

THINKING HATS



BUSINESS
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Thinking Hats

Thinking Hats helps you to see all sides of an idea. With five colored hats you shape your idea better and clearer. Each color stands for a specific way of thinking, from optimistic to pessimistic. By wearing the “hats” mentally you can easily focus or redirect thoughts. With a complete view on the idea you can better assess the value of your idea.

Template & example

Use the Thinking Hats Canvas template to make a large printout (page 4). Use this printout to do an analysis on your idea or brainstorm with others. Have a look at the example of the innovative Bakery Alink to see how they have used the Thinking Hats (page 5).

How to use

You can use the Thinking Hats in two ways; by yourself or in a group setting which may be more fruitful.

There are 5 colored hats:

| | |
|------------|---|
| White Hat | stands for information known about the idea. With this hat you write down only facts about the idea. |
| Yellow Hat | symbolizes brightness and optimism. Under this hat you explore why the idea will work. You probe for value and benefit. |
| Black Hat | is judgment. Spot the difficulties and dangers; where the idea might not work. <i>Warning: do not overuse this hat.</i> |
| Red Hat | signifies feelings, hunches and intuition. You can share fears, likes, dislikes, loves, and hates. |
| Green Hat | focuses on the possibilities, alternatives, and new ideas. You can express new concepts and new perceptions. |

Thinking Hats for yourself

This will help you to structure your own thoughts. Each hat on the Canvas stands for a specific way of thinking. At every box at the canvas you wear the corresponding hat and write down your thoughts. This helps you to look at your idea from different angles. You can use the filled in Thinking Hats Canvas to communicate your idea to others. You can also use it to get a first impression about your idea, i.e. if your idea has more benefits or more issues.

Thinking Hats in a group setting

In a group conversation or discussion, the Thinking Hats help everyone to look from the same direction at the same time. The discussion will be more focused and the group tends to be more collaborative. Or each participant in the group can mentally wear one of the hats and keeps reasoning from the corresponding perspective. In a group setting a sixth colored hat is introduced:

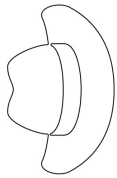
Blue Hat is used to manage the thinking process. It helps you to structure how the meeting will be conducted.

The steps in using Thinking Hats in a group setting are:

- The group will start with the Blue Hat. Discuss how the meeting will be conducted and develop the goals.
- Next is the White Hat. Describe the idea just with the facts. What is it and how does it work? This will give everybody a clear image of the idea.
- Continue with the Yellow Hat and the Black Hat. Explore the value and the difficulties of the idea.
- The Red Hat is used to collect opinions and reactions to the idea.
- The last hat is the Green Hat. Use this to think of other ideas or solutions.
- Write down the main points and conclusions on the Thinking Hats Canvas.

thinking hats

name _____



describe the idea -
just with facts



describe why the idea will
work - benefits and value



describe why the idea will
not work - difficulties and
dangers

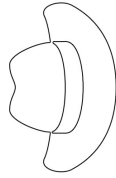


describe feelings, hunches and
intuition towards the idea



describe alternatives for the idea -
new ideas

date _____



describe the idea -
just with facts

Fresh from yesterday

Selling bread from yesterday to
customers for €1,- in a different store

Instead of throwing or giving bread
away at the end of the day, the bread
is moved to a different store to be sold
for a lower price



describe why the idea will
work - benefits and value

Less throwing away of bread

Less waste of materials

Still sell one day old bread and earn
some money instead of giving or
throwing it away

Gaining an additional customer
segment of people who do not want or
are not able to spend money on bread



describe why the idea will
not work - difficulties and
dangers

Customers do not want to buy one day
old bread

The money earned in the store is not
enough to cover the costs of opening
and sustaining an additional store

The bakery gets a bad reputation
when a customer buys a bread that is
not fresh anymore



describe feelings, hunches and
intuition towards the idea

What about the charities who normally would receive the one
day old bread?

A good initiative to reduce all the waste of still good food

Only people with a very low income would buy this bread and
they can normally get it from a charity



describe alternatives for the idea -
new ideas

Instead of opening a completely new store, just add a few
shelves in the current stores with the one day old bread

Only bake bread based on orders to avoid baking too much
bread causing leftovers