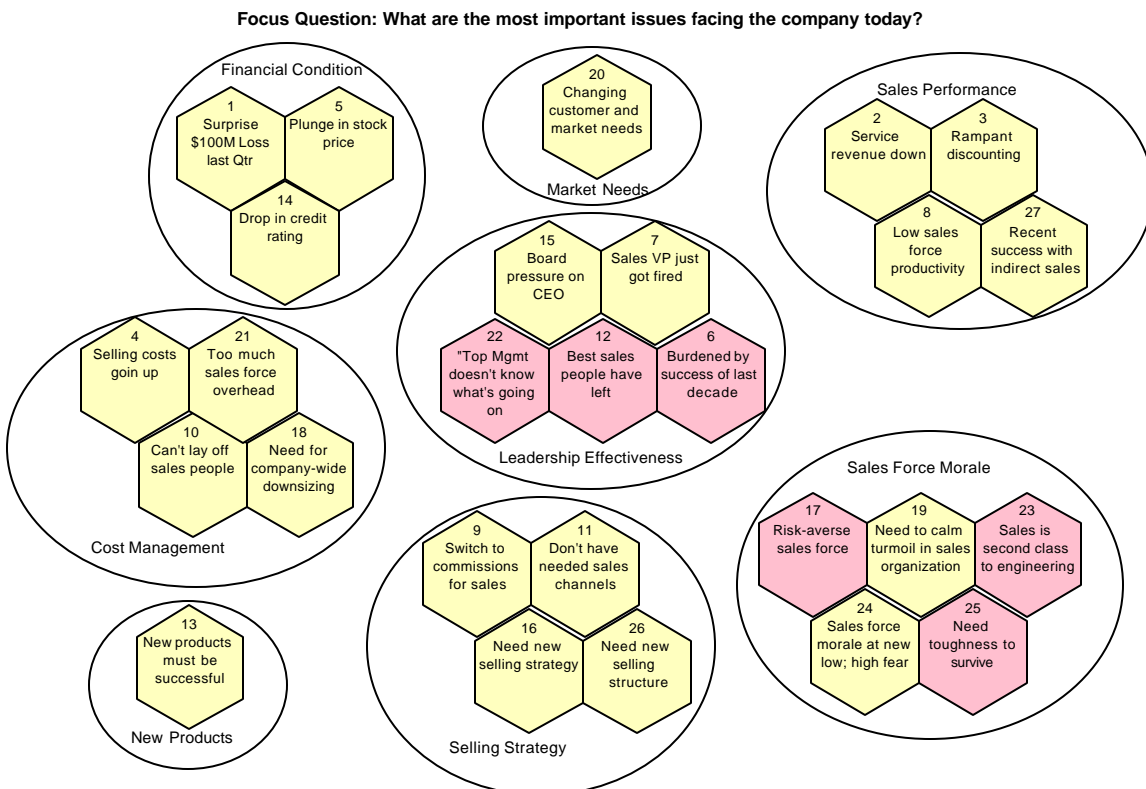
Initiate the clustering process after all of the hexagons have been arranged in generalized but unnamed groupings on the posting surface. Starting with one of the groupings, the facilitator will ask the people to respond to questions like: "What word or short phrase expresses the theme, common thread, or concept that ties the ideas in this set of hexagons together?" This phrase will become the cluster's label. Once the cluster label is decided on, the facilitator will draw a

circle around the cluster, including the label within the circle. **TIP:** Some facilitators write the cluster label on a blue or green hexagon so that it can be moved around easily, too.

### Capture Additional Ideas

In the idea arrangement activity, expect that many hexagons will change places, from one cluster to another, as relationship themes are explored and challenged. As this occurs, the synthesis idea will begin to emerge more clearly. Further, new responses to the focus question, not mentioned before, will also emerge from these conversations, and these ideas should be captured and numbered sequentially, too.

The output of the clustering and labeling steps are Cluster Labels that represent core issues and opportunities that need to be addressed by the participants or others within the organization. At this point, the group has likely achieved a two-fold purpose for the session: (1) the creation of a shared understanding, and (2) the development and identification of a Critical Issues Agenda for further attention. See the clustering results below.



### Connect Ideas

Write each cluster label on a different color hexagon, and then arrange them on a new posting space in similar relationship to the original clusters, leaving plenty of space between them. Now the facilitator invites the group to assist in drawing

arrows from one cluster label to another to indicate how each cluster label might have a causal influence on any other cluster label. Examine each cluster label in turn. Avoid two-headed arrows. This activity moves the group into the practice of Systems Thinking. See the Causal Loop Diagram Technique for more details.

### **Evaluate the Session and Decide on Next Steps**

At this point, the group has likely identified the core issues, and, perhaps some strategies for dealing with the Critical Issues. Thus, the group can evaluate how well it achieved the purpose of the session, and then identify Next Steps, posted on green hexagons

### **Implement Ideas**

The next steps might involve assigning individuals or team to develop action plans and/or implement change. The important thing is that the group agrees on what to do following the session.

### **ABOUT VISION WORKS**

Vision Works, LLC is the creator of the VIS-IT™ Line of facilitation and thinking tools including FlowShapes™, 6" Hexagons, Jumbo Hexagons, Mini Hexagons, Big Idea Pads, and the Great Big Idea Pad. Vision Works serves a rapidly growing customer base including facilitators, trainers, consultants, managers and executives working in some of the world's largest and most innovative organizations.

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