

"The Creative Habit went down a storm with a group of people I know are not easy to please!"  
Sarah Lawrence, Communications Lead, CEIS Planning & Performance Team, Centrica

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## SIX THINKING HATS

**Six Thinking Hats? It all sounds a bit namby-pamby!** Yes, it sounds awful at first! Stay with us though... Edward de Bono proposes that our minds naturally process ideas through up to half a dozen different 'filters', including positive & negative thoughts, facts and emotions...

**But people tend to do it in a disorderly mish-mash,** and without much awareness! So if a person really likes an idea, for example, they're inclined to be dismissive of some of the problems associated with it, and carry on regardless.

**Edward de Bono's 'Six Thinking Hats'** is a system that uses metaphorical hats to represent each of six thinking 'filters'. This means that ideas can be more thoroughly explored and communicated not only one on one, but in large groups as well. Let's take a quick look at the hats...

**White Hat:** The White Hat lets you present facts, figures and information needs & gaps. White Hat thinking means putting aside any objections opinions and emotions to just look at data.

**Red Hat:** This lets you put forward your intuition, feelings and emotions without justifying them. "I hate it" is a Red Hat remark! Often, one introduces this sort of comment before trying to justify it with dubious logic. The Red Hat gives full permission to declare feelings without logic – you're allowed to just hate it without an explanation!

**Black Hat:** A hat for flaw finding, thinking about caution, concerns, judgment – and playing Devil's Advocate! Whereas this thinking style may seem negative, it is, nevertheless, essential... We like people to remember that the word 'critical' means two things: 'Of criticism', obviously, but it also means absolutely necessary. When you 'put on the Black Hat', you're able to highlight problems that need solving and address issues when ideas that don't fit the facts, are fundamentally flawed or prohibitively expensive, etc.

**Yellow Hat:** The positive hat! This style explores why things will work and offers benefits, etc. One uses it when looking forward to the results of proposed actions, and to find value in what's already happened; e.g. "It's broken... How do we make the best of it?"

**Green Hat:** This metaphorical millinery style represents creativity, ideation, alternatives, proposals, interests, possibilities and changes! It has no limits imposed upon it by 'other hat' thinking, since so many great ideas form from less suitable ones. So if you were to hold a Creative Brainstorming session with a team of people, you'd almost certainly want them to predominantly use Green Hat thinking... That's to say there'd be no objections, facts, or opinions getting in the way of just being creative!

**Blue Hat:** You can think of this as the 'overview' or 'control' hat. When someone stands up and explains what 'Six Thinking Hats' are, or calls for a change of hat colour in a dialogue, they're wearing the Blue Hat! It helps us think about 'thinking'. So "This is a Green Hat meeting..." is a Blue Hat statement!



**Objection!** There are plenty of reasons why some people won't ever bother with Edward de Bono's Six Thinking Hats. In fact, we could list them here as part of a Black Hat thinking exercise! However, there's really only one reason to try it, and it's this: If you're open minded, it can massively improve the quality of your creative thinking!

**Buy the Book:** Six Thinking Hats is available all over the place! Get copies from Waterstone's, or Amazon. It's a phenomenal system, used by millions of creative people all over the world! As a taster, here are some of the hat combinations that you might want to use to get a feel for it... But do yourself a favour: skip them! Buy the book and get the most out of it...

**New ideas:** Blue, White, Green

**New client briefs:** Red, Blue, White, Green

**Improvement:** Black, Green

**Explanation:** White, Green

**Design:** Blue, Green, Red

**Possibilities:** Green, Blue

**Alternatives:** Green, Yellow, Black

**Full Creative:** (Sometimes Red first!) Blue, Green, White, Green, Blue, Yellow, Red, Blue

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