

THINKING HATS

Using the Thinking Hats method for peer coaching

Using “Thinking Hats” for problem solving and decision making is a simple method whereby lateral divergent thinking helps to be more productive, focused and intentional in conversations.

Each hat assumes a different role, a type and direction of thinking. This is not prescribed but is a guide for the conversation to move out of the normal known to the out of the box, unknown thinking.

Anyone can apply this method and it can be used with multiple hats or with a select few. The idea is to use one hat at a time and for them to build on each other in a fruitful dialogue. Once information is gathered regarding the objective, facts & figures, data & information, the focus turns to the solution using the various perspectives of lateral thinking

Benefits

- Focused thinking
- Provides a common language
- Diversity of thought, multiple perspectives
- Helps uncover bias and helps people work against preference and their own judgement
- Saves time

Process

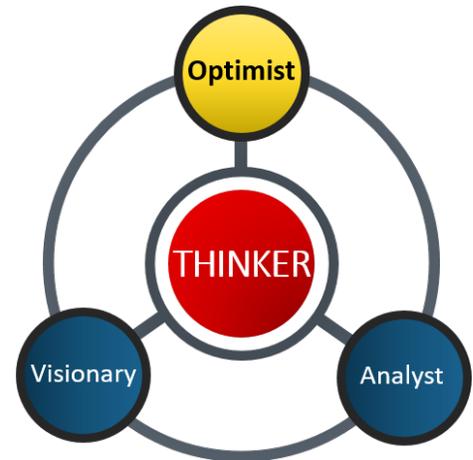
1. EACH LISTENER chooses one THINKING HAT (role)
2. THINKER brings to the conversation a challenge they have been thinking about
3. THINKER shares briefly what the issue is
4. ONE of the LISTENERS asks a question to the THINKER in line with the HAT role (you can refer to some sample questions below)
5. THINKER responds and everyone **listens to understand, not to respond**
6. LISTENERS 2 & 3 ask questions from their own HAT perspective
7. LISTENERS take turns to use each of the HATS
8. A natural dialogue occurs where there is a flow of flip-flopping between all the hats where everyone takes turns, one HAT at a time.
9. The objective is for the **THINKER to reflect**, work through the challenge and **come up with a great solution**

OPTIMIST HAT

- Hunches, intuitions, impressions, gut instincts
- Doesn't have to be logical or consistent
- No justifications, reasons, or basis
- Put yourself in the other persons shoes
- Very confident that there is always a solution

Sample Questions

- What do you need to get it moving?
- Who could you leverage to implement?
- What positive outcomes do you see?
- Why are you waiting for ? What small step could you take?
- What is your gut reaction to the situation?
- What emotions are involved - fear, anger, hatred, suspicion, enthusiasm, joy?
- How can you overcome uncertainty and find a sense of autonomy instead?

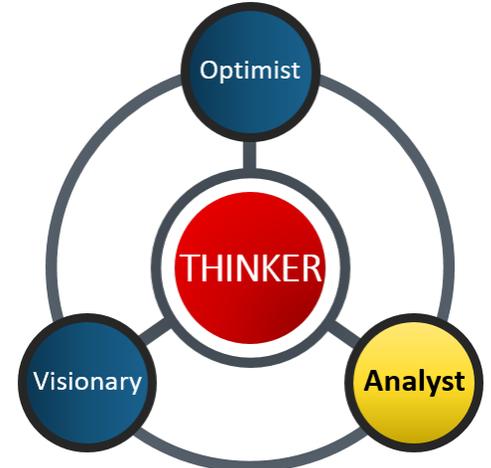


ANALYST HAT

- Fact checker looking for evidence and data
- Focuses on the objective
- Mirrors back, summarizes and paraphrases
- Can play devil's advocate to get to the truth and not let them off the hook

Sample Questions

- What is the value or benefit in this?
- Is this true? Is this really really true?
- How do you know?
- How do you measure this?
- Why are you here at this point and not at another?
- Where do you want to end up?
- What options do you have?
- What really is at stake here?
- What crucial decision needs to be made?



VISIONARY HAT

- Positive whilst being strategic
- Thinks big picture and connects the dots
- Holds vivid helicopter view of the solution
- Thinks in best scenarios, ideal outcomes
- Looks beyond what's possible

Sample Questions

- What is your vision for how this can move forward?
- Why is this worth doing?
- What ripple effects will this have for you, for other stakeholders, for the business?
- How can you think outside the box?
- How could you reshape the idea or context?
- How would you describe this from 30,000 feet?
- What would you do if you could start from scratch?
- How would it look/ feel like if you had solved this?
- What would the ideal future look like?

