The Six Thinking Hats

THINKA

Some discussions are harder to navigate than others. The Six Thinking Hats is a system developed by Edward de Bono to stimulate creative thinking and collaboration. It provides a framework for individuals or teams to discuss an issue from a number of different but valuable perspectives.

White hat
Gather the facts
- Information and data
- Neutral and objective
- What do I know?
- What do I need to find out?
- How will I get the information I need?

Red hat
Listen to your instincts
- Intuition, hunches, gut instinct
- My feelings right now
- Feelings can change
- No reasons are given

Black hat
Pick out the faults
- Difficulties, weaknesses, dangers
- Logical reasons are given
- Spotting risks

Yellow hat
Focus on the benefits
- Positives, plus points
- Logical reasons are given
- Why an idea is useful

Blue hat
Step back and evaluate the process
- Thinking about thinking
- What thinking is needed?
- Organising the thinking
- Planning for action

Green hat
Get creative
- Ideas, alternatives, possibilities
- Provocations
- Solutions to black hat problems

Each of these six metaphorical hats are tools made for a specific purpose, like the tools in a mechanic's toolbox. When used together, teams are better able to resolve a problem or explore a subject to its full potential.

Applying The Six Thinking Hats system:

1. Removes power struggles and egos.
2. Improves mindfulness and productivity.
3. Brings complementary perspectives together.
4. Covers crucial points when problem solving.
5. Turns arguments into constructive discussions.

Tip: If you're alone or in a smaller team, pick the hats most relevant to the issue. Once your thoughts or the discussion evolves, change hats. For example: *start with the green hat to explore innovations, then wear the black hat to apply critical thinking.*

CREATIVE THINKING IN ACTION

When could you apply The Six Thinking Hats?
For example: We have a 'big picture' brainstorming session with the team every three months; we could use the system then.

How would the system benefit the discussion?
For example: We usually get caught up on difficulties and risks when discussing new ideas. Using the system would open up the discussion to the benefits of an idea and solutions to problems that may come up.

What could you achieve using the system?
For example: After exploring an idea from all angles, we could implement it and start bringing it to life that day.