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Six Thinking Hats



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SIX THINKING HATS

CASE STUDIES

CUSTOMER SERVICE RESULTS SOAR WITH THE HELP OF SIX THINKING HATS

Future by Design Conference Presenter: Simona Adelina Popovici, Associate Director, Organizational Development.
MobiFon-Connex, Romania

MobiFon-Connex, the first mobile telecommunications company to win a GSM license in Romania, is the market leader. Their mission, "We make it easy for people in Romania to stay in touch and to connect to the world," has helped them focus on the needs of their customers, and to win the Best Management award from the Economist three years in a row. In 1999 they started training their employees to be better thinkers by using Six Thinking Hats® and Lateral Thinking tools. The results were so good they decided to incorporate the Six Thinking Hats® tool into all phases of their Business Process Re-engineering project. Impressive improvements in customer service were achieved.

Customer Service Soars

The average speed to answer a customer phone call went from 225 seconds to 40 seconds.

The average number of phone calls per customer, per month, dropped from 3 calls to 1.28 calls.

A new point of sales process was introduced which reduced activation time from 8 hours to less than 15 minutes.

Customer retention - customer churn was reduced by over 50%.

A bad debt process was introduced that reduced bad debt from 4% to 2.18% .

The results speak for themselves. Employees shared these comments:

"During our first opportunity to practice and use the Six Thinking Hats training — it worked! This is a good sign that we can make efforts to concentrate on a specific matter and stick to that matter."

"We found a lot of solutions in a very short period of time."

"It created a common direction for all people involved."

"Brought discipline to the group."

This is a great example of a company that undertook a big project, and understood they needed to select and implement an appropriate process tool to help employees think through all of the possibilities in order for the project to be successful. You can too.

SIX HATS FOR POST-TSUNAMI RECONSTRUCTION

Under pressure from donors, media and beneficiaries, those working in housing and settlement efforts in Sri Lanka after the tsunami used the six hats approach in order to plan and implement reconstruction efforts more effectively. The German government, through its Federal Ministry for Economic Cooperation and Development (BMZ), is supporting key Sri Lankan governmental organizations in facilitating and implementing the housing and reconstruction process.

The Sri Lankan and German counterparts jointly conducted the planning of the entire project, including its outcomes and key activities. The joint project planning sessions commenced with the six thinking hats methodology, which was used to generate a shared sense of the key issues in the reconstruction process that needed to be further explored and practically addressed.

BRAND BUILDING: THE NESTLÉ PREPARED FOOD DIVISION APPROACH

Brand Building Challenge: Strengthen brand portfolios. The product development team presented 19 new concepts they had created to the marketing employees of two sub-groups of a well known frozen food brand. Each concept was quickly evaluated using the Six Hats process to look for benefits and disconnects with the different sub-brand strategies. When the panel concluded, both groups were pleased. Each had selected concepts that fit with their individual portfolios while strengthening the overall brand portfolio. Elapsed time: just one hour.

Increase Sales Challenge: A cross-function product development/ marketing/ sales team convened an idea session for the purpose of assisting a key retail customer to increase product sales. The retailer's buying group joined the session led by a Six Hats® thinker. In less than two hours, the group generated several excellent ideas, evaluated them, selected the best ones, and created an action plan to implement them.

The Nestlé USA Food Division is home to such well-known brands as Stouffer's® and Lean Cuisine® frozen entrees, Ortega® Mexican foods, Nestlé Toll House® morsels, baking products and cookie dough, and Libby's® Pumpkin, among others.

The Six Thinking Hats® process was introduced to this Solon, Ohio-based division during a special application-based training session attended by employees from marketing, operations and product development groups. Participants in the session were impressed by the versatility of the Six Hats tool and the ease with which it can be used to quickly achieve outstanding results.

Now, many of these employees are successfully applying Six Hats thinking in a variety of situations within their own departments. Using the Green Hat, in particular, has helped those facing challenges to generate a larger array of options, often leading to more innovative solutions.

In fact, the human resources group was so impressed with the new thinking techniques that The Fundamentals of Creativity and Innovation: Six Thinking Hats® course will be offered to the division's employees.

IBM CHIEF SCIENTIST USES SIX THINKING HATS TO HELP DEVELOP CHIP THAT MIMICS HUMAN BRAIN

Featured in a Fortune Magazine Article: The New Team Work (4/28/14)

IBM Chief Scientist Uses Six Thinking Hats as a Collaboration Tool to Develop a Chip that Mimics the Human Brain

Many teams are global. Working collaboratively together to solve tough challenges is very hard to do. It can be done. The issue of Fortune Magazine (04/28/14) highlights the approach taken by IBM Fellow and chief scientist Dharmendra Modha in an article titled "The New Teamwork: Collaboration has Never Been More Crucial in Business."

The Project: Develop a chip that would mimic the human brain.

The Challenge: Corral an unwieldy team of more than 200 of the brightest scientists at eight different IBM labs, two government laboratories, and five university campuses with diverse areas of expertise.

The Result: Modha's team successfully demonstrated a brain-inspired chip architecture.

The Method: The journalist describes it this way, "An old school organizational technique, Six Thinking Hats, not software saved the day."

Success tips for you:

When you're leading a project team, select a process and tools for the team to use. Ensure each team member understands each process step and is competent using the tools. This approach facilitates effective collaboration, communication, and creativity. Your job depends on the unique insights you bring to your work, your team, your colleagues, and your customers.

People want to know what you think. Thinking drives the future. Your thinking toolkit needs to be robust. If you're missing some thinking tools, it's time to skill-up. Resist getting caught up in the "technology trap." Sometimes productive thinking will do the trick; after all, your brain is always with you. If you need to be more collaborative, select processes and tools that will help you group gang up on the challenge instead of ganging up on each other.

INTERNATIONAL BANK ABN AMRO SEES EMPLOYEE IDEAS JUMP FROM 60 TO 900 IN ONE YEAR THE STORY:

ABN AMRO is a prominent international bank with 3,000 branches in 60 countries. In 2001, Mary Lou Leistikow, a Certified de Bono Instructor with QréaCom, was at a conference when an ABN AMRO manager approached her with a challenge. The Dutch branch of ABN AMRO employed more than 7,000 people, yet their employee suggestion box averaged merely 60 suggestions per year. This particular manager felt certain that the employees would offer more opinions and suggestions if creativity became a higher priority. They discussed the issue at some length, and the manager asked Mary Lou to make ABN AMRO more creative.

Mary Lou's first action was to get rid of the suggestion box. Then she went to the top managers and asked them for commitment to creativity. She proposed a program called "The Golden Idea" to encourage innovation among employees. Mary Lou explained the benefit of taking the employees' ideas seriously, and she asked the managers to commit to implementing one new idea per quarter. They agreed.

To implement "The Golden Idea" Mary Lou held three half-day Green Hat sessions with 20 employees at a time. She wanted to teach a small group of employees about creativity, hoping they would spread the word to the rest of the company. During the half-day sessions, the employees generated 300 completely new ideas that would improve business. This was a great start to the new program.

INTERNATIONAL BANK ABN AMRO SEES EMPLOYEE IDEAS JUMP FROM 60 TO 900 IN ONE YEAR THE STORY:

Each quarter, the management team asked specific questions about a particular topic, such as, “How can we use the Internet more with our customers?” or “How can we improve communication within the branch?” An internal web page was set up as a way for employees to quickly submit ideas. Within the first year, employees had more than 600 ideas listed, partly because the website was such a convenient repository.

Each quarter, a creative team sifted through all the ideas and selected the ten best. Then, they used the Six Thinking Hats to decide which five ideas to present to the senior managers. The managers then chose which idea to implement. Because the senior leadership team had committed to evaluate the ideas and implement the best one, employees finally felt as though they had an effective vehicle through which to voice their opinions. There have been numerous topics and hundreds of ideas exchanged since “The Golden Idea” began. ABN AMRO continues to improve its customer care and internal strength with the assistance of its employees and their Green Hat suggestions.

Summary: ABN AMRO used Six Thinking Hats to help employees generate and present new ideas to top management.

Challenge: Encourage employees to produce more ideas.

Method: Create the "Golden Idea" program incorporating Six Thinking Hats.

Result: Employee ideas jump from 60 to 900 in one year.

SIX THINKING HATS AT BOSCH SAVES MEETING TIME AND KEEPS EGOS IN CHECK

Future by Design Conference Presenter: Bernard Balle, Bosch, Germany

Background: Bosch, a global leader in automotive technology, headquartered in Germany, generated \$43 billion in sales during 2000. Bernard Balle, internal coordinator for the process improvement process, in the thermo technology division, shared this experience using the Six Thinking Hats® tool with a cross culture group.

Four years ago Edward de Bono introduced the thermo technology group, an engineering based division within the company, to his thinking techniques. This sparked Bernard Balle to become a certified Six Thinking Hats® instructor to conduct this training. He also facilitates meetings using the Six Thinking Hats® method.

Challenge: A catastrophe meeting was called with the mandate, "To develop a new appliance." Participants flew in from Germany, Great Britain, France, Turkey and Portugal. There was a wide variance in English proficiency among the group members, not to mention cultural assumptions about how the people from the different countries would contribute to the challenge.

The Six Hats was used during a meeting that lasted one and a half hours. The group concluded they did not have enough white hat—information, data, and facts, to be able to productively participate in a meeting to develop a new appliance. Typically, groups would go on and on and on to fill up the time allotment, wasting time, accomplishing nothing. The tool enabled the group to recognize they needed to break, collect information, and plan another meeting, which they did; refreshing and productive actions.

SIX THINKING HATS AT BOSCH SAVES MEETING TIME AND KEEPS EGOS IN CHECK

Bernard reported that use of the Six Hats structure:

Enabled the quiet people to contribute;

Included a proper place for feelings and emotions to be expressed;

Surprised some people attending that every person attending had clever ideas to contribute to the challenge. Good ideas weren't exclusive to a group from one country.

Bernard also shared the following tips:

Hang a Six Thinking Hat® poster in every meeting room to remind teams to use the tool.

Provide a useful job aid. Bernard had a tent card designed as a Six Thinking Hats® reminder for everyone which resulted from a marketing idea. Each month a different tent card is distributed to reinforce something important for employees. They discovered the only tent card that lasted longer than a month was the Six Thinking Hats® card.

de Bono Thinking Systems for Business Clients Since 2001

200 workshops every year

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attended the workshop

As a de Bono Thinking Systems sub-distributor, we help clients:

Identify and develop workable opportunities to secure the future
Develop high-potential professionals to lead thinking together meetings that deliver remarkable results. We help clients challenge their thinking about their business to prepare them better to think about and prepare for the future; this usually requires a good dose of creativity. We teach, We facilitate, We train, We practice. It helps us become a better team of trainers and helps us earn your business. Let's work together to strengthen your future.

Dr Edward de Bono

**LATERAL
THINKING**

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**SIX THINKING
HATS**

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**POWER OF
PERCEPTION**

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91 98116-30393

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