

Six Thinking Hats

“A structured approach to creative thinking.”

- Edward De Bono

Edward De Bono’s ‘Six Thinking Hats’ tool enables you to look at decisions from a number of important perspectives, in sequence. This forces you to move outside your habitual thinking style, and helps to give a more rounded view of a situation.

Use it on your own or in a group creativity session as follows:

1. Agree upon the problem or issue around which you require creative thought.
2. Use the ‘Hats’ to structure thinking time, between 2 and 10 minutes per hat, and agree upon an order such as red-white-green-yellow-black-red.. **DECISION!**
3. Apply the discipline of everyone simultaneously ‘wearing’ the same coloured hat at the same time i.e. everyone thinks of creative ideas during the ‘green hat session’, and all think of reasons why they won’t work during the ‘black hat session’ etc. No-one is allowed to swap hats outside of the agreed process.



The **Red hat** Symbolises feelings, hunches, gut reactions and intuition; everyone is allowed, and required, to (briefly) express emotions and feelings, without need for explanation or justification.



The **White hat** symbolises data and information; it is unemotional and asks for information that’s known, unknown, and needed. People are not allowed to withhold information during white hat thinking.



The **Green hat** symbolises creativity; it demands creative effort and the application of creative thinking tools in order to generate many possibilities, alternatives and ideas, without critical analysis.



The **Yellow hat** symbolises sunshine and optimism; it explores the positives of these ideas and looks for ways in which things can be done; the yellow hat probes for value and benefits.



The **Black hat** symbolises the ‘Devil’s Advocate’; it calls for caution, exposes danger, difficulties and problems; it’s a very useful hat as it can often prevent you from making unwise decisions; it looks for dangers and reasons why something won’t work.



The **Blue hat** manages the thinking process; it’s the control mechanism that ensures that the Six Hat guidelines are followed, and is often ‘worn’ by the facilitator of the meeting.