

How to Prioritize in a Meeting Using Sticky Notes and Voting Dots

When working in a team, it's often challenging to decide which ideas or tasks should come first. A simple and effective way to prioritize as a group is by using Sticky Notes and voting dots. This method encourages participation, keeps things visual, and makes it easier to reach consensus. Here's how to do it, step by step:

1. Generate Ideas

Start by giving each participant a stack of Sticky Notes and a marker. Ask them to write down their ideas, tasks, challenges, or topics—one per note. These can be responses to a question, brainstormed ideas, or items from a list that needs to be prioritized.

Once written, have everyone stick their Sticky Notes on a wall, whiteboard, or large sheet of paper—somewhere visible to the whole group.

2. Cluster and Group Similar Notes

Take a few minutes to work as a group to organize the Sticky Notes. Group similar or related items together into clusters or themes. This helps reduce repetition and gives you a clearer overview of the range of input.

Encourage short discussions to clarify what each note means, and feel free to merge or reword duplicates.

3. Review and Align

Once the notes are grouped, go over them one by one. Make sure everyone understands each item or idea. This is important to ensure people vote with a full understanding of what's being proposed or prioritized.

You can also give each group a quick title or heading to capture the essence of the cluster.

4. Distribute Voting Dots

Now, hand out a fixed number of voting dots to each participant—typically 3 to 5 dots per person. Let the group know that they can:

- Use all dots on one idea they feel strongly about
- Spread their votes across several ideas
- Even put multiple dots on the same item if they feel it deserves higher priority

The goal is to visually capture everyone's opinions without lengthy debates.

5. Vote Together

Give the group a few minutes to place their voting dots. This can be a silent, individual process to keep things objective and quick.

As people vote, a visual heat map starts to form—you'll clearly see which items are gathering the most support.

6. Review the Results

Once voting is complete, step back and count the number of dots per Sticky Notes or cluster. The items with the most stickers are considered the top priorities.

Have a short discussion to reflect on the outcome:

- Do the results match your expectations?
- Are there any surprises?
- Are there items with few votes that still require attention for other reasons?

7. Decide on Actions and Responsibilities

Finally, use the prioritized list to determine your next steps. Assign responsibilities, set timelines, and identify any follow-up needed.

The result is a clear and democratic overview of what matters most, with buy-in from the entire team.

This method works well in both strategic sessions and creative workshops. It keeps things engaging, fair, and transparent—and helps avoid long-winded discussions with no outcome. Plus, it adds a fun, hands-on element to your meetings!