



IDEATION 6 THINKING HATS

The 6 Thinking Hats is a classic ideation technique that you learn how to separate thinking into six clear functions and roles. Each thinking role is identified with a coloured symbolic "thinking hat." By mentally wearing and switching "hats," you can easily focus or redirect thoughts, conversation, or the meeting.



FORMAT
Workshop



TIMEFRAME
1.5-2 hours



GROUP SIZE
5-10



FACILITATION LEVEL
Beginner



REQUIRED MATERIALS
6 hats, post-its

STEPS

1

List the questions that represent the hats. List a set of questions on the whiteboard to represent the hats. You can do this either at the start of the meeting or when you hit a sticking spot. Here's the Six Thinking Hats: White Hat – the facts and figures Red Hat – the emotional view Black Hat – the "devil's advocate" Yellow Hat – the positive side Green Hat – the creative side Blue Hat – the organising view. Here's an example set of questions you can use to represent the hats: What are the facts and figures? What's your gut reaction? How do you feel about this? Why can't we do this? What prevents us? What's the downside? How can we do this? What are additional opportunities? How should we think about this? (what are the metaphors or mental models) The sequence of the questions can matter. For example, it wouldn't make sense to start thinking up solutions before you've focused on the problem.

2

Walkthrough each question as a team. Walkthrough each question as a team. This is the key. Rather than debating each other, you're now collaborating. You'll be surprised when suddenly your team's "Devil's Advocate" is now showing off their ability to dream up wild solutions that just might work!

3

Modify the approach. If it's not working, change the approach. For example, you might find that you started with the wrong "hat" or question. See if switching to another question or hat makes a difference. The key is to keep this lightweight but effective. This isn't a heavy-handed approach. Instead, it's a subtle shift in strategy from free-for-all debate to focusing and coordinating your team's thinking power in a deliberate way. This lets everybody get heard as well as really bang on a problem from multiple angles in a teamwork sort of way.

Benefits

- Maximising productive collaboration and minimising counterproductive interaction/behaviour.
- Considering issues, problems, decisions, and opportunities systematically.
- Using parallel thinking as a group or team to generate more, better ideas and solutions.
- Stimulating innovation by generating more and better ideas quickly.
- Spotting opportunities where others see only problems.
- Viewing problems from new and unusual angles.

Tips

Sources

1. The Bono Group