



6 Thinking Hats

Why

At some point in your ideation sessions, you'll have reached a critical mass of ideas, and it will become unproductive to attempt to keep pushing for more. This is referred to as the 'convergent stage' where ideas are evaluated, compared, ranked, clustered and even ditched in an attempt to pull together a few *great* ideas to *act on*. Right now, the aim is spotting potential winners, or combinations of winning attributes, from a number of ideas.

The Six Thinking Hats will help you apply the idea criteria which are right for your current design challenge. These methods will help you work through the pile of ideas which you've generated and select the best ones, which you can start prototyping and testing.

The Six Thinking Hats Technique provides a range of thinking styles to apply to idea selection.

Best practice: How

- The facilitator should encourage the participants to evaluate and consider all the ideas through six various mindsets and thinking styles so as to uncover the widest range of possible angles on the ideas being assessed. It helps break participants out of their set styles of thinking and forces them to look at the ideas being assessed from multiple viewpoints and assessment criteria.

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- **White Hat:** The White Hat calls for information which is *known* or *needed*. It's all about this: 'The facts, and nothing but the facts.'
- **Yellow Hat:** The Yellow Hat symbolizes *optimism, confidence, and brightness*. Under this hat, you explore the positives and probe for value and benefit.
- **Black Hat:** The Black Hat is all about *judgement*. When you put on this hat, you're the devil's advocate where you try to figure out what or why something may *not* work. It's now your job to spot the difficulties and dangers and ask where things might go wrong. This is probably the most powerful and useful of the hats, but it's a problem if you overuse it.
- **Red Hat:** The Red Hat calls for *feelings, hunches, and intuition*. When you use this hat, you should focus on expressing emotions and feelings and share fears, likes, dislikes, loves, and hates.
- **Green Hat:** The Green Hat focuses on *creativity*: the possibilities, alternatives, and new ideas. It's your opportunity to express new concepts and new insights.
- **Blue Hat:** The Blue Hat is used to *manage* the *thinking* process. It's your control mechanism that ensures the Six Thinking Hats guidelines are observed.

