

# Six Thinking Hats



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Six Thinking Hats is a structured method of analysis that approaches a situation from six different perspectives. Created by Edward DeBono in the 1980's, it can be useful for addressing complex issues. The Forum helps a member look at an issue from multiple perspectives (the six hats). The entire Forum wears the same hat at the same time which keeps everyone unified and in alignment throughout the process.



Asking questions:  
- What do we know?  
- What do we need to know?  
- How do we get this information?



Expressing emotion:  
- What are my gut feelings?



Judging:  
- What are the difficulties & weaknesses?



Being optimistic:  
- What are the strengths & opportunities?



Being creative:  
- New ideas?  
- New opportunities?  
- How can it be improved?



Thinking about thinking:  
- What's been learned?  
- What's next?

## Snapshot Guidelines – Complex Issues

- 1) **Blue Hat/Intro:** The Coach introduces the topic and the process..... 1 min.
- 2) **White Hat/Facts:** The Presenter gives an overview of the situation (minimal Q&A) .....10 to 15 min.
- 3) **Green Hat/Ideas:** The Forum engages in brainstorming for ideas ..... 10 min.
- 4) **Silent Prep:** People prepare in silence for the next three hats, writing down their thoughts..... 5 min.
- 5) **Red Hat/Emotions:** People share their gut instinct about the situation ..... 3 to 5 min.
- 6) **Yellow Hat/Positive:** Each person offers 3 to 5 positive aspects about the situation or ideas 3 to 5 min.
- 7) **Black Hat/Negative:** Each person offers 3 to 5 negative aspects about the situation or ideas. 3 to 5 min.
- 8) **Green Hat/Ideas:** Brainstorm again on possible ideas, outcomes or scenarios .....5 to 10 minutes
- 9) **Blue Hat/Summary:** The Presenter summarizes their top 3 to 5 take-aways..... 2 minutes
- 10) **Wrap-Up:** The Forum debriefs on the process ..... 3 min.

## Moderator/Facilitator Role

- This exercise requires a high level of facilitation skills to guide the Forum through the process.
- As you move from one hat to the next, be sure to explain each hat clearly. Be thoughtful and intentional as you determine when the time is right to move to a different hat.
- The order shown above is specifically designed for tackling complex issues in a Forum setting.

## Examples

- I'm trying to decide whether to close down an unprofitable division of my company.
- I'm having problems with my three partners and I'd like to explore my options.