Better Thinking For Better Meetings

Intelligence is potential, thinking is a skill

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Today's Agenda

• Meetings, Thinking, & Communication

• Six Thinking Hats
  – Overview
  – Hat Profiles
  – Use of Hats
  – Case Example

• Wrap Up
Meetings

Unspoken Assumptions

1. Hierarchy & status limit dialogue, openness, & ideas
2. Advocacy culture limits dialog, openness & ideas
3. Structure of agenda affects dialogue
4. Facts are selectively used (reinforcing point of view)
5. Thinking involves taking too may different paths at one time - Emotions, Information, Logic, Creativity
What About Communication?
What About Your Thinking?

- My thinking is good!
- Nothing more can be done about my thinking!
- Improving my thinking is complicated and boring!

The quality of our thinking will determine the quality of our future! Edward de Bono
CONFUSION & COMPLEXITY in dialog are the biggest enemies of good thinking

A. We attempt too many thinking modes at the same time.
B. We look for INFORMATION
C. We are affected by FEELINGS
D. We seek new IDEAS and OPTIONS
E. We have to be CAUTIOUS
F. We want to find BENEFITS

Tossing too many balls in the dialog at a time!
Traditional Habit of Thinking = Argument

Truth

Limits
Constructive
Talk

Little Creative &
Constructive
Energy

Six Thinking Hats . . . By Edward de Bono
Two Paths

1. Advocacy
   Opinion Thinking (Or)

2. Inquiry
   Parallel Thinking (And)
Traditional Approach

Argument or Adversarial Thinking

- "Conversation" is often where ideas clash (Win/Lose)

- In an argument often both sides are right, but looking at different aspects of the situation.

- Each side seeks to prove (criticize) that the other side is wrong.

- It lacks a constructive, creative or design element
Culture of Advocacy

- Western Approach: Advocacy Over Inquiry
- To Advocate Is To Be Right
- Advocacy Is Connected to Ego
- Trained in Advocacy & Criticism


Six Thinking Hats . . . By Edward de Bono
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It is easy!
Solution: Parallel* Thinking

- At any moment everyone is looking in the same direction.
- Directions can be changed - but everyone changes at the same time.
- It is co-operative, co-ordinate, constructive thinking.
- A simple and practical way of carrying out ‘Parallel Thinking' is the Six Thinking Hats method.

*Parallel Thinking = Lateral Thinking
Put On Your Thinking Cap!

Six Thinking Hats . . . By Edward de Bono
Six Thinking Hats is a **flexible** and **easy-to-use** thinking process.
Key Idea: Everyone thinks in the same direction at any given point

Directions can be changed – but everyone changes direction at the same time!
Thinking Hats encourage Parallel Thinking, where everyone explores all sides of an issue at the same time.
Advantages of Parallel Thinking

Parallel Thinking is:

- A tool to organize thinking for individuals & groups
- Unbundled, constructive, creative thinking
- Defeats *groupthink*; cooperatively explore ideas
- Separates ego (my idea) from discussion
- Provides switching modes
- Increases awareness of different modes of thinking
Outcomes of Six Thinking Hats

• Shorter, more productive meetings.
• A new approach to problem solving and decision making.
• Reduced conflict.
• Improved results.
• Higher quality and quantity of ideas.
• Merge talents of extroverts and introverts.
Simplifies thinking by having to deal with one thinking mode at a time
The Basics

- There are six different imaginary hats. Think of the “hats” as thinking icons. Put them on or take them off.
- Each hat is a different color and represents a different type or mode of thinking.
- We all wear the same hat (do the same type of thinking) at the same time.
- When we change hats - we change our thinking.
- Forces you to move outside your habitual thinking style
- Developed by Edward de Bono
Benefits of Six Thinking Hats

1. Provides a common language
2. Discussion focus (one thing at a time)
3. Creates a more open dialogue for engagement & inclusion of more people
4. Creates increased diversity of thought
5. Allows you to say things with less risk
6. Removal of ego (reduce confrontation)
7. Improve meeting outcomes: \( \uparrow \) results and \( \downarrow \) time
Six Thinking Hats Applications

- Individually
- Organization for reports
- Facilitation of meetings
- Leadership development
- Innovative thinking
- Problem solving and decision making
- Project management
- Preparation for discussions
- New products and new designs
- Marketing
- Strategic Planning
- Six Sigma and process improvement
<table>
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<tr>
<th>What Does Each Hat Mean?</th>
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<tr>
<td><strong>Blue Hat</strong></td>
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<tr>
<td>Manages the thinking process, focus, next steps, action plans.</td>
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<tr>
<td><strong>White Hat</strong></td>
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<td>Data, Facts, Information known or needed.</td>
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<tr>
<td><strong>Red Hat</strong></td>
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<td>Feelings. Emotions and Intuition.</td>
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<tr>
<td><strong>Yellow Hat</strong></td>
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<tr>
<td>Values and Benefits- Why something may work. (Advantages)</td>
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<tr>
<td><strong>Black Hat</strong></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Difficulties, potential problems - why something may not work. (Disadvantages)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Green Hat</strong></td>
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<td>Creativity- possibilities, alternatives, solutions, new ideas.</td>
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Hats are not descriptions of people.
Blue Hat

- Worn by people facilitating meetings
- Blue hat wearer is like the conductor of an orchestra
- Sets the focus, defines the problems, shapes the questions, determines the thinking tasks
- Ensures the “rules of the game” are observed

Focus on the big picture
The Blue Hat Role

• Control of thinking & the process
• Begin & end session with blue hat
• Facilitator role:
  ✓ Open, sequence, close
  ✓ Focus: what should we be thinking about?
  ✓ Asking the right questions
  ✓ Defining & clarifying the problem/idea
  ✓ Setting the thinking tasks
Participant’s Role

• Follow the lead of the facilitator

• Stick to the hat (type of thinking) that is in current use

• Try to work within the time limits

• Contribute honestly & fully under each of the hats
Blue Hat

In **blue hat** mode, think about one of the following...

**Topic: What is role of the facilitator?**

Six Thinking Hats . . . By Edward de Bono
White Hat

• Focus on the data available.
• Separate fact from speculation
• Look at the information available and see what can be learned from it.
• Look for gaps in knowledge, and either try to fill them or take account of them.
• Analyze past trends, and try to extrapolate from historical data.
• Report on someone's feelings-market research

“In God we trust . . . everyone else must bring data”
White Hat

In white hat mode, think about one of the following...

Topic: How to reduce heroin usage
Red Hat

• Exactly the opposite of White Hat which is neutral, objective and free of emotions

• About emotions and feelings
  - the non rational aspect of thinking
  - Opportunity to express feelings, emotions and intuition without any need to explain or to justify them.
  - Hunches bring about the best decision (Book: BLINK)
Red Hat

In red hat mode, think about the following:

Topic: Legalization of medical marijuana
Yellow Hat

• Helps you to think positively
• It is the optimistic viewpoint
  – helps see all the benefits of the decision and the value in it
  – spot the opportunities that arise from it.
• Yellow Hat thinking helps you to keep going when everything looks gloomy and difficult.

There is always a bright side
Yellow Hat

In yellow hat mode, think about...

Topic: One day per week broadcasting ban - television and Internet
Black Hat

• Look at things pessimistically, cautiously and defensively

• See why ideas and approaches might not work
  – Highlights the weak points in a plan or course of action.
  – Allows to eliminate them, alter the approach
  – Prepare contingency plans to counter problems that arise.

• Makes plans tougher and more resilient

• Helps spot fatal flaws and risks

Reality Check: What Black Hat is not: Negativity
Black Hat

In black hat mode, think about one of the following...

Topic: Universal (world-wide) identity card
Green Hat

- The creative hat
- Put forth new ideas, options and alternatives
- Develop creative solutions to a problem
- A freewheeling way of thinking, in which there is little criticism of ideas
- A specific time is set out for everyone to make a creative effort

Think Out of the Box
The Green Hat

In green hat mode, think of other uses (pick one) for:

Balloon
_________________
_________________
_________________

Paper Clip
_________________
_________________
_________________
Hats & Sequences (Options)

• Use only one hat (This is the major use.)

• Use several hats in a sequence
  – Used to direct & switch thinking
  – No one right sequence
  – Use some hats several times or not at all

• When to use several hats in sequence
  – Strongly held views
  – Rambling discussions
  – Timeframe is short
Types of Sequences

• **Fixed**
  This is the sequence.

• **Flexible**
  We have some strong opinions. Let's spend time for a quick red hat.

• **Contingent**
  After red hat thinking, we will decide what other thinking is needed.

*Six Thinking Hats...* By Edward de Bono
Evaluation Sequence

To discover the positive & negative aspects of an idea.

Use the yellow hat before the black hat. You could follow up with the green hat (new ideas) and red hat (feelings) thinking.

Example: Consider positive and negative of:

- Community wide meatless Friday
Case Example Exercise

Small Group: Use the Six Thinking Hats approach to discuss a new product.

(Use about 2-3 minutes for each hat.)

Goal: Develop an all-weather bike.
All Weather Bikes?
Engagement & Inclusion

• **Engagement:** An employee's heightened emotional connection to their work through participation and alignment with organizational goals.

• **Inclusion:** Elimination of negative biases and barriers to contributions in order to create a culture where people are respected and able to give their best.
Conclusion

• A practical way to teach thinking as a skill
• The colors and hats provide a useful visual image that is easy to learn and remember.
• Provides a framework for organizing thinking
  – No longer a matter of drift and argument
  – Thinking is more focused, more constructive and productive.
• The role-playing nature of the hats allows for the detachment of ego from the thinking
Hats **are** fun and **effective** to **wear** **everyday everywhere!!**

Thank You!!
References

• Six Thinking Hats by Edward de Bono
• Lateral Thinking: Creativity Step by Step by Edward de Bono
• The Innovator's Solution: Creating and Sustaining Successful Growth by Clayton M. Christensen and Michael E. Raynor
Follow Up: Action Item