Six Thinking Hats

Problem

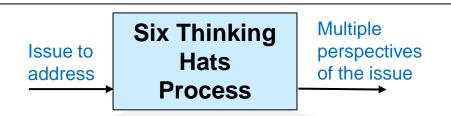
How to obtain multiple perspectives of an issue?

Difficulty

Work with an SME

- Six Thinking Hats uses 6 differently colored hats, each representing a specific thought process (see below).
- When the team "puts on a hat," they address an issue from that hat's point of view. Sessions begin with a "blue hat," to discuss the meeting and hat order.
- Sequentially, the team puts on different hats, each for a fixed period.
- The facilitator always wears a blue hat.

<u>j</u>	Black	risk assessment
	Blue	organization and planning
	Green	creative thinking
	Red	feelings and instincts
	White	information gathering
	Yellow	benefits and values



- 1. Select an issue (e.g., project or concept).
- 2. The facilitator & the team select a hat ordering:
 - Any meeting: Blue, White, Green, Yellow, Red, Black
 - Brainstorming meeting: Blue, White, Green, Blue
 - **Problem solving meeting**: Blue, White, Green, Red, Yellow, Black, Green, Blue
 - Strategic planning meeting: Blue, Yellow, Black, White, Blue, Green, Blue
- 3. The facilitator sequences through the hats, leads the discussion for each hat, and decides when to move to the next hat.

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Six Thinking Hats – Example

Sample initial questions for a facilitator to ask for different hats

- Black Hat: What risks need to be considered?
- Blue Hat: What support, systems, or processes will be needed?
- Green Hat: How can we create new ideas?
- Red Hat: What are your initial reactions?
- White Hat: What information do we have?
- Yellow Hat: Why should we be optimistic?

Sample follow-on questions for the Black Hat:

- 1. How will this fail?
- 2. What are the weaknesses or risks?
- 3. What are potential unintended consequences?
- 4. How will the competition react?
- 5. Which stakeholders can prevent success?

Sample follow-on questions for the Green Hat:

- 1. How can we generate multiple problem solutions?
- 2. What brainstorming tools can we use to find solutions?
- 3. What relevant outrageous scenarios can we create?
- 4. How would <famous person> solve this problem?
- 5. What thought experiment could we perform?

Sample follow-on questions for the Yellow Hat:

- 1. What does success look like?
- 2. What makes this so successful?
- 3. What are the short term and long term benefits?
- 4. How does this make things better?
- 5. If we could not fail, what would we do?

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Six Thinking Hats – Notes

Slide 1

- Edward de Bono developed the Six Thinking Hats in 1986 in his book "Lateral Thinking for Management"
- 2. Use Six Thinking Hats to:
 - Run more structured meetings
 - Make more holistic decisions.
 - Approach problems from multiple viewpoints (e.g., facts and emotions)
 - Have more meeting collaboration and reduce conflict
 - Avoid getting stuck in a single point of view
 - Consider issues systematically
 - View issues from unusual angles

Slide 2

- 1. The facilitator leads the meeting by asking questions of the team.
- 2. The web has a wide variety of potential questions for each hat color.
- 3. In the time allocated, there may be only a few follow-up questions per hat.
- 4. If possible, have a scribe capture information from the team discussion.