



# Impact Effort Grid

## MEETING ENGAGEMENT TOOL

---

### Description

An impact effort grid allows participants to sort the alternatives and identify easy solutions while eliminating the difficult ones that won't solve the problem. Participants sort each alternative, either individually or as a group, to see where it falls in the grid that compares the effort to implement something against the potential impact on objectives.

### Participants

This can be done with many people if a voting technique is used. If each alternative is going to be discussed, 8-10 people is optimum.

### Process

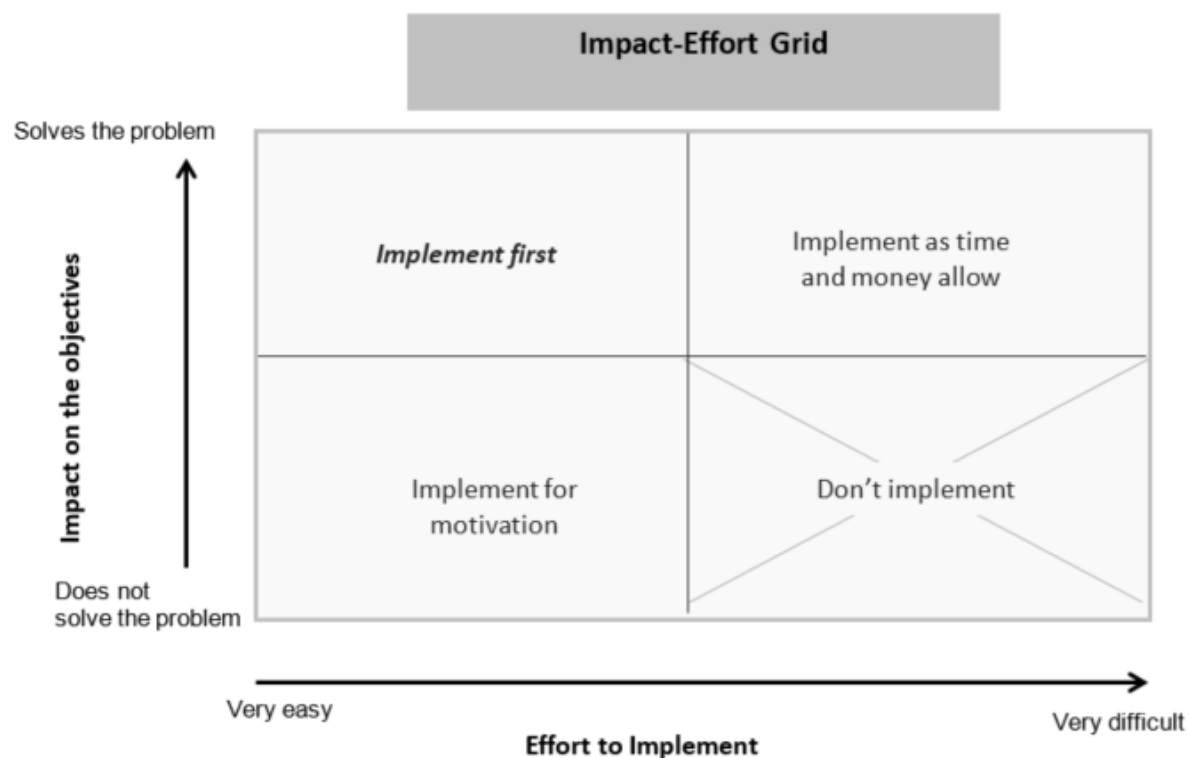
1. **Participants decide if the alternative will or will not impact the outcomes.** Will it solve the problem? This can be done through discussion and agreement, electronic polling, voting using dots, or with a roving flip chart activity.
2. **Participants determine the effort** (will it be easy, or will it be hard) to implement each alternative. Defining effort is important; in order to rank the alternatives, participants need to know what to consider. Effort can include cost, time, inconvenience, or some other qualifier.
3. **Place each alternative into one of the four quadrants** based on the answer to the questions of impact and effort. The planning team must decide in advance if the quadrant will be selected by consensus, majority rule, or some other way.
  - For example, if an alternative will have a large impact on the outcome, and it is low effort, it will be written in the upper-left quadrant. This quadrant is considered "low-hanging fruit" and can often be implemented earliest. Alternatives that are difficult to implement and have a large impact on solving the problem should be considered if the effort required justifies the impact. Alternatives that will have a small impact and require little effort may be implemented to keep stakeholders engaged so that they will stay involved during the implementation of alternatives that are long term. Alternatives that have little impact and are a great effort should be discarded.

## Benefits

- Helps narrow down a long list of alternatives and establish some general priorities.
- Allows participants to see why some alternatives should be discarded.
- Alternatives that are “low-hanging fruit” rise to the top and can be implemented quickly.

## Considerations

- This process works best when items are not ranked within each quadrant. If it solves the problem it goes above the centerline; if it is hard to implement, it goes in one of the right-hand quadrants. Each choice falls into a quadrant in the grid. Further refinement can take place after the solutions are sorted.
- It can be difficult to determine which quadrant a solution belongs in.
- Requires a good understanding of the effort required.



## Debrief

1. Discuss each alternative and which grid it is in. The facilitator may lead this discussion or ask the champion of the alternative to lead it.
2. Do the alternatives in each quadrant make sense?
3. Should we discard lower-right alternatives?
4. Was effort and impact defined properly?

## Materials Needed

- Alternatives listed on post-it notes or other moveable medium.
- Large grid on a wall.
- Electronic polling software.
- Dots for each alternative.

## References

Impact and Effort Matrix [gamestorming.com/impact-effort-matrix-2](http://gamestorming.com/impact-effort-matrix-2).

Impact Effort Matrix at [asq.org/healthcare-use/why-quality/impact-effort.html](http://asq.org/healthcare-use/why-quality/impact-effort.html).