**By the Numbers**

Double your chances of achieving your goals by prioritizing your team’s top strategic objectives.

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| Type | Meeting |
| Purpose | Planning and strategy |
| Topics | Goal alignment, prioritization, decision-making, brainstorming, consensus building |
| Audience | General |

## **About this activity**

In today's fast-paced business environment, it's easy to feel overwhelmed with the sheer number of tasks and goals we need to accomplish. Often, we find ourselves struggling to decide which goal to tackle first, or how to make progress on multiple goals at once. That's where the importance of goal prioritization comes in.

According to McKinsey & Company, businesses that establish and adhere to clear priorities are twice as likely to succeed in achieving their goals. Additionally, companies that prioritize their initiatives are 1.6 times more likely to meet their financial objectives and 1.9 times more likely to have a highly engaged workforce.

By the Number is a practical prioritization tool to help participants sort through competing priorities. By identifying and building consensus around top goals and objectives, your team can stay focused on what truly matters. This tool applies to personal and professional goal setting and can be used anytime to refocus your day-to-day strategy and execution. Let's get started!

This activity is designed for a general audience and works well with up to 100 participants in an in-person, hybrid, or remote setting.

#### Important details

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| Best for groups of | 10, up to 100 total participants |
| Preparation time | 10 minutes |
| Duration | 1 hour |
| Required materials | * Flip chart * Markers * Pen/pencil * By the Numbers Prioritization Grid Worksheet * By the Numbers Prioritization Grid Example Worksheet * By the Numbers Prioritization Grid Tally Sheet * Calculator * Timer * Removable tape * Access to meeting platform, if hybrid or remote * Whiteboard, if hybrid or remote |
| Required location | * Indoors or outdoors * Access to Internet for virtual groups |
| Noise level | Medium |

## **How it works**

#### Instructions

Before conducting the activity (15 minutes):

The facilitator will reach out to the company to determine what goals, objectives, or projects should be prioritized during the session.

The facilitator will review the instructions and set up a flip chart for in-person groups or a whiteboard for virtual groups.

The facilitator will make a double-sided copy containing the example By the Numbers Prioritization Grid on one side and the blank grid on the flip side to distribute to in-person participants. For virtual groups, the example worksheet and blank worksheet should be emailed ahead of the session.

The facilitator will decide how to divide into smaller groups for counting totals - groups of ten or less work best.

Conducting the activity:

Introduction (5 minutes):

The facilitator will inform participants that they will be working together to brainstorm a list of goals, projects, objectives, etc. (whatever is identified as a focus by the meeting organizer). The facilitator will encourage participants to call out ideas and jot them on the flip chart, or for virtual participants, on the whiteboard.

Goal Brainstorming (15 minutes):

The participants will create a list of goals and objectives related to the assigned topic. The facilitator will record all ideas without regard for merit and stop once the group is tapped out on new ideas or 15 minutes, whichever is first.

Selection of top goals to prioritize (10 minutes):

For in-person participants: the facilitator will tape the flip chart pages on a blank wall where participants can access them. The facilitator will have in-person participants take a marker and make a tally mark beside their top two goals or objectives on the flip chart. When everyone has voted, the facilitator should count the marks and use additional voting by hand to narrow down the list to the top 10 goals or objectives.

For virtual participants: the facilitator should divide participants into breakout rooms of ten or fewer, designate a group leader, and give each group five minutes to agree on their top two priorities. Participants should be called back to the main meeting room and the group leaders should be asked to share their choices. The facilitator should then use voting by raised hands if needed to narrow down the list to the top 10 goals or objectives.

Completion of the worksheet (10 minutes):

The facilitator should list the 10 goals and objectives as item #1, item #2, and so on and post them on a flip chart or whiteboard that is visible to all.

Each participant should be instructed to complete their blank worksheet using the list of goals by prioritizing the items in pairs. For example, participants should ask themselves, “If I had to choose between item #1 and item #2, which would I pick?” The participant should then circle their preference in the top left column.

Participants should be encouraged to go with their gut response and not overthink the answers. The facilitator keeps time and gives a reminder at 2 minutes, a final reminder at 1 minute, and a countdown at 10 seconds to help participants stay on track. As participants are completing the worksheet, the facilitator should open the By the Numbers Tally Sheet and prepare to record the results.

Results Tally (10 minutes):

For in-person groups, the facilitator should appoint a counter for every ten people who will work with their assigned participants to count the total number of circles for each item. Virtual groups should return to their breakout rooms to count the total number of circles for each item. Counters will then report their totals to the facilitator, who will log them on the tally sheet.

The facilitator will then write the items on a flip chart or whiteboard from most to least circles, revealing the final prioritized list of goals.

Final Results Sharing and Wrap-Up (10 minutes):

The facilitator should ask if there are any surprises in the final results and allow participants to share their observations. The facilitator should remind participants that they can use this tool at work or home whenever they need to prioritize decision-making and conclude by congratulating the group on being able to quickly prioritize their goals and objectives.

#### Rules

All input is welcome in the brainstorming stages. Ideas will be evaluated on merit as they are prioritized.

Each participant will have 10 minutes to complete their worksheet and is encouraged to go with their gut-level reaction and not overthink the selection process.

#### Example

See the completed By the Numbers Prioritization Grid worksheet to determine your favorite ice cream flavors.

## **Materials**

#### For facilitator

Flip chart, if in-person

Markers, if in-person

By the Numbers Prioritization Grid Tally Sheet

Timer

Removable tape, if in-person

Access to meeting platform, if hybrid or remote

Whiteboard, if hybrid or remote

#### For attendee

Pen/pencil

By the Numbers Prioritization Grid (Worksheet/Example)

Calculator