Social impact hackathon

Time: Approximately half-day to a full-day event.

Materials needed: Whiteboard or flipchart, sticky notes or digital collaboration tools, timer, optional presentation aids (e.g. slide templates, props).

Participants: Team or department.

Values in Action: High Performance, Teamwork, Compassion.

Outcomes: Strengthen purpose-driven teamwork, spark innovation, and develop socially responsible ideas that can positively impact the wider community.

Purpose

This hackathon-style activity encourages collaborative problem-solving with a meaningful twist. Teams work on real-world social challenges (e.g., mental health, sustainability, inclusion) to brainstorm creative, practical solutions that could benefit the community or organisation. It promotes innovation, compassion, and values-based teamwork.

How to run the activity

Step 1: Define your challenge (30-45 mins)

Choose one or more social impact themes relevant to your workplace or community. Examples:

- Mental health in the workplace
- Environmental sustainability
- Community outreach and equity
- Inclusive recruitment or service access

Teams can either self-select or be assigned a theme. Ensure each group clearly understands the challenge and what success could look like.

Tip: Consider inviting a guest speaker (e.g. community partner or lived-experience expert) to inspire the group.

Step 2: Form teams and ideate (60-90 mins)

Divide participants into small, diverse teams (3–6 people). Each team:

- Defines the problem in their own words

- Brainstorms possible solutions
- Selects one idea to develop further

Encourage divergent thinking, no idea is too bold at this stage!

Step 3: Develop your pitch (45-60 mins)

Each team prepares a short 3–5 minute pitch outlining:

1. The social issue and why it matters
2. Their proposed solution
3. The expected impact
4. How it could be implemented

Optional: Encourage creative formats — mock-ups, taglines, or mini-campaign posters.

Step 4: Present and celebrate (30-45 mins)

Each team delivers their pitch to a panel (can include leaders, peers, or community guests). After all presentations:

- The panel provides feedback.
- A winner or top ideas can be selected.
- Celebrate all contributions and discuss next steps.

Optional prizes: Offer small rewards (e.g., coffee vouchers, certificates, team lunch) for creativity, impact, or values alignment.

Step 5: Reflect and close (15-30 mins)

Bring everyone together to debrief and reflect:

- *"What did you enjoy or learn today?"*
- *"How did the activity help you connect with your team or purpose?"*
- *"What social issues matter most to you personally or professionally?"*
- *"Which ideas could realistically be taken forward?"*

End with a commitment to ongoing impact — ask participants how they could continue the conversation or embed their ideas in their daily work.