Six Thinking Hat Methodology

**This is for basic understanding of Six Thinking Hats® as defined by the creator "Edward De Bono"
To understand the details on each element, required separate presentation and guidance to perform and evaluate.**

Jankrut Dave

Introduction of Six Thinking Hat

The Six Thinking Hats approach was created by Edward de Bono, a Maltese physician, psychologist and philosopher. He used it in his work advising government agencies, but he also wanted it to be a practical tool for everyday problem solving. It first appeared in his 1985 book of the same name, which has since been revised several times.

De Bono – who died in 2021 – was also the inventor of "lateral thinking," a method of solving problems indirectly, often in creative and surprising ways. Similarly, Six Thinking Hats is a way to understand and explore different types of thinking.

The premise of the method is that the human brain thinks in a number of distinct ways which can be deliberately challenged, and hence planned for use in a structured way allowing one to develop tactics for thinking about issues.

De Bono identifies six distinct directions in which the brain can be challenged. In each of these directions the brain will identify and bring into conscious thought certain aspects of issues being considered (e.g. gut instinct, pessimistic judgement, neutral facts). Some may feel that using the hats is unnatural, uncomfortable or even counterproductive and against their better judgement

Introduction of Six Thinking Hat

Colored hats are used as metaphors for each direction. Switching to a direction is symbolized by the act of putting on a colored hat, either literally or metaphorically. This metaphor of using an imaginary hat or cap as a symbol for a different thinking direction was first mentioned by De Bono as early as 1971 in his book "Lateral Thinking for Management" when describing a brainstorming framework.

These metaphors allow for a more complete and elaborate segregation of the thinking directions. The six thinking hats indicate problems and solutions about an idea the thinker may come up with.

Making the best decisions often requires looking at them through different lenses so that you don't overlook an important aspect. Six Thinking Hats, is a tool for doing exactly that. You can use it for your own thinking or in a group where everyone can represent a different perspective.

The Six Thinking Hats technique gets you to look at a problem in six different ways. It takes you and your team beyond any instinctive positions, so that you explore a range of perspectives. That way, you can carefully consider each one, without having to argue your case or make snap decisions about what's "right" or "wrong."
By the time you've tried out all six hats, you should have a rich collection of insights that will help you to decide your next steps.

Using of Six Thinking Hat

Having identified the six modes of thinking that can be accessed, distinct programs can be created. These are sequences of hats which encompass and structure the thinking process toward a distinct goal.

A number of these are included in the materials provided to support the franchised training of the six hats method; however it is often necessary to adapt them to suit an individual purpose.
Also, programs are often "emergent", which is to say that the group might plan the first few hats then the facilitator will see what seems to be the right way to go.

Sequences always begin and end with a blue hat; the group agrees together how they will think, then they do the thinking, then they evaluate the outcomes of that thinking and what they should do next.

Sequences (and indeed hats) may be used by individuals working alone or in groups.

Example programs are shown below, each hat is typically used for approximately 2 minutes at a time—although at the start of a process an extended white hat session is common to get everyone onto the same page, and the red hat is recommended to be used for a very short period to get a visceral gut reaction—about 30 seconds, and in practice often takes the form of

Using of Six Thinking Hat

Six colors of hats for six types of thinking

    Each hat identifies a type of thinking

    Hats are directions of thinking

Hats help a group use parallel thinking

    You can "put on" and "take off" a hat

Six thinking hats methodology being used for below:

Problem solving

Strategic planning

Running meetings

Much more

Using of Six Thinking Hat

Hat Color	Hat Overview	Techniques followed
BLUE	"The Big Picture" & Managing	CAF (Consider All Factors); FIP (First Important Priorities)
WHITE	"Facts & Information"	Information
RED	"Feelings & Emotions"	Emotions and Ego
BLACK	"Negative"	PMI (Plus, Minus, Interesting); Evaluation
YELLOW	"Positive"	PMI
GREEN	"New Ideas"	Concept Challenge; Yes, No, Po

White: neutral, objective

Red: emotional, angry

Black: serious, somber

Yellow: sunny, positive

Green: growth, fertility

Blue: cool, sky above

The Six types of Thinking Hat

White Hat: Similar to the calm and pure emotions associated with the color white, this type of thinking focuses on analytical, objective thinking, with an emphasis on facts and feasibility.

Red Hat: We often associate the color red with anger and heat and hence this represents emotional thinking, subjective feelings, perception, and opinion.

Black Hat: The color black has been stereotypically linked with doom and gloom and so this forms a type of thinking that is critical, skeptical, focused on risks, and identifying problems.

Yellow Hat: Often symbolizing sunshine and happiness, the yellow hat is about thinking optimistic, speculative, best-case scenarios.

Blue Hat: Blue being the color of the sky and high above creates a sense of structured thinking, high-level overview of the situation, the big picture.

Green Hat: Associated with the color of trees and nature, the green hat is about creative, associative thinking, new ideas, brainstorming, out-of-the-box.

Using of Six Thinking Hat

- 🟡 **Yellow hat** is about **positivity**. Try seeing the benefits of this decision and what opportunities it opens.
- 🟢 **Green hat** represents **creativity**. Let your mind run free and generate ideas without censoring them. Try producing creative options and solutions. Tools like the Productive Thinking Model or First Principles can help you.
- 🔴 **Red hat** is about **emotions**. How do you feel about this? Use your intuition and gut feelings. Try to see how others might react emotionally. It's a great way to bring emotions into an otherwise rational process.
- ⚪ **White hat** makes you focus on the **data**. Analyze the available data and trends. This represents a very rational approach.
- ⚫ **Black hat** represents looking at the **downside**. What are the worst-case scenarios? Take a defensive approach, imagine any potentially negative outcomes, see what might not work. Inversion might be a helpful tool here.
- 🔵 **Blue hat** is for controlling the **process**. Especially in meetings, it's good to be able to step in when there's no progress and enable the group to move forward (e.g. by shifting the thinking or discussion to a different hat/perspective).

Using of Six Thinking Hat

Activity to be performed	Sequence of HAT to be follow
Initial Ideas	Blue, White, Green, Blue
Choosing between alternatives	Blue, White, (Green), Yellow, Black, Red, Blue
Identifying Solutions	Blue, White, Black, Green, Blue
Quick Feedback	Blue, Black, Green, Blue
Strategic Planning	Blue, Yellow, Black, White, Blue, Green, Blue
Process Improvement	Blue, White, White (Other People's Views), Yellow, Black, Green, Red, Blue
Solving Problems	Blue, White, Green, Red, Yellow, Black, Green, Blue
Performance Review	Blue, Red, White, Yellow, Black, Green, Blue

White: neutral, objective

Red: emotional, angry

Black: serious, somber

Yellow: sunny, positive

Green: growth, fertility

Blue: cool, sky above

Using of Six Thinking Hat

Benefits of Six Thinking Hats

Provides a common language

Experience & intelligence of each person (Diversity of thought)

Use more of our brains

Helps people work against type, preference

Removal of ego (reduce confrontation)

Save time

Focus (one thing at a time)

Create, evaluate & implement action plans

By Using Hats

Provides a common language

Experience & intelligence of each person (Diversity of thought)

Use more of our brains

Helps people work against type, preference

Removal of ego (reduce confrontation)

Save time

Focus (one thing at a time)

Create, evaluate & implement action plans

Example of Using HAT

Let's see how using this tool might play out in an example scenario.

Suppose you're in a management meeting to decide if you should introduce a new product to your portfolio to battle declining sales.

You use the Six Thinking Hats tool to make sure the decision is considered from all possible angles.

Starting with the yellow hat, you discuss the sizable chunk of the market that this new product might cater to. It's a big opportunity for capturing a lot of revenue.

You switch to the **black** hat to look at possible downsides: what if the new product cannibalizes our existing products? What if it doesn't offer enough value for people to buy it?

Example of Using HAT

A person wearing the white hat points out that the data you have about the market shows several unmet needs. It also shows that the declining sales of the existing products signal a trend that the market as a whole is moving to different solutions.

Wearing the yellow hat again, you see that the unmet needs in the market represent a solid opportunity and it's supported by data. Considering the possible downsides, you ask: How might we make sure the new product offers enough value?

You put on the green hat and generate ideas for how you might prototype the new product and test its value with people.

Because the meeting has been running for a while now, the facilitator wearing the blue hat suggests postponing the decision until the new product is validated with people.

The group decides to wear the red hat to do a check how everyone feels about this plan. People agree that it's a high-stakes decision and it feels right to lower the risk before making the decision. They're less anxious about it now.

In this example, the group arrived at a reasonable next step toward making this decision. Using the Six Thinking Hats, every perspective was heard and the outcome was made possible by discussing the different perspectives.

The Blue HAT
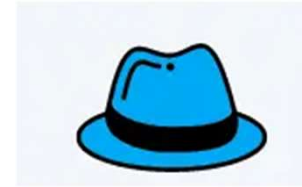
Responsible for when the group is focused on managing the overall decision-making, the blue hat mode is when the discussion's agenda and goals are formed.

Sample questions to ask while using the blue hat:

- What needs to be resolved?
- How should we define the problem?
- What are the goals or desired outcomes?
- How will the process of using each hat go?
- What kind of decision shall we arrive at?

The White HAT

Representing the process of gathering information, the white hat doesn't just tackle the details that are available for the team's reference, but also identify other pieces of information that are lacking and need to be collected.

Sample questions to ask while using the white hat:

What data is available?
What information is required?
What information is missing?
What needs to be done to gather such information?
What questions need to be asked?

The Green HAT

Used to spark novel and creative ideas, "wearing" the green hat allows for a free-flowing, think-outside-the-box process where any idea can be looked into, discussed, and noted.

Sample questions to ask while using the green hat:

Are there thought experiments we can do?
Is it possible to explore new ideas or opportunities?
What are the other options we have to carry this out?
Are there any other scenarios we can consider based on this idea to come up with new insights?
What kind of risks are we willing or able to accept?

The Yellow HAT

Typically covering the potential benefits of ideas, the yellow hat allows people to look at issues using the lens of optimism, further probing the insights gained during the green hat process.

Sample questions to ask while using the yellow hat:

Are there any opportunities for the green hat to expand on to show a clearer way of achieving the desired outcomes?
How can we lay down the factors that would make this idea beneficial or successful?
How do we define success?
How does this idea make our processes better?
What are the potential long-term benefits?

The Red HAT

Combining instincts and feelings, the people engaged in the red hat type of thinking are free to express their feelings toward the ideas passively, without having to explain or justify their fears or dislikes in a logical way.

Sample questions to ask while using the red hat:

How do we feel about the possible choices we will make?
What are our gut feelings about the idea we are proposing?
What are our initial reactions?
What kind of emotions does this idea bring out?
What does our intuition say about the solution?

The Black HAT

Often regarded as the "negative yet logical" type of thinking hat, the black hat aims to represent the act of looking at the possible scenarios that may be far from or opposite to the desired outcome, along with the risks associated with the ideas.

Sample questions to ask while using the black hat:

What are the possible failure scenarios?
How do we identify the idea's fatal flaws?
What are the potential risks and consequences we are likely to face?
What are the reasons why we should not proceed?
What might be the challenges along the way?

How to Use the Six Thinking Hats to Run Better Result

Six Thinking Hats is a powerful technique for looking at decision-making from different points of view. By introducing a structured parallel thinking process, it helps people to be more focused and mindfully involved in a discussion.

BrainStorm…

Group Review…

Vote..

Share…
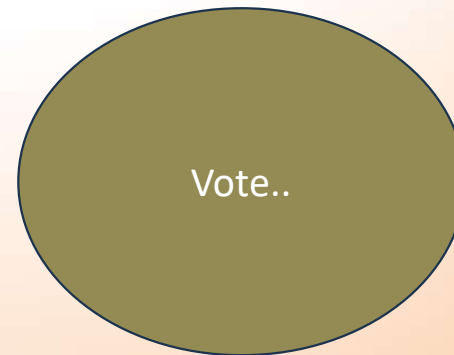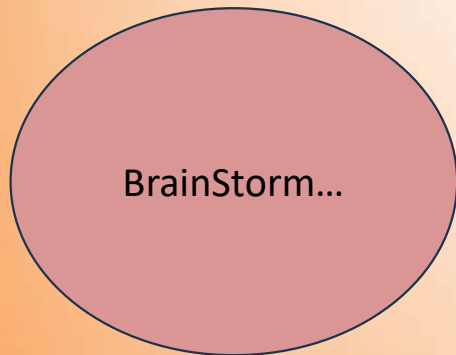
How to Use the Six Thinking Hats to Run Better Result

Brain Storm :

Facilitate the conversation (wearing the blue hat).

As an inspiration, check the following example of how to use Six Thinking Hats sequentially to resolve a problem with alternative solutions:

1. White Hat: Present the facts of the problem
2. Green Hat: Generate ideas on how the problem can be solved
3. Yellow Hat: Evaluate the ideas by listing their benefits
4. Black Hat: Evaluate the ideas by listing their drawbacks
5. Red Hat: Get everybody's gut feelings about the alternatives
6. Blue Hat: Summarize the discussion and agree on the conclusions

Group Review :

Once you have completed the brainstorm for each thinking hat, review the responses and look for common themes which can be grouped into one.
This step is more time consuming if the brainstorming was performed individually – or completed at different times and locations. Using a software tool to group ideas can significantly reduce the time and effort required in this step – and result in a better outcome.

How to Use the Six Thinking Hats to Run Better Result

Vote:

Now that there are clear themes, encourage your participants to vote on the top three ideas they would like to discuss further. You can facilitate this by advising participants to vote based on:
• the level of importance to action or implement;
• aspects that they would like to discuss or explore further;
• areas that they have questions on and require clarification.

Combining individual voting into an overall score is much easier and faster if you use any software tool, especially if you can vote on ideas individually and independently.

Share :

With the votes tallied, you can now better facilitate the discussion in the meeting and help the group come to a more considered and educated decision.
Sharing the outcomes of the Six Thinking Hats process ideas and comments with the wider group of stakeholders as well as the team is essential to getting buy in!

The results of your Six Thinking Hats should allow for the next steps of:
• Communication to relevant stakeholders.
• Further analysis using other business tools such as a SWOT Analysis for each of your top voted discussions.
• Product and design thinking activities, including customer personas..

How to Use the Six Thinking Hats to Run Better Result

Though the six thinking hats process may be tailored-fit to suit the needs of the individual or group using it, knowing its ideal step-by-step method helps direct any meeting, brainstorming, or discussion in a more practical, conflict-free way.

Having that said, what is the order of the six thinking hats? As per common terms* , this is the recommended order:

1.Blue hat
2.White hat
3.Green hat
4.Yellow hat
5.Red hat
6.Black hat

* It's best to remember that facilitators or even team members can suggest using a different hat at any point in the discussion that seems more relevant or appropriate.

THANK YOU

- **For More Information -**
- Jankrut Dave
  - +91-9426177365
  - www.Jankrut.com
  - Email – jankrut@jankrut.com
- *Training on ISO 9001 , SPC , MSA , APQP , PPAP , FMEA , G8D , 7QC Tools , Time study , Process Improvements, Six Sigma ,*