

# How to wear your six thinking hats in business management

[Business](#)



No, this doesn't mean you need to think with your baseball cap on, but it does mean that you need to think and prioritize with your business to make sure that you are successful. There are six thinking hats in business analysis and you should look at this as a way to help you to better understand how to make your business run more smoothly.

A lot of companies that are growing and are working around the world, will use these top tips to help to make sure that they're focusing on things like growth. In looking at their business, they want to assess (think about) their different types of needs. By looking at the separate areas the six thinking hats fall under and seeing how these roles are clearly defined, you can make sure that you focus on different aspects or parts of your business.

Sometimes in business, that might mean that you have to actually switch hats and focus on a different direction. Let's look at the six thinking hats to better understand the different areas that you can focus on with your business.

### 1. The Yellow Hat

Yellow stands for bright things; it's positive and you think about the sunshine. This is the optimism and this is how you would look at things that are valuable and will help to benefit your business.

When a company starts thinking about different strategies, they want to look at the big picture and they also want to see the bright side of what a new product might introduce.

They might want to think about a new value or a new benefit. When Ford and Dodge came out with a TV camera that was behind the bumper, they did this to help parents to be able to make sure that their children weren't behind their vehicles when they backed up. The reason they had this idea was because it was a problem that they needed to fix and to solve.

## 2. The White Hat

The white hat is about information or knowledge. This is when you want to focus on just the facts. Look at the white as being a blank canvas where you only put in the actual information. When Toyota had a problem with their brakes, they were having problems with people losing control of their vehicles while they were driving. They needed to fix this right away. They didn't want to hear people blaming other departments on why the brakes failed or problems with engineering. They needed to hear clear cut reasons why the brakes were bad so they could issue a recall.

## 3. The Red Hat

When we think of red, of course we think of emotion. We always think of red as rage and anger, but it can also be fear, and feelings that are expressed. Any company that does an advertising piece, whether it's online or in print, has to think about the emotions that the ad will emit (cause). There was a commercial recently where a little girl was being adopted and her mom learned sign language so she could speak to the little girl who was deaf. Companies that presented this ad on TV were trying to get a certain emotion from people such as compassion and comfort. They also wanted to identify

with the public and understand that there are people who may be deaf so that's why they used sign language in the ad which is something that you rarely see.

#### 4. The Black Hat

The black hat represents difficulties, problems, things that aren't working and judgment. This is an area where you would address things that might go wrong and think about ways how to fix them. This particular hat is looked at a lot because any product or service that you're going to have, you want to think about what could potentially go wrong.

A few years ago, a very popular playpen came out for toddlers. The problem was when toddlers were learning how to walk, if the baby put their finger in the metal bracket as they tried to pull themselves up, the hinge would come undone and it would hurt their fingers. The company had to recall this right away, but had they tested it more thoroughly ahead of time they wouldn't have had to do that. Sometimes companies will come out with a product that they don't really test well enough to ensure that it won't be harmful to the public. That's why you have a black hat which can spot out different dangers and even demonstrate areas where something can go wrong with a new product or service.

If you think about the Walmart ads over the holidays, they were advertising TVs for \$10 and less. The problem was that they had people coming to their stores right before Christmas and crowds of people rushed the door to get the TVs. They ended up crushing a lot of people and severely injuring some.

Because they didn't anticipate this, lawsuits took place. That's why the black hat is important because you have to make sure you look at every area that could go wrong. They should have had security in place.

#### 5. The Green Hat

If you look at green as growth, the green hat represents possibilities, new ideas, growth, and opportunities. This may be a way to expand. If you look at a company like Chipotle, right now they're doing great because so many people love their food. The problem with Chipotle is - and this is where the black hat will come in, after a while people are going to get tired of the same food. We might change and put the green hat on and say a new opportunity is they come out with a new menu. That's why you always have to think about future opportunities and things that may come up so you know how to get ready for them. And that's where the last hat comes in.

#### 6. The Blue Hat

The blue hat is used in the actual thinking process that you would go through with products and services. Look at this as a way to make sure you know how to balance out the other hats that are involved. The blue hat might be on and you're thinking about that Chipotle restaurant, but you know that you don't want to take out the old menu completely. The black hat might say people will get upset if you change the menu entirely. The green hat might say, let's add an extra recipe or two to the menu and that will draw in new customers.

When you start thinking about your business, ultimately your goal is to wear all of the six thinking hats. Think about every area of service and products as you work towards building success in your corporation or company.

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