How to solve Case Studies VII

The 6 Thinking Hats (Edward de Bono)
A thinking tool for group discussion

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The Challenge of Group Discussion

• Meetings are sometimes frustrating when they are unfocused, unstructured.
• Members may react negatively to other members ideas because of ego, or because they are in a different state of mind...

Example:

• One Marketing Manager may be very optimistic about a new project: “hey, why don’t we make a Sunday Brunch Buffet at the Restaurant?”
• The Chef may interrupt and say: “Another Buffet would kill the food cost, this is a really bad idea”
• A restaurant manager may say: “Sorry I can’t work on Sundays”...

The 6 Thinking Hats benefits by E. de Bono

Parallel thinking versus Argument

• The essence of parallel thinking is that at any moment everyone is looking in the same direction (but the direction can be changed)
• The thinkers are asked to look at different directions symbolized by colored hats
• This removes power struggles, ego, and saves time because we go “one thing at the time”
White Hat

- White is neutral and objective. The white hat is concerned with objectives, facts and figures
  - What info do we have?
  - What info do we need?
  - What info is missing?
  - What questions do we need to ask?
  - How are we going to get the info we need?

Red Hat

- Red suggests anger (seeing red), rage and emotions. The red hat gives the emotional view
  - The opposite of neutral, objective information.
  - No need to justify
  - No need to give reasons or the basis
  - Intuitions and hunches, gut feelings

Black Hat

- Black hat is somber and serious. The black hat is cautious and careful. It points out the weaknesses in an idea
  - Pointing out difficulties and problems
  - Staying within the frame of law
  - Why something may not work
  - Risks about the future

Yellow Hat

- Yellow is sunny and positive. The yellow hat is optimistic and covers hope and positive thinking
  - Focus on benefits
  - Constructive thinking and making things happen
  - Proposal and suggestions
  - Best possible scenario
  - Looking at “if”

Green Hat

- Green is grass, vegetation and abundant, fertile growth. The green hat indicates creativity and new ideas
  - New ideas, concepts and perceptions
  - Humor and lateral thinking
  - Self-organizing information system
  - Alternatives and more alternatives, new approaches to problems

Blue Hat

- Blue is cool, and it is also the color of the sky, which is above everything else. The blue hat is concerned with control, the organization of the thinking process and the use of other hats
  - Thinking about thinking
  - Instructions organization process control of other hats
In practice

• Some rules: The hats are always referred to by their color and never by their function:
  – I want you to take off your black hat for now…
  – Let us all put on our red thinking hat for a minute…
  – That’s fine for yellow thinking, now let’s have the white hat…
  – I think we need some green hat here…
  – Maybe we should have some white hat on this…

• The hats used in sequence:
  – The Blue hat should always start and finish sessions:
    • At the beginning, the blue hat indicates:
      – Why we are here,
      – What we are thinking about,
      – The problem/situation definition
      – Objectives and end results
      – Background and plan for discussion
  – At the end, the blue hat indicates:
    – What we have achieved
    – Outcome
    – Conclusion
    – Design, solution and next steps

Exercise

• Pick one of the processes you have learned in this class (SA, PA, DA, PPA) and try to put a “hat” on each step:

Situation Appraisal:

RECOGNIZE CONCERNS
- Current or future
- Deviations
- Threats
- Opportunities

SEPARATE:
- Break broad concerns into more clearly defined sub-concerns
- List additional concerns that must be resolved

SET PRIORITIES:
- Identify and evaluate concerns to work on;
- Set priorities

PLAN FOR RESOLUTION:
- Select the appropriate process to solve each concern
- Plan the Who, What, Where, When and Extent of the solution

GAME: LOST ON THE MOON

• Break in groups
• Read the group assignment
• Use a rational process and the 6 thinking hats.
  – Perform your personal (individual) ranking first (on your own sheet of paper)
  – Perform your group ranking on Group Sheet (Appendix 4)
• Debriefing (NASA’s Ranking)
• Discussion Questions