

THINKING HATS



How to use
Template
Example

Thinking Hats

Thinking Hats help you to see all sides of an idea. With five coloured 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.

Tips for use

You can use the Thinking Hats in two ways; by yourself or in a group setting which may be more fruitful. To let the Thinking Hats come to life it is fun to wear actual coloured hats.

Use the Thinking Hats template to make a large printout. 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.

How to use

There are 5 coloured hats:

- The White Hat stands for information known about the idea. With this hat you write down only facts about the idea.
- The Yellow Hat symbolises brightness and optimism. Under this hat you explore why the idea will work. You probe for value and benefit.

- The Black Hat is judgment. Spot the difficulties and dangers; where the idea might not work. Warning: do not overuse this hat.
- The Red Hat signifies feelings, hunches and intuition. You can share fears, likes, dislikes, loves, and hates.
- The 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 stands for a specific way of thinking. At every box on the template 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, and evaluate 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. In a group setting a sixth coloured hat is introduced:

- The 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 template.

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 the feelings, hunches and intuition
towards the idea



describe alternatives for the idea - new ideas

Example Bakery Alink

industry	Bakery
products & services	Bread and pastries
size of business	28 employees
revenue	€ 315,000
location	Rome



Grandpa Gerald Alink started a bakery in 1932. This bakery was then passed on from father to son. A family business with three generations of craftsmanship. Meanwhile, there are several bakeries spread through the region. In the modern bakery, experts deliver top quality every day. The assortment contains more than 100 types of bread and a large variety of pastries. All products are made according to the wishes of the customers. Of course, with regard for craftsmanship, hygiene and environmental regulations.

Thinking Hats for Bakery Alink

In this example the focus lies on Bread. An important goal of the bakery is to guarantee oven-fresh bread. As a result, a lot of bread is discarded (sometimes given away) at the end of the day. Bakers have been asked to supply ideas to reduce this waste. In the example one of the ideas is further explored with the Thinking Hats. The proposal is to sell bread from yesterday, in a separate store, at a reduced price. The chances and problems of this idea are described under the different hats.



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 the 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