WORKSHOPSKILL · FACILITATION KIT

Four-Lens Sweep — Facilitator Run Sheet

Folder: `four-lens-sweep` · Category: creativity · 4–10 people · 20 min · offline + online · print props · tool pack

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20	4–10	print props
MINUTES	PEOPLE	SETTING

Four-Lens Sweep — Facilitator Guide

One idea is reviewed four times in a row — but each pass through a single lens: what's true (facts), how it lands (feelings), what could break (risks), what it unlocks (upside). Everyone wears the same lens at the same time, so the room stops arguing positions and instead looks at the same object four different ways. **Unlike a free-for-all critique where the loudest voice wins, this sweep gives each lens its own timebox — the idea that survives all four passes is genuinely stronger, and nobody left feeling steamrolled.**

Objectives

By the end of the activity, participants will have:

1. Seen one idea through all four lenses — facts, feelings, risks, upside — the whole room in the same lens at once.
2. Caught where a "fact" was really an unverified assumption, and marked it to check.
3. Decided with the whole picture in view, and ended on what the idea unlocks.

When to use this activity

- A promising idea is about to be killed or loved by gut in one pass, with no even look at it.
- Your team reviews by personality — the optimist, the doubter, the accountant — and never all four at once.
- You have twenty minutes and one decision worth pressure-testing; it works on a call.

The four lenses

Lens	The one question	Kept honest by
Facts	What's actually true here — what do we know, what do we assume?	No opinions allowed this pass.
Feelings	How does it land — who's excited, who's uneasy, and why?	No justifying with data yet.
Risks	What could break, and what would we notice first?	No solving, just spotting.
Upside	If it works, what does it unlock that we didn't name?	No hedging with "but".

Setup

Clock: 20 minutes total — frame 1, four passes at 4 minutes each, synthesis 2.

Space: a wall or shared board with four labelled columns — Facts · Feelings · Risks · Upside — for one idea.

Materials per person:

Item	Source
Sticky notes (one colour per lens, or one colour into four columns)	any office supply
A pen	bring your own

Materials for the room: the four lens cards from `four-lens-sweep-prop-cards.pdf`, and the A3 poster up on the wall.

Grouping: 4–10 people reviewing one decision worth pressure-testing; everyone wears the same lens at the same time.

Roles: the room notes within each lens; you keep every pass single-lens and timeboxed and run the final synthesis.

How to run it

Time	Phase	Facilitator does	Participants do
0–1	Frame	Put one idea on the wall. State the rule: one lens at a time, everyone in sync.	Read the idea; ask clarifying questions
1–5	Facts pass	Everyone notes facts/assumptions on the idea for four minutes. Only facts.	Write facts and assumptions on sticky notes; post to the Facts column
5–9	Feelings pass	Same idea; now only reactions — where it lands and who it's for.	Write reactions; post to the Feelings column
9–14	Risks pass	Same idea; only failure points and early warnings. Don't fix them yet.	Write risks and early-warning signals; post to the Risks column
14–18	Upside pass	Same idea; only what it opens. No "buts" allowed this round.	Write unlocks and opportunities; post to the Upside column
18–20	Synthesis	Read the four sticky columns together; decide with the whole picture in view.	Discuss; decide ship / kill / reshape; name what to verify first

Why synchronise the lenses

Mixing lenses is how one loud doubter and one loud optimist turn a review into a tug-of-war. When the whole room is "in the risk pass," nobody is defending a position — you get four clean, complete looks at one idea.

The card

Use the faces from `four-lens-sweep-prop-cards.pdf`: four lens cards (Facts / Feelings / Risks / Upside), a "one lens at a time" rule card, and a blank to author your own. The rule card is the load-bearing one — it's what stops the room from mixing lenses mid-pass.

Failure modes

1. **Someone jumps lenses ("yes but the risk is…").** The room loses the single-lens discipline and reverts to argument. Rescue: "Hold it for the risk pass" — park it on the right column and move on.
2. **Facts pass turns into opinion.** People write what they believe, not what they know. Rescue: keep asking "how do we know?" until the difference between known and assumed is on the wall.
3. **It becomes a downer.** The risk pass dominates and the room forgets why the idea was promising. Rescue: the upside pass is mandatory and last on purpose — finish on what it opens, not what breaks.
4. **Synthesis collapses to a vote.** The four columns get ignored and the room just raises hands. Rescue: read one sticky from each column aloud before any vote; the picture decides, not the headcount.

Variations

- **Remote:** four columns on a shared board; run each pass timed, everyone posting into one column before the next opens.
- **Solo prep, then team sweep:** one person does a first sweep to seed the columns, then the team re-runs it live.
- **Two ideas:** only if each keeps its own board — mixing an idea across two columns breaks the single-lens discipline.
- **Shortened (12 min):** two minutes per lens and a one-line synthesis; still finish on the upside pass.

Facilitation notes

- The strongest moment is a fact-flag that turns out to be an assumption everyone had been treating as true.
- Keep each pass timeboxed and single-lens; the discipline is the value.

Put it on the wall

Print `four-lens-sweep-activity-poster.pdf` (A3) to put the run of show, the four lens cards and the "one lens at a time" rule on one wall while you facilitate.

Props in this folder

- `four-lens-sweep-prop-cards.pdf` — poker-spec print sheet (63.5 × 88.9 mm, bleed and cut guides): four lens cards, a "one lens at a time" rule card, a blank card, branded backs
- `four-lens-sweep-run-sheet.pdf` — the print edition: this run sheet + the debrief, bound as one A4 document with bookmarks (`-Letter.pdf` is US Letter)
- `four-lens-sweep-activity-poster.pdf` — the whole sweep on one A3 wall sheet
- `four-lens-sweep-guide.md` · `-debrief.md` · `-start-here.md` — the facilitator guide, the debrief, the one-page start here
- `four-lens-sweep-license.md` — what you may do
- `SKILL.md` · `four-lens-sweep.zip` — the machine-readable manifest, and the whole folder in one download

Agent version

Every file in this folder has a stable public URL — an AI agent can fetch the cards, the debrief and this run sheet with three curl commands (see `SKILL.md`). The paper version needs nothing but a wall, four labelled columns and sticky notes.

Four-Lens Sweep — Debrief

> Four clean looks beat one loud argument. The point isn't the verdict — it's that the idea was seen whole.
>
> Use with `four-lens-sweep-guide.md` . The synthesis at minute 18 is the compressed version; this sheet is the full one.

How to run this debrief

- Walk the four columns **in order** before any verdict — skipping straight to "ship / kill" throws away the sweep.

- Separate the facts from the assumptions you only assumed; the latter become owner-by-date checks before the call.
- Close on the upside pass on purpose — what the idea unlocks is part of the answer, not an afterthought.

Read the four columns

1. **The fact/assumption line.** Which “facts” were really assumptions? Those are the ones to verify before the decision.
2. **The feeling spread.** Who was excited and who was uneasy, and did the room hear both without arguing?
3. **The risk/upside balance.** Which failure points had no answer in the room, and was the upside from the last pass worth what the risk pass flagged?

The six debrief questions

1. The verdict shift.

“What did the sweep change — kill the idea, greenlight it, or reshape it?”

→ Targets: the decision delta — what the four passes moved that a single gut call would not.

2. The load-bearing assumption.

“Which assumption, if it turned out false, would move your answer the most?”

→ Targets: the one check that matters before committing.

3. The quiet unease.

“Whose quiet unease in the feelings pass deserves a follow-up conversation?”

→ Targets: the person who felt something but didn’t argue — their signal is data, not noise.

4. The hidden upside.

“What is one upside the idea only surfaced once you were forced to look for it?”

→ Targets: the unlock that the risk-first room would have missed.

5. The lens that surprised.

“Which of the four passes told you something you didn’t expect — and why did that lens catch it?”

→ Targets: meta-awareness of which lens your team habitually skips.

6. The next sweep.

“What’s the next idea that deserves this same four-pass treatment — and when will you run it?”

→ Targets: transfer — scheduling the habit instead of ending the exercise.

Failure modes of the debrief

Failure mode	Why it happens	The rescue
It collapses to “ship it / kill it”	The synthesis skips the columns	Walk the four columns before any verdict; decide after the full picture.
The risk pass won the room	Negatives feel more rigorous	Re-read the upside pass aloud; weigh it against named risks on purpose.

Failure mode	Why it happens	The rescue
Assumptions left unverified	It was faster to move on	Turn the fact/assumption line into owner-by-date checks before the decision.