Starburst brainstorming

Problem
How to create brainstorming questions?

- **Starburst Brainstorming** is a type of structured brainstorming that focuses on creating key questions before finding the answers.
- The process uses a six-point starburst diagram, the points of the star are *who, what, when, where, why,* and *how*.
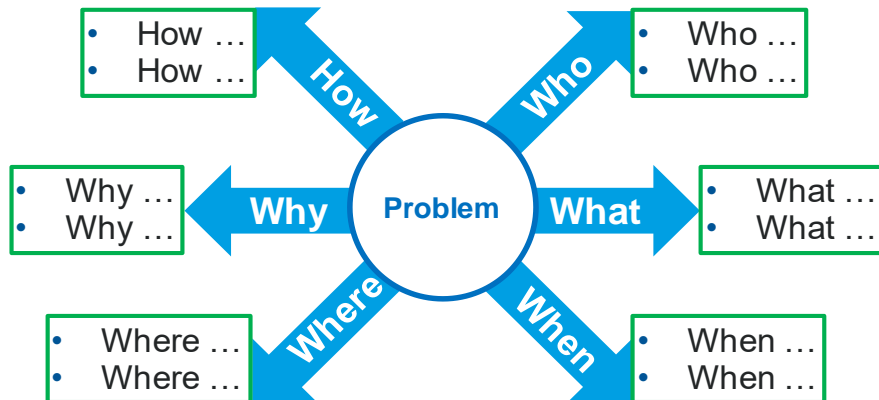- The facilitator manages the process and addresses off-track (but useful) questions.

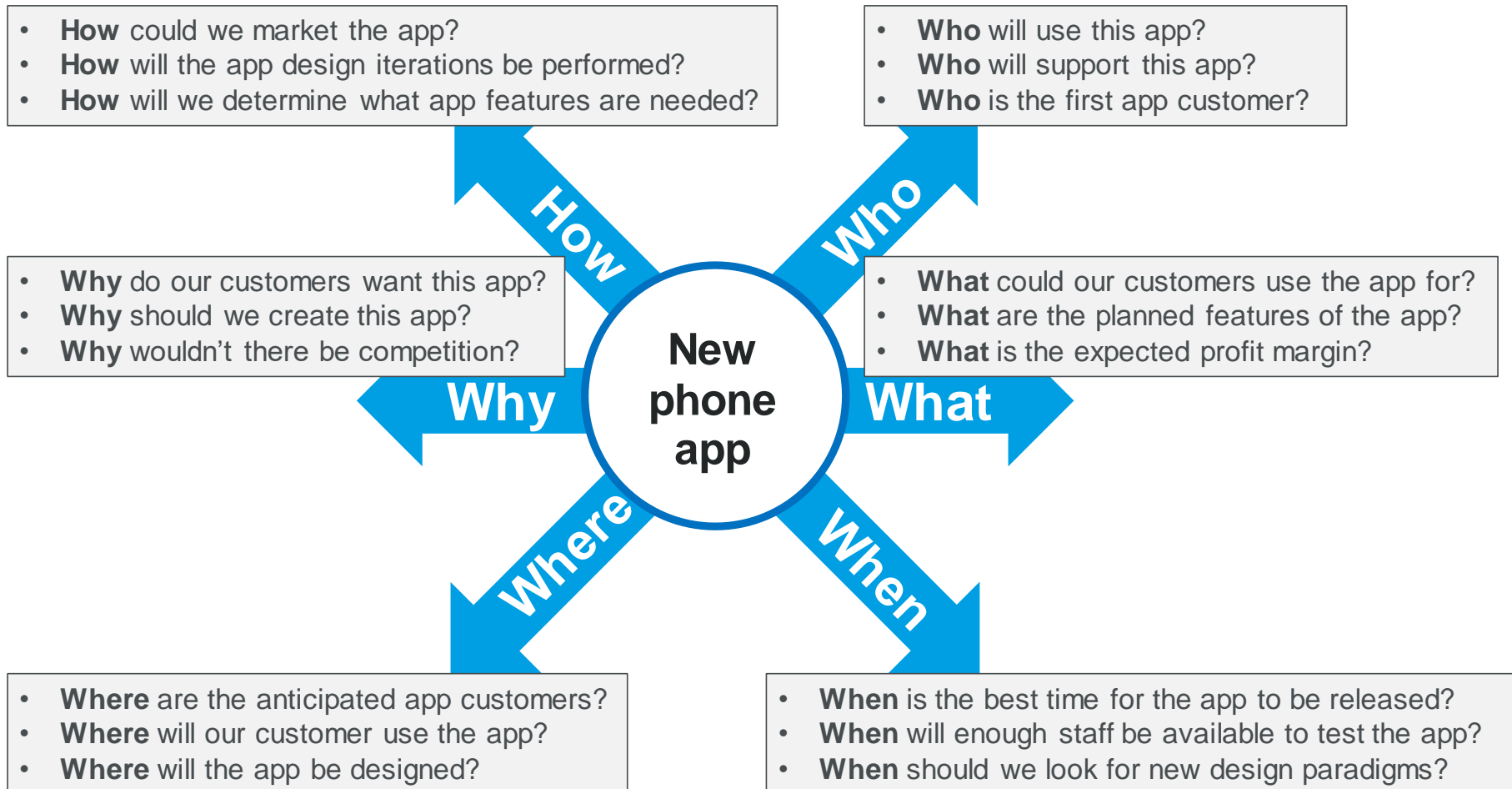Concept or process → **Starbursting Process** → Key questions / Answers

1. Construct a **six-pointed star**
   A. Put the concept, process, problem, product or service in the center of the star.
   B. Add the five 'W's and the 'H' at the star's points.
2. For each of the six star points, **create questions** for the word at that star point and write them down
   A. Do not attempt to answer questions immediately.
   B. Continue brainstorming until there are at least 3 questions for each of the six points of the star,
3. Systematically **address each question**.

How …
How …

Who …
Who …

Why …
Why …

What …
What …

Problem

Where …
Where …

When …
When …

Starburst brainstorming – Example – Phone App

Suppose your company is creating a new phone application.
The resulting Starburst might look as follows.

- *There are 6 collections of questions.*
- *Each collection has at least 3 questions.*

- **How** could we market the app?
- **How** will the app design iterations be performed?
- **How** will we determine what app features are needed?

- **Who** will use this app?
- **Who** will support this app?
- **Who** is the first app customer?

- **Why** do our customers want this app?
- **Why** should we create this app?
- **Why** wouldn't there be competition?

- **What** could our customers use the app for?
- **What** are the planned features of the app?
- **What** is the expected profit margin?

How **Who** **Why** **What** **Where** **When**

New phone app

- **Where** are the anticipated app customers?
- **Where** will our customer use the app?
- **Where** will the app be designed?

- **When** is the best time for the app to be released?
- **When** will enough staff be available to test the app?
- **When** should we look for new design paradigms?

Starburst brainstorming – Notes

Slide 1

1. Starburst brainstorming is best performed with no more than 6 people (otherwise the sessions takes too long).
2. Pros of Starbursting
   - Starbursting often raises questions not usually asked in a typical brainstorming session.
   - Starburst questions and answers may lead to new product concepts.
3. Cons of Starbursting
   - After a starburst session, there are many next steps such as creating project goals and a project timeline.
   - Starbursting can be time-consuming, it might be inappropriate for time-critical problems.

Slide 2

1. Instead of one starburst meeting, you can hold 2 brainstorming meetings, one to create the questions (starbursting) and one to answer the questions raised.
2. The questions raised in a starbursting meeting
   - Can be related to any problem related issue, from cradle to grave;
   - Can address abstract concerns such as whether the product achieves company, is good for society,, etc