

Cover Story

Introduction

Cover Story is a game about pure imagination. In line with the E Week India theme 'Ideas for India', this exercise helps to identify and face India's biggest challenges and find solutions for the same.

The objective of the game needs participants to suspend all disbelief and pretend as though this future has already taken place and it has been reported by mainstream media.

This game is worth playing because it not only encourages people to think big, but it actually plants the seeds for a future that perhaps wasn't possible before the game was played.

Learning Objectives

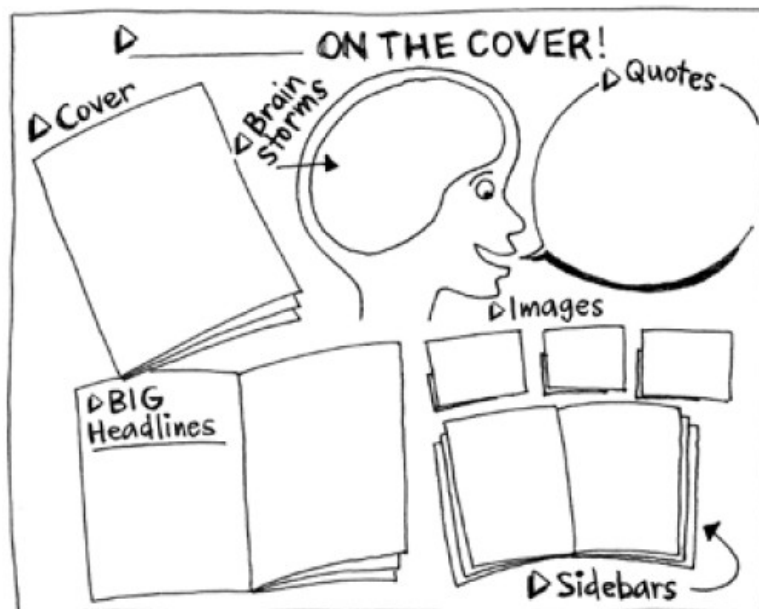
To

- foster creative and innovative thinking
- engage in idea generation
- improve communication and presentation skills

The Exercise

Preparation for the facilitator:

1. Before the exercise, draw out large-scale templates that depict the categories shown in the image below. Your templates don't need to look exactly like this one—you can be creative with the central image and the layout. Just make sure that the categories are all there. The number of templates you create depends on the size of the group. At the most, only four to six people should work on one template together.



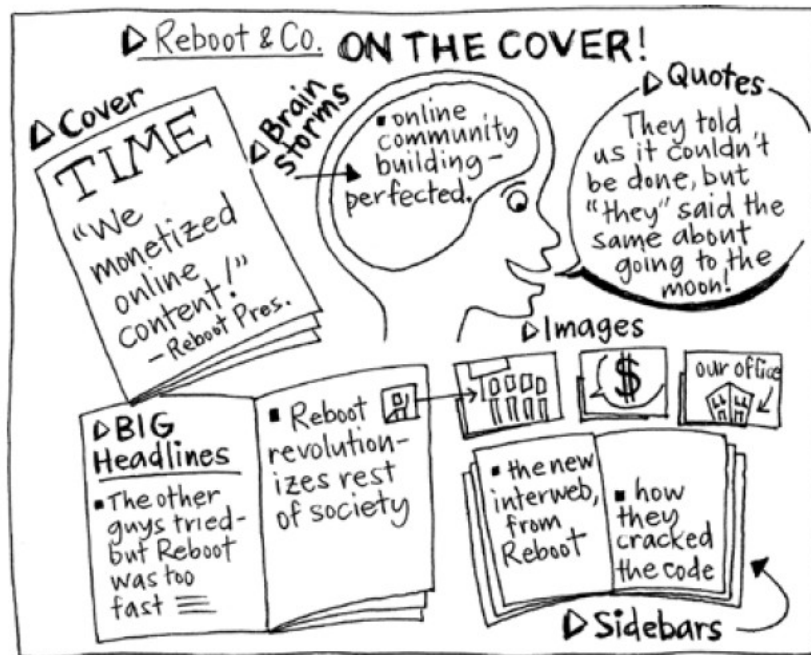
2. Explain the purpose of the exercise to the participants. As a group, they can think about the many opportunities available to solve India's biggest problems: water, housing, healthcare, electricity, roads and more. Ask them to choose one sector that they would like to focus on and find solutions for. They can feature this opportunity as a story in the given template.
3. Break up the participants into groups of four, five or six and give marker pens and one large chart paper to each group. Ask the participants to populate the template—they can either select a scribe or write and draw on it together.
4. Define each category on the template:
 - 'Cover' tells the big story of their success.
 - 'Headlines' convey the substance of the cover story.
 - 'Sidebars' reveal interesting facets of the cover story.
 - 'Quotes' can be from anyone as long as they're related to the story.
 - 'Brainstorm' is for documenting initial ideas for the story.
 - 'Images' are for supporting the content with illustrations.
5. Ask them to spend ten minutes to identify which sector/problem/topic they would focus on.
6. Once they have selected their focus area, ask them to imagine their own stories on the sector/topic chosen. Give the groups 30–45 minutes to generate this 'story of the year' and represent it in their template.
7. Reconvene the groups and ask for volunteers to present their visions first. Give each group 5 minutes to share what they imagined was written in the story and the supporting elements.

Concluding the Exercise:

Make a note of any common themes and areas of agreement. Ask for observations, insights, and concerns that they might have.

Optional activity:

Ask two participants to do a role-play of an interview taking from the content of their 'On the Cover' template, just like if the magazine had sent a reporter to interview an important character in the story.



Useful Tips:

This game is about telling a story of a dream that has already happened. So, when you set up this exercise, as the facilitator, encourage the participants to use the past tense while describing their 'success' in the story.

Don't let the group go into analysis mode. This game is not about logic, pragmatism, or parameters. Cover Story is an open-ended, creative-thinking exercise, so ask all participants to be wary of any 'reality checks' from other participants.

As the groups present their visions to the rest, note and discuss any common themes that arise. These themes—however whimsical—are, in fact, quite telling, because commonalities reveal shared hopes and also plant seeds for real possibilities.

Time:

1 to 2 hours depending on the number of participants

Required Material:

Sheets of paper and pen
 Enthusiastic instructor and participants

Note: This exercise is adapted from Cover Story by Dave Gray | filed under: [Gamestorming wiki](http://www.gogamestorm.com/?p=365), <http://www.gogamestorm.com/?p=365>