# EDWARD DE BONO METHODS

## Application in Malaysia Context

# 30 & 50

cases          exercises

from the 1st independent De Bono consultant

THINKING EXERCISES INCLUDED

" Perception is real even when it is not reality "

- Edward de Bono

# FOREWORD

Thinking is the most important human skill. Nothing is more important than thinking. We use thinking to enjoy and deliver the values we hold. We use thinking to design the future. The quality of our future will depend directly on the quality of our thinking.

On the whole, our thinking is not very good. We rely on recognising standard situations and then providing the standard answer. This is excellent but it is not good enough. We need to do far better.

If I believe our thinking was excellent I would be very pessimistic about the future of the world. It is because our thinking can be greatly improved that I am an optimist.

There are simple and effective thinking 'tools' that can be learned, practised and used. It is not enough just to read about them. You have to use them. Training is essential.

These methods are now in use in corporations all around the world. Some of the methods are used in thousands of schools and in whole countries.

Thinking is a skill. Thinking skill can be learned.

The great value of this book is that it shows how the thinking skills can be used in real life situations. Thinking is not academic philosophy but must work in  real life.

The Prophet Mohammad in the Hadith has some very powerful things to say about thinking: "One hour of thinking about the works of the Creator is worth more than seventy years of prayer!".

Read this book - and then take the training.

**Edward de Bono**
London

This book is available at special quantity discounts to use as promotions and corporate training programmes. For further information, please write to the Senior Manager - Corporate Service at the address above.

# Preface

Contents

"A lot of the approaches to creativity are, to my mind, motivation and also the notion that creativity is just a little bit of art, just to express yourself. That's not real creativity, those are ideas and concepts.  Most of the approaches to creativity are very weak and consist of brainstorming, feeling free & being a bit crazy; those are very weak."

- Edward de Bono

# PREFACE

In this 2nd edition, the revisions include more cases and new exercises to encourage readers to practice their thinking and creativity skills My main goal is to encourage and motivate anyone who has adopted de Bono's creativity methods to continuously use and apply them in upgrading their lifestyles. All individuals and corporations are under tremendous pressures as competition intensifies. To continue to do the same thing in the hope that it will produce better results is not enough. Everyone needs to add values to their services, processes and products. Creativity is an important element in values creation and it goes beyond cost cutting and maintenance. De Bono's creativity process will show you how, in practice, to think creativity and constructively.

There is no short cut than keep practicing the thinking tools. All de Bono's thinking tools are simple and practical. The tools are grounded in a system model on how the brain works in forming self-organizing information systems. Each of the cases illustrates an application on specific needs; therefore, every application is govern by the learning environment, nature of business and the legislations

I would like to thank the following people who have motivate and inspire me in one way or another to complete this book:

- My Boss, Guru, Mentor and personal friend Dr Edward de Bono, the regional distributor and Master Trainers, Lady Linda Low & Sir Dr. Peter Low for their advice, support and motivation.

- My clients, both individuals and corporations who have shared numerous experiences during the training sessions, consulting assignments and meeting sessions.

- All the participants who have attended my training sessions on de Bono's Six Thinking Hats, Lateral Thinking Applications and Direct Attention Thinking Tools, for giving me endless interesting ideas.

- My team members for their continuous support.

# "THE SIX THINKING HATS CLARIFY AND SIMPLIFY THE THINKING PROCESS"

Dr de Bono invented the Six Thinking Hats method in early 1980s and touches on the crucial aspects of the way we think and react towards other people and the environment. The Six Hats method is a framework for thinking which is used to improve meetings and team productivity. The system separates the different types of thinking-emotions from facts, positive from negative, critical from creative. As a result, it does not allow judgmental thinking to dominate as in normal thinking. Experience has shown that Six Hats system is much more powerful and constructive than arguments or discussions.

The six hats represent six modes of thinking and are directions to think rather than labels for thinking. In other words, the hats are used proactively rather than reactively. At any moment all thinkers involved are thinking in the same 'direction.' One or other of the six coloured hats indicates the direction. For example, the White Hat requires an attention to information: 'What do we have? What do we need? What is missing? When the Green Hat is used everyone makes a creative effort: new ideas, alternatives, modifications of an idea, possibilities, provocation, etc.

The method promotes thorough inputs from everyone in a discussion. In Dr. de Bono's words, it 'separates ego from performance'. Everyone is able to contribute to the exploration without denting egos as they are just using the white hat or whatever hat. The six hats system encourages performance rather than ego defense. For example, a critical person who is wearing a black hat during green hat thinking will feel awkward and at a disadvantage for the first two minutes before he / she takes off the black hat and put on the green hat as well.

The key point is that a hat is a direction to think rather than a label for thinking. According to Dr de Bono, the theoretical reasons to use the Six Thinking Hats are to:

- encourage Parallel Thinking
- encourage full-spectrum thinking
- separate ego from performance



Six Thinking Hats Method®

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# SIX THINKING HATS

There are six coloured hats and each colour represents a type of thinking. The thinker can put on or take off one of these hats to indicate the type of thinking being used. The hats must never be used to categorize individuals and label individuals, even though their behaviour may seem to reflect this. When 'Six Hats' is used in a group, everybody wears the same hat at the same time. This means that everyone is now thinking parallel in the same direction and is thinking about the subject matter.

## White Hat thinking
The white hat indicates an exclusive focus on information, facts, data or needs. What information is available? What information is needed? What information is missing? How are we going to get the information we need? For example, "I need more data at this point before I can proceed..."

## Red Hat thinking
The red hat covers intuition, feelings and emotions. I allow the thinker to put forward an intuition without any reasons or justifications. For example, "Putting on my red hat, I think this idea needs more polishing."

## Black Hat thinking
This is 'logical negative'. The black hat is for judgment and caution. It is one of the most useful and valuable hats when it is used appropriately. The black hat is used to point out why an idea does not fit the facts, the available experience, the system in use or the policy. For example, "Wearing my black hat, I see that we do not have the expertise in this...."

## Yellow Hat thinking
This is 'logical positive'. In this hat, the thinker seeks out the values and benefits. The thinker looks at how the idea or proposed action can be made workable and also to find something of value in what has already happened. For example, "Putting on my yellow hat, the benefits of this action are…..."

## Green Hat thinking

The Green Hat is a hat of creativity, alternatives, possibilities and provocations. This is an action hat as it opens up possibilities. For example, "Let us think of some green hat ideas to overcome the weaknesses of…."

## Blue Hat thinking

The blue hat is the overview or process control. It looks at the thinking about the subject while other hats are thinking about the subject matter. In Dr. de Bono's term, the blue hat is concerned with 'meta-cognition'. For example, "Putting on my blue hat, I feel we should look at the values of the ideas before we throw them away."

The relevant book is **Six Thinking Hats,** London, Penguin Book; Boston, Mass., Little, Brown & Co.

> " Because the Six Hats system quickly becomes a neutral game, the method provides a very convenient way to switch thinking or to ask for a certain type of thinking "
>
> – Edward de Bono"
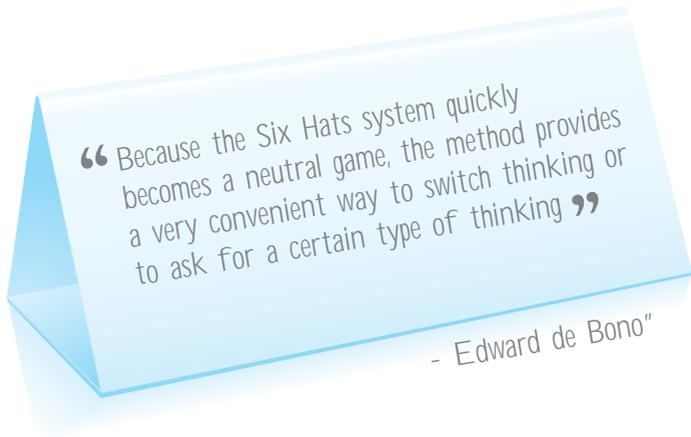
# "Lateral Thinking is seeking to solve problems by apparently illogical means and encourages out of the box thinking"
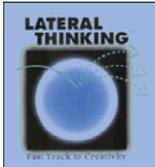
Dr de Bono writes in 'Serious Creativity', how he became interested in the sort of thinking that computers could not do: creative and perceptive thinking. He also created the term 'lateral thinking' in 1967 which now has an entry in the Oxford English Dictionary which reads: "seeking to solve problems by unorthodox or apparently illogical methods.

Lateral thinking is specifically concerned with changing concepts and perceptions. The term covers a variety of methods including concept triangle, random entry, provocations and challenge to get us out of the usual line of thought. Lateral thinking is based directly on the way the mind works as a self-organizing system that sets up asymmetric patterns. It has very much to do with cutting across the patterns in a self-organizing system and changing of perception.

For example: There is a wild cat outside the window and you are afraid that the cat will steal the big fish on the table. One neighbour suggests closing the window or covering the fish. The other neighbour suggests it might be a better idea to put a dog outside to chase the wild cat away. A lateral thinking answer!

Creative thinking is different from normal thinking and it requires specific methods. It is not enough to be simply ignorant, uninhibited or to have a creative attitude. We need to cut across the routine patterns set up by our brain in the perception process.

There are some specific reasons why we need to learn how to think creatively and laterally.

• The way the brain handles information

The neural network in our brain (as mentioned in Dr. de Bono's book-'Mechanism of Mind,' 1969) allows the brain to organize information in a sequence albeit in a temporarily organized state. Everyday we walk, talk, get across the road, recognize friends etc. Our brain has established this mainstream patterns which we refer to as 'tracks in our brain.

If we are able to move from point A to the side of point B, then the path to point A is clear. In other words, in hindsight, it would be obvious. Unfortunately, the patterns in our brain are not in symmetry. That is, we need techniques / tools to help us get to the sidetrack from the main track. Creativity helps us to move laterally and all creative ideas are logical in hindsight.

- The need to learn specific skills and use of specific thinking tools

Some people have said that if we are inhibited (i.e. suppressed), we are not creative. For example, if a normal person left a tennis racket & tennis ball behind, he or she cannot possibly play tennis. However, if tennis rackets and tennis balls are provided, the same person still cannot become a tennis player if he is not trained to play tennis. In other words, if we are made inhibited, we do not become creative automatically. Creativity is more than just feeling free, acting crazy and letting absurd ideas abound. We need specific skills, techniques and tools to be creative.

- Best 'uses' of information

We live in a system. We receive information (i.e. political, economic, social, technology etc.) every day, every week, every month and every year. When this information is received in sequence, bit by bit, it will eventually form a concept in our mind. The concept in turn will govern our actions, whether we are right at each stage, path, procedure and so on, but this in itself is not sufficient to be competitive. Thus what we need to do is to go back and change this concept and associated principles or procedures if we want to move forward and move ahead.

Others have argued that if we were able to arrange and change this information at an earlier stage, then we would be able to capture the opportunity faster. But only complete knowledge of the future will allow you to change it, otherwise there is no way you can do it, no matter how wise you are in using the information. These are the logical reasons why we need creativity.

According to Dr. de Bono, the term lateral thinking can be used in two senses:

- Specific: A set of systematic techniques used for changing concepts and perceptions and generating new ideas.
- General: Exploring multiple possibilities and approaches instead of looking at a single approach.

Dr de Bono has created specific Lateral Thinking techniques which can be learnt, practised and used deliberately.

**1 Alternatives** : how to use concepts as breeding ground for new ideas

**2 Focus** : when and how to change your focus and improve your creative efforts

**3 Challenge** : breaking free from the limits of accepted ways of operating a system

**4 Random Entry** : using unconnected inputs to open new lines of thinking

**5 Provocation** : moving from a provocative statement to useful ideas

**6 Harvesting** : selecting the best of early ideas and reshaping them into practical solutions

**7 Treatment of Ideas** : making the output both valuable and practical

Those who use Lateral Thinking techniques would eventually develop an attitude of looking for alternative solutions and a willingness to re-examine things. They will be willing to think with specific or general focus and be creative in generating ideas deliberately.

The relevant book is **Serious Creativity**, London, HarperCollins Book.

> " All valuable creative ideas are logical in hindsight. However, they are usually invisible to logic in the first place. Lateral thinking gives you the power to see past these blind spots — to find new patterns and new concepts. I t gives you the power to create new, valuable ideas on demand. "
>
> - Edward de Bono
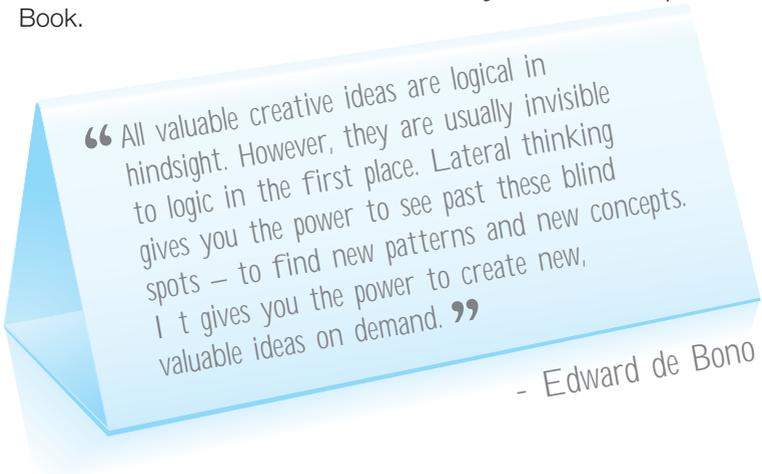
# "Reduce Life's Frustration with DATT – make problem solving and decision making easier"

Try this simple test yourself.

Two men were playing tennis. They played five games and both of them won three games. How can this be or

Explain the meaning of this formula: 36b + 52w = 88k.

In the first example, the correct answer is the two men were playing doubles on the same side. As for the second, it's a shorthand description of a piano – 36 black keys plus 52 white.
Both of these examples do not require specialized academic skills but rather the ability to think and stretch our minds.

Dr de Bono defines thinking as the operating skill through which intelligence acts upon experience. According to him, many people who consider themselves to be highly intelligent are not necessary good thinkers. In fact, people of limited intelligence can learn to think well if they are trained. He believes that thinking is the operating skill with which we use our intelligence and thinking skills can be developed and improved.

Our modern lives – both business and personal are very fast-paced and full of action. We often confuse action with accomplishment and frequently jump to action without thinking. If the result is good, we keep going. If it is bad, we usually stop and clean up the mess that we have made. Although this is obviously better than doing nothing at all, it is inefficient. Mistakes are costly and painful. Most of our mistakes in our thinking are in perception as shown by Professor David Perkins at Harvard. In our early education, we learned a lot about 'processing' system but very little about perception and we persist that thinking is about avoiding logical errors. We believe that bad logic makes for bad thinking but good logic does not necessary make for good thinking. If the perception is poor then good logic will give you a wrong answer. Perception provides the ingredients for processing which relates to simple acronym GIGO – Garbage In Garbage Out. Therefore, in order to reduce our frustrations and failures, we need tools to help us to explore, to evaluate, to value and to act accurately.

DATT helps us to avoid bad decision. Using DATT will improve our ability to consider consequences before taking action. Instead of wondering, "What do I do now?" people will systematically draw upon their thinking power tools in group work, in conversation or in their own thinking. Studies have proven that when people are specifically asked to use DATT thinking tools, their thinking dramatically improves by as much as 300%.

These "attention-directing tools" can be compared to carpenter's tools.

- Each tool is designed to carry out specific function
- The carpenter becomes familiar with one tool at a time
- The carpenter learns how and when to use each tool
- There is no fixed sequence for using the tools
- Practice is needed to become a skillful carpenter
- It is the skill of the carpenter combined with the design of that tool that creates craft men

The ten DATT tools are:

**Tool 1 Consequences and Sequels**      **(C & S)**
- It is critical to look ahead to see the consequences of action, plan, decision, or rule. We will see future repercussions and possibilities.

**Tool 2 Plus, Minus, Interesting**      **(P.M.I)**
- This tool will force us to see the positive and the negative before it's too late.

**Tool 3 Recognize, Analyze, Divide**      **(RAD)**
- Break a larger concept into smaller, more manageable parts. Getting down to the 'core' of a situation makes it easier to deal with.

**Tool 4 Consider All Factors**      **(CAF)**
- Explore all factors related to an action, decision, plan, judgment or conclusion. Rarely do we deal with simple issues and rarely are they singular in dimension. We'll learn to focus our attention on a particular factor.

**Tool 5 Aims, Goals, Objectives**      **(A.G.O)**
- Focus directly and deliberately on the intention behind actions. You can prevent 'drifting'.

**Tool 6  Alternatives, Possibilities, Choices          (APC)**
  - Give ourselves the benefit of alternatives, and then we have choices.

**Tool 7  Other People's Views                     (OPV)**
  - Gain the power of broad vision by exploring other people's viewpoints.

**Tool 8  Key Values Involved                      (K.V.I.)**
  - Our values influence our thinking. The whole point of thinking is to help us to attain what we value. Make sure our actions fit our values.

**Tool 9  First Important Priorities               (FIP)**
  - Priorities guide our actions, choices and decisions. Get the right things done – target deliberately at what is important and what must be done first.

**Tool 10  Design/ Decision, Outcome, Channels, Action   (DOCA)**
  - Direct our attention to the outcome of the thinking and action that follows. We'll be confident in our decisions.

66 Thinking is not a natural ability – it's a skill that can be developed and improved. 99

- Edward de Bono"
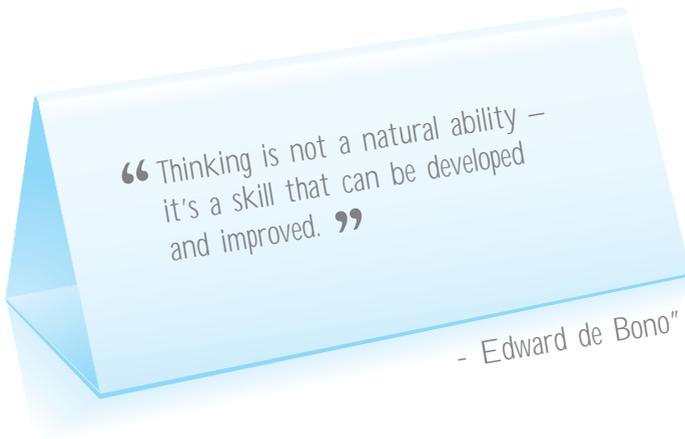
# Simplicity™

There are few things more frustrating in work than dealing with complex machinery or cumbersome processes. From complexity comes stress, anxiety and frustration - even rage - followed by apathy and exit. Simplicity™ is a tool created by Edward de Bono which is invaluable to companies looking to uncomplicate their business processes and thus, their lives. If your organization wishes to streamline products and processes, thereby becoming more effective, efficient and user-friendly, Simplicity™ will help you accomplish these goals. Simplicity™ teaches people to end habits that are no longer necessary, stop duplication of tasks, and challenge every aspect of business so that they can perform at a higher level in all areas.

This will helps us by:
• Reducing unnecessary duplication of efforts to increase ROI
• Removing age-old roadblocks and barriers, which will increase employee and customer satisfaction
• Free your employees to think through new ideas more quickly, leading to faster to market innovations

In **Simplicity™**, the tools like shedding, reframing, bulk-and-exceptions, historical review will shift group thinking to a 'challenge' mode where moving from complex to simple situations. Eventually, it helps us in saving time, energy and needless stress among your customers, clients, vendors, and employees.

*...EXAMPLES OF SIMPLICITY*

• Target launches a new prescription pill bottle that enables family members to identify their prescriptions with a colored ring that slips around the neck of the bottle. No more taking the wrong pills by mistake. Yellow for mom, green for dad, blue for grandmother!

• The Country Club has its own TV station that lists all current events for members. No need to distribute flyers, call for updates, times, locations, pricing, etc.

# The 6 Value Medals

**Six Value Medals™**

Values are central to the purpose of our actions whether as an individual, corporate executive or a government officer. However, values are usually vague and intangible and we need a better guidelines and framework in delivering values when making effective and creative decision.

In The Six Value Medals, it offers a robust framework to allow us to make decisions that deliver maximum values. Many individuals and organisations need a concrete way to assess the impact that a decision may have on their attempts to create and protect value. When individuals and employees can scan, identify and prioritize values, they become vital partners in growing the business.

The skills taught in Six Value Medals™ help people quickly but thoroughly scan for values, prioritize which values are the most important to pursue, and then ensure that top values are addressed and maximized every step of the way. It's like putting on a pair of glasses with six lenses, one for each of six important value categories:

**Gold Medal:** Gold is precious, and so are people. The gold medal asks, what matters to the people? Human values include pride, achievement, a sense of belonging, hope, trust, and growth.

**Silver Medal:** Silver impacts the organization. What matters to the organization? What are our goals as a company and how will a prospective action help us or hinder us in pursuit of these goals?

**Steel Medal:** Steel must be as strong as possible. The steel medal asks what are the implications for quality? How will the decision at hand impact the quality of what we do?

**Glass Medal:** Glass can take the shape of many functional, often beautiful and colorful objects. The glass medal covers change, innovation, simplicity and creativity.

**Wood Medal:** Wood spotlights ecology values in the broadest sense. Is there a positive or negative impact to the environment if we take this road?

**Brass Medal:** Brass looks like gold but is not. Brass medal values examine appearances and perception. How will this action be interpreted?

# CASE
## 01

# Teach Your Child How to Think

I have been training corporate executives and others involved in commercial activities. A few months ago I received a call from an organizer who is organizing a seminar for her client entitled "Realize your Child's fullest potential". There are different seminars for different types of parents. I was invited to speak on a seminar entitled "Unleashing you child's potential" targeted for parents with children aged 3 – 10.

I was requested to make the session, a fun-learning process for the parents and the children too. I thought for a long time and decided to name my talk as 'TEACH YOU CHILD HOW TO THINK". I incorporated the Six Hats concept and the Thinking Tools in my talk. I worked closely with the organizer and managed to include games, riddles and exercises into the talk.

I believe that this talk is of the utmost importance in the drive of Dr. de Bono's Thinking Tools in Malaysia. This particular talk shows that within a short time, the knowledge of using the tools was transferred to the parents who appreciate the value of teaching their children how to think. They themselves acknowledged that they too have learned from it. One of the parents came to me and said; " I did not know that such simple tools can have so much impact on children."

In the short talk, I discovered that the Dr. de Bono's thinking techniques are simple as children are able to separate thinking into six distinct categories easily. I put each hat physically on the children and asked them to think in the particular mode – This is even better that mentally wearing and switching hats. The children found it fun and at the same time they were able to focus and direct their thought.

As for the parents, they felt that the techniques helped them to communicate better with the children as the hats system allowed them to direct their children's thought especially when they disagreed or argue over some matters.

Some of the exercises used during the talk were:

White Hat (information) – "Wearing a White Hat what information is needed to spend quality time with your children at home?"

Red Hat (feelings and intuitions) – "Putting on your Red Hat how do you feel if your daughter insists in going out with friends when her piano exam is tomorrow?"

Yellow Hat (advantage, positive values) – "Putting on a Yellow Hat, what values do you see if your son isolates himself from all his friends at school?"

Black Hat (difficulties, risks & weaknesses) – "Wearing a Black Hat, what are the risks of allowing your son to stay at home with your maid while you are attending to personal matters?"

Green Hat (creativity, new ideas and alternatives) – "Putting on your Green Hat, what ideas do you have with regard to a family vacation?"

Blue Hat (What is next? What is the decision?) – "What is your Blue Hat decision on using Six Hats to teach your child how to think?"

Dr. de Bono's thinking tools - PMI (Plus, Minus, Interesting), CAF (Consider All Factors) and O.P.V. (Other People's Views) – designed to support the Six Hats system were introduced and the parents found them important for their children. Some of the exercises on these tools are:

• PMI was presented as a means to 'rewards for children on their creativity work at home'. Three (3) minutes for each point.
• CAF is applied to an idea of 'a family outing'
• O.P.V. is used in considering 'a financial planning package for the children'

Here are things you can do to teach your child how to think using Dr. de Bono's thinking tools:

**A brief and simple session on Six Thinking Hats:** The hat system can be used right down to the age of about five. Teach the hat for individual use and the sequence use of hats is only applicable for older children (let's say aged ten to fourteen).

**Teach all the attention-directing tools:** CAF, APC, OPV, C & S, PMI, AGO and FIP. Use various examples and problems to illustrate the tools. There may be problems with C & S and AGO as children are not very good at deducing consequences or objectives

**Attempt to teach the basic lateral thinking tools:** It is useful to simplify the tools such as Random Entry and Provocation. Practise as many examples as possible, starting with simple exercises and moving into detailed ones later. Teach the older children the details of lateral thinking as they would prefer challenges.

" Thinking is the most fundamental human skill. That is why we must develop and use it "

– Edward de Bono"
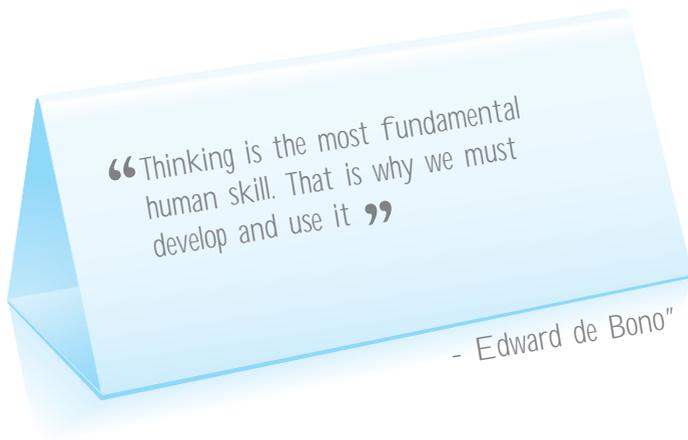
1. Identify a problem and discuss how you can solve the problem using your normal problem solving approach. Do you find any difficulty in solving the particular problem?

2. Now try to list down your problems and separate the items using the Six Thinking Hats Method

| Hats | Items |
|---|---|
| White (Information) | |
| Red (Feelings) | |
| Yellow (Benefits) | |
| Black (Cautions) | |
| Green (Creativity) | |
| Blue (Process Control) | |

3. Do you find any difference in your thinking process in separating the items in six different modes of thinking?

One of the thinking tools developed by Dr. de Bono is called C & S (Consequences & Sequel). This tool is used to predict various consequences and sequels from an action. It also helps us to forecast and think of any possible problems in the future.

C & S can be positive and negative. There are three types of C & S, namely Short Term C & S, Medium Term C & S and Long Term C & S.

All school teachers must be taught how to think so that they can teach the students in creativity skills.

| | | |
|---|---|---|
| Short-Term C & S | | |
| | | |
| Medium-Term C & S | | |
| | | |
| Long-Term C & S | | |
| | | |

# Creative Secretary

Edward de Bono's creative thinking tools received recognition at one of the secretary conferences.

The organizer contacted me seeking a presentation of Six Thinking Hats at the National Secretary Conference, at which the conference honors its Secretary of the Year Award recipients. Held in Kuala Lumpur, the conference welcomed delegates, who are all senior personal assistants and executive secretaries.

I personally represented Edward de Bono Methods at the conference; I worked closely with the organizer to create a Six Hats talk that would fit the format required for a short talk and the secretaries' working environment.

Many delegates joining the conference specifically wanted to sit through the session and experience the power of the Six Hats Method. I presented a public lecture covering all the Hats and focused on the Green Hat/Random Word activities. Six participants took part in the activities and demonstrated to others on How Simple the Six Hats Are in separating out thinking. Many personally told me that their bosses required them to learn the thinking tools and to apply them to their work.

A brief discussion during the conference tells why the secretaries were so enthusiastic about their use:

• Bosses are using the Hats system at meetings
• Solving and making decision for my bosses
• Evaluating appointments and engagements with the Six Hats
• Settling customers' conflicts with Six Hats
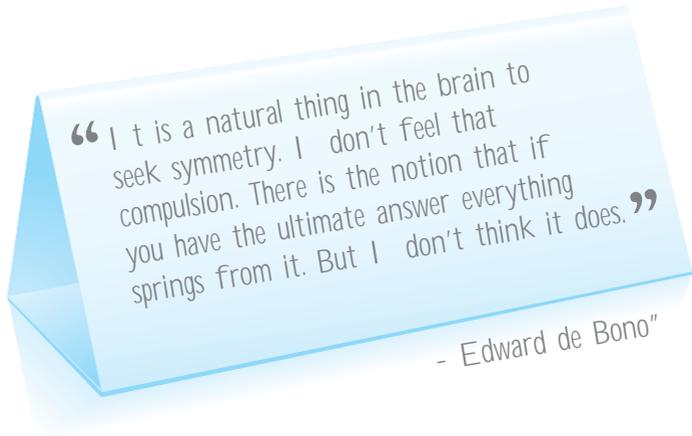• Six Hats format for counselling the staff.

"This Six Hats was one of my all-time favourites," reports one of the delegates. "I was nervous at first but after using them, I find them a lot simpler. The tools work for my children too."

Here are a few ways to help make your secretary in applying the Thinking Hats:

**Encourage them to use Green Hat:** Find alternatives and ways to every action (simplify decision, flexible requests, more relaxed working atmosphere etc.)

**Applying White Hat Thinking:** Use the principles in the white hat information (What do we know? What do we like to know? What do we need? How to find out?)

**Consider Yellow and Black Hat before decision-making:** Suggest to the secretaries that they run through Yellow Hat and Black Hat thinking before they make any decisions.

"It is a natural thing in the brain to seek symmetry. I don't feel that compulsion. There is the notion that if you have the ultimate answer everything springs from it. But I don't think it does."

– Edward de Bono"

In Six Thinking Hats Method, Green Hat is represented by new plant and new life. This thinking output is on creative ideas, alternatives and possibilities.

Imagine your company is now experiencing a tight cash flow due to increase of cost of doing business and a drop in customers' orders. Identify the steps that your company should take to overcome this situation. Do not judge the ideas in order to allow those ideas to flourish.
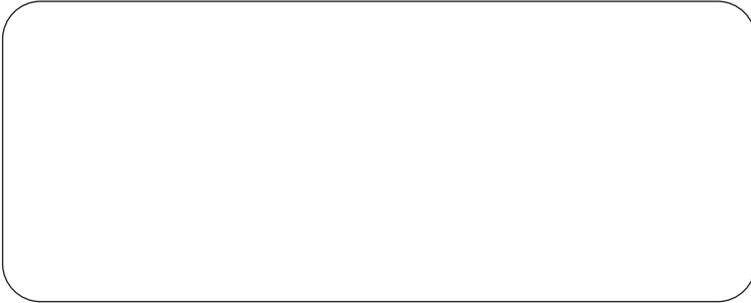
White Hat seeks information that you need to know, identify what we know and what we don't know. It also spells out how we should discover the missing information.

Using the above situation, in order for you to implement the ideas generated, what are the additional information that you need to know. You may need to use your personal experiences and knowledge if necessary.

Yellow Hat equates to benefits, advantages and feasibilities whereas Black Hat means cautions, difficulties and disadvantages. Yellow Hat focuses on logical positive and Black Hat is on logical negative, not from emotional aspect. When you use the hats, you must focus your thinking at one hat at a time.

Based on the Green Hat ideas, select three (3) ideas that you think are most feasible and put on your Yellow Hat and Black Hat. List down how the benefits of each ideas and then list down the disadvantages of the ideas.

| Idea 1: | |
| --- | --- |
| **Yellow Hat Thinking** | **Black Hat Thinking** |
| | |
| **Idea 2:** | |
| **Yellow Hat Thinking** | **Black Hat Thinking** |
| | |
| **Idea 3:** | |
| **Yellow Hat Thinking** | **Black Hat Thinking** |
| | |

# CASE 03

# Innovative Strategy

This company is in the telecommunications industry. I remembered that the Legal department invited me over to discuss the customization of the Lateral Thinking programme for their staff. I was told that the nature of their work involved many negotiations, meetings and co-ordination with the authorities, other telecommunication partners and contractors. Their aim is to learn how to think out from the box as many initiatives were from them. I designed and customized the Lateral Thinking course for 25 Senior Managers & managers. I led this team to understand the tools and then apply them to the company's own problems and opportunities.

Facilitation involved around the following focus areas:
• Targeting customers to use more services
• Sharing of infrastructures among telecommunication partners
• Working together with the relevant authorities
• Attract more new pre-paid and post-paid customers
• Handling contractors

We used a number of Lateral Thinking techniques and all the managers were working in teams. They worked together very well and demonstrated the power of Creativity. Posters and games were deployed to help them to learn fasters and also in an interesting way. The head of Legal department played an important role to facilitate and showed support and encouragement. In fact, many projects were determined in advance during the pre-training session.

The department witnessed significant innovative ideas and newer ways of working in the 6-months post-training period. People are more creative in negotiations where they initially perceived more problems due to common and saturated markets and felt they could not introduce new services and collaborate with other telecommunication partners. With a change in perceptions, they are now proactively coming up with innovative terms with their customers and partners and at the same time fulfilling the requirements of the authorities.

Here are some lessons learned:

**Encourage Creativity in general areas:** Lateral thinking is not only for finding solutions for problems. New ideas and concepts for general or non-problematic issues are equally important.

**Encourage new ideas:** Eventhough there are policies by predecessor and legislations; you must have a belief that there is an alternative for everything. Be disciplined and be willing to look for alternatives.

**Full sequence of Concept Triangle:** There is of value and importance if you can extract new concepts from alternatives in order to breed a list of new ideas. The essential part is to extract the relevant and suitable concepts - Concept is a general way of carrying out an idea.
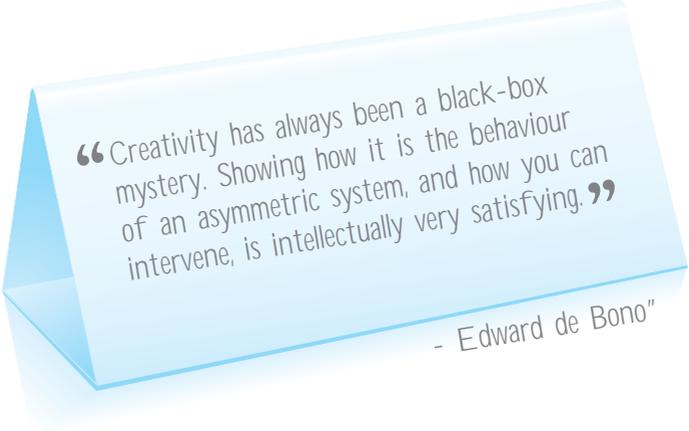
> " Creativity has always been a black-box mystery. Showing how it is the behaviour of an asymmetric system, and how you can intervene, is intellectually very satisfying. "
>
> – Edward de Bono"

## Activity 6

Lateral Thinking was introduced by Dr. de Bono which allows us to think outside our norm and challenge the existing concepts. It provokes our thinking based on possibilities and changes.

Think of the alternatives for traveling to work.

1._____

2._____

3._____

4._____

5._____

## Activity 7

In generating ideas, one of the most important disciplines that you should adopt is discipline of time. You need to allocate time before you start to think of the alternatives.

What are the ways to improve transportation system in a city? Think of as many ideas as possible and list them in the box below.

# CASE 04

# Focus On Creativity

Companies that value innovation as the key factor to add value to their services and products discover that the real challenge is always getting the ideas into the market place immediately in order to meet customer demand. They also need strong teamwork as well as project management skills.

One multinational company recently invited me to share the concept of Dr. de Bono's tools & techniques. The management team believes that the first level to compete is to innovate their products and processes and follow up by integrating the values into them. The Managing Director likes what I share and told me to come up with a customized training course for the management team.

I led a team of 20 for a course on Six Hats and Lateral Thinking. Almost all the management staff has engineering background and they found the techniques intriguing and applicable to their business. Subsequently, I trained batches of 20 each for the workforce from managers to engineers level. The company needs to improve its manufacturing and assembly processes constantly to meet customer tight delivery schedule. The company manufactures and assembles parts based on customers' specifications. There were numerous designs with different parts, machines and materials. Not only have they to find ways to reduce costs, simplify processes, they had an extremely narrow period of opportunity to reap the benefits before competitors are following.

"This gave us an extremely tight delivery schedule", says the Business Planning Director. "We used Six Hats to help us go through the customer demands, preliminary analysis on new processes in a structured and productive manner. The hats system reduces conflicts among the team members too."

Six Hats provides the framework for team members to explore issues by separating thinking into six different modes: White Hat (information), Red Hat (feelings), Yellow Hat (benefits), Black Hat (caution), Green Hat (creativity) and Blue Hat (managing thinking process).

LT tools were used in special projects where teams of engineers work together to find alternative ways to current processes. A pool of experienced staff that had undergone the training, acts as internal facilitators. Every project was documented, measured and shared among other staff. They learn from each other as well.

One of the project leaders says, "We were able to think outside the box, take some pretty crazy ideas for new process development and cutting the production cost and making them work." "People are more creative with the LT tools and are more daring to come up with unorthodox ideas and the good thing is they reserve their skepticism until later."

"We were able to cut materials costs and make the job simpler while allowing more time for other projects. Some of the engineers were stunned by the simple efforts that could improve the products and the efficiency of the processes", says the team leader.

In addition to the initial effort by the management to involve all levels of employees, the HRD department undertakes the following initiatives to sustain the momentum in transforming an innovative workforce.

1. A simple and practical approach to training
• Simplify all the training methodology
• Incorporate many applications and learning activities in the course
• All the learning activities consist of general and industry related subjects

2. Application of Six Hats and Lateral Thinking Techniques in the workplace
• Each team is assigned work-related projects.
• Every project must have a sponsor and a qualified facilitator.
• Sharing of project outcomes on a quarterly basis.

3. Follow- up systems
• Display reminders such as Six Hats and LT posters, online bulletin, Dr. de Bono's books and CD ROM in resource centre.
• Creating Creativity Club, Creativity lounge and Creativity Day.
• Measuring the impact of the projects in terms of cost and sales.
• Evaluating participants' learning and results three months after completing the seminar.

Here are some ways to make lateral thinking work and which might help you to apply the tools effectively:

**Be clear of your focus:** Very often, people are too concerned with creative ideas and fail to notice the relationships with the focus (targets). You must be clear and precise in your intentions or objectives and be willing to redefine the focus to get more ideas.

**Provoke your mind:** In using Random Entry technique, ensure that you use a word at random; make sure that you do not have any preconceived ideas on the topic. Limit the associations from Random techniques and try to link the associations to the purpose focus.

**Don't confuse Provocation with Movement:** In setting up provocation, select the boldest statement that lies outside your normal experiences. Then use movement techniques to help you to generate ideas. Move fast and try all the movement techniques.

66 Thinking without values is like a tool without a purpos 99

– Edward de Bono"
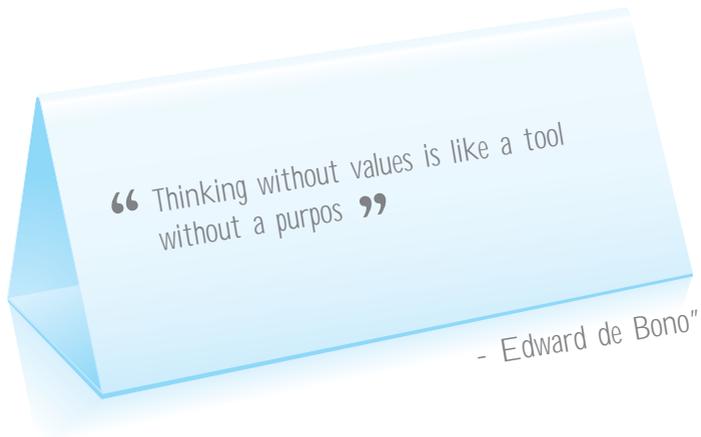
Focus is a target or what we want to achieve at the end of our thinking process. Some focus is general in nature whereas others are specifically to solve a problem, executing a task or improving a situation.

Try list down 10 items that need your attention at home this weekend.

1. _____

2. _____

3. _____

4. _____

5. _____

6. _____

7. _____

8. _____

9. _____

10. _____

Among the list, how many items are general and specific in nature?

Provocation technique is a method of generating ideas by using statements that initially would not make any sense. One of the provocations introduced by Dr. de Bono is reversal technique. Reversal technique will reverse the normal direction of thinking. Once the provocative ideas are generated, and then select few ideas that can be expanded in order to produce more practical and rational ideas. This is called movement technique.

Let's say a town council wants to encourage the community to use paper bags instead of plastic bags to promote "Save the Environments" campaign. You are in the taskforce to ensure this campaign is successful.

Using the reversal technique, the provocation would be:

"Paper bags use the community"

List down other provocations:

1.

2.

3.

There is few movement techniques used to expand and produce more practical and rational ideas:

a. Extract the concept from the provocation
b. List down the positive aspects of the provocation
c. Focus of the difference between the provocation and the normal ways of doing things.

| Extract the concept | Idea 1: Work with supermarkets to use only paper bags. |
| | Idea 2: |
| Positive aspects | Idea 1: Incentives for household who use paper bags |
| | Idea 2: |
| Focus on the difference | Idea 1: Only issue license to food sellers who use paper bags |
| | Idea 2: |

# Strategic Planning

I recently used De Bono's techniques to facilitate a strategic business meeting for a multinational corporation. All the management staff is trained in Six Hats, Lateral Thinking and DATT. Here are the steps taken:

## The Key Focus
"Use Edward de Bono's Six Thinking Hats and Lateral Thinking Methods to develop concepts and design ideas for a futuristic corporation".

## The Senior Management Team
A Team was from different backgrounds, with different knowledge and experiences, wre formally trained by me, using Dr. de Bono methods.

## The Approaches Taken
*Step 1:*   Flowscape (Identify the significant area to focus on). Identify four major areas i.e. People Development, Cost Factors, Service Factors and Valuable Products.

*Step 2:*   White Hat thinking to seek most important information in one of the selected areas and what are involved. E.g. People Development.

*Step 3:*   Red Hat thinking to focus on the values of those information.

*Step 4:*   Blue Hat thinking to decide on the Aims, Goals, Objectives (A.G.O) of the main area. E.g. People Development.

*Step 5:*   Green Hat thinking to generate immediate ideas. (11 ideas generated)

*Step 6:*   Use of "Random Entry" technique. (12 more ideas – Total 23 ideas)

*Step 7:*    Use of "challenge" technique. (9 more ideas - Total of 32 ideas)

*Step 8:*    Quick Red Hat selection of one idea to work on.

*Step 9:*    Shaping the idea. E.g. 5 major constraints with 17 refined ideas for implementation.

*Step 10:*   Detailed analysis of the chosen ideas using both Yellow and Black Hat thinking.

*Step 11:*   Make a decision using a Decision Grid. E.g. A matrix on positive values, negatives values, positive and negative priorities.

*Step 12:*   Summarize and present the overall Strategic plan on People Development to top management
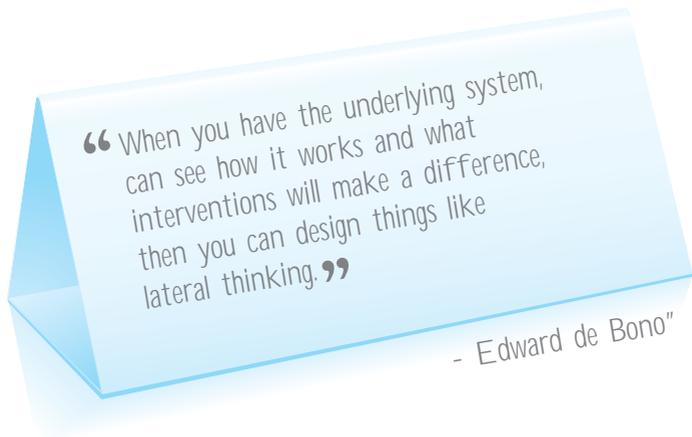
**Outcomes**

The strategic business meeting using Edward de Bono's methods has helped the team to break out, innovate new concepts and dare to try new things instead of the usual conservative business plan.

Here are some tips on applications in strategic planning:

Integrate all Dr. de Bono's thinking tools and make them work: Start with simple thinking tools: Most people like complicated process, as they believe it is challenging and worth their time invested. I do not think so; if we need to analyze more and more information then a good thinking tool is necessary. I learned to use Random Entry or Concept Triangle as starting tools and later added other tools slowly.

Use Flowscapes to clarify the important points of focus: In the flowscape, links are made between the focus points of a topic and that eventually help to clarify the more important points of focus. It helps you to pinpoint the target to focus on.

Integrate all Dr. de Bono's thinking tools: I always integrate Dr. de Bono's thinking tools in actual applications. It works wonderfully. For example, DOCA (Decision/Outcomes, Design, Actions) can be inserted in the Harvesting process in order to select the important ideas to work on. The selection is remarkable as it is based on KVI (Key Values Involved) and FIP (First Important Priorities).

> " When you have the underlying system, can see how it works and what interventions will make a difference, then you can design things like lateral thinking. "
>
> – Edward de Bono"

## Activity 10

Random Entry technique is used widely to generate lateral thinking ideas. This tool was developed by Dr. de Bono by using words associations randomly.

Some of the steps in random entry are:

a. Define the issue or focus of your thinking
b. Select a noun / word randomly
c. Identify the associations with the noun / word selected.
d. Generate ideas using the associations identified.

Let's say, you are required to design a community project in order to promote unity and racial integrity.

| Focus | Random Word | Associations | New Ideas |
|---|---|---|---|
| Design a community project to promote unity and racial integrity | | | |
| | | | |
| | | | |

One of the thinking tools introduced by Dr. de Bono in the Management Perception programme is called KVI (Keys Values Involved). FIP thinking tools use to priorities important factors in thinking. It focuses your mind on your priorities. It can be used after C & S (Consequences and Sequels) and CAF (Consider All Factors)

For example, you want to streamline the processes in your organisation, list down the factors that you need to consider and pick up three items that you give priorities.

**Factors**

**Priorities**
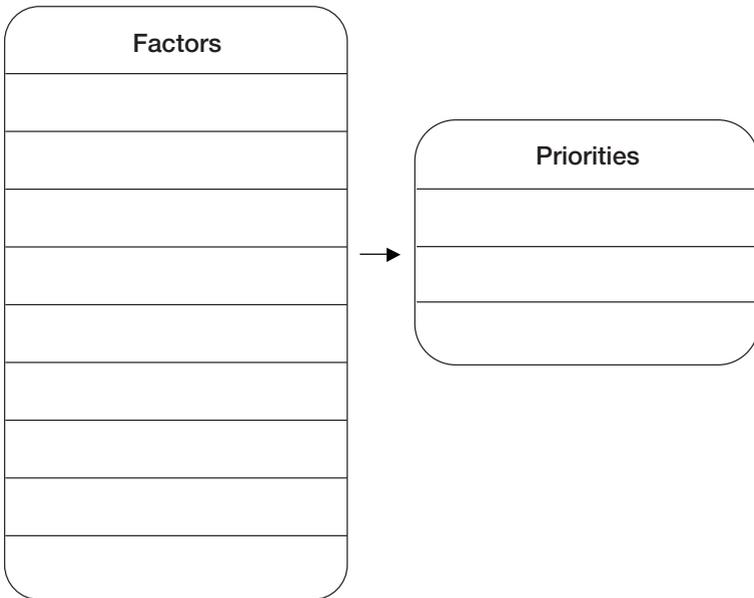
# CASE 06

# Future Challenge

A multinational company success was attributed to Hi-Value and Innovative products. Edward de Bono's Six Thinking Hats and Lateral Thinking methods have become one of the most important and successful components in driving this new product development.

The company identified several key corporate issues on valuable products, which Six Thinking Hats and Lateral Thinking offered solutions:-

- Hi-Value products development such as value creation and customized products.
- The need to create and encourage innovation and creativity among the people.
- The drive for breakthrough in improvement.
- Intense competition from within group of companies and outside the country.

Now, to face these future challenges require new concepts and designs. Hence, the senior management team decided to spend a day to deliberate on this issue.

**The approaches taken by the team**

*Step 1:*   Blue Hat to identify the main focus area. E.g. two key areas were identified.

*Step 2:*   Two teams were formed and they worked on a selected key area. They started to use Yellow Hat and White Hat. What are the values and what is involved?

*Step 3:*   Green Hat thinking to look for Alternatives, Possibilities and Choices (A.P.C). Team A with 18 ideas and Team B with 10 ideas.

*Step 4:*   Use of "Provocation" Technique. Team A with 45 ideas (Total of 63 ideas) and Team B with 20 ideas (Total of 30 ideas).

*Step 5:*   Use of "Random Entry" technique. Team A with 23 ideas
(Total of 86 ideas and Team B with 15 ideas
(Total 45 ideas).

*Step 6:*   Use of Red Hat for selection of best ideas.
Team A selected 4 ideas and Team B selected 3 ideas.

*Step 7:*   Detailed analysis of the chosen ideas using both Yellow
and Black Hat to assess, evaluate and check the fit.

*Step 8:*   Decision on new concepts and ideas presented to top
management.

The meeting has identified these immediate outcomes:-
Meetings are now more structured, organized and encourages
creativity. Many improved version of "old" ideas were raised and
discussed for future implementation. Open communication has been
enhanced as the ranking and status barriers were removed.

Here are some things to help you put Six Hats in team discussion:

**Systematic sequence of Hats:** It is advisable to sequence the hat
before any serious discussion to minimize arguing over the hats
sequence later. You should also allow flexibility of hats in the
sequence, which depends on the climate, motivation level and the
general feelings of the team

**Appoint a Blue Hatter:** Allow any qualified and trained person to be a
Blue Hatter. Initially, the Blue Hatter only focus on process control and
not on the subject of discussion. When he is more mature and experi-
enced then he too can join in the discussion using the other hats.

**More time on Green Hat:** Spend more time (e.g. 30 – 45 minutes) on
Green Hat when you want alternatives and new ideas. You should use
lateral thinking tools here such as Random Entry, Provocation or
Challenge.

> "The first phase of business was based
> on product or service, the second phase
> was based on competition and the third
> phase will be based on integrated values."
>
> – Edward de Bono"

You and colleague in a project team to increase the morale of employees working in your organisation. Lately, many of the employees are demotivated and demoralized as they heard rumors that the company will shift to China in order to reduce the operation cost and to compete in the market.

Using the Six Thinking Hats Method, discuss on this focus and try to find solutions to overcome this problem.

| Hats | Discussions |
|------|-------------|
|      |             |
|      |             |
|      |             |
|      |             |
|      |             |
|      |             |

# CASE 07

# Challenge To Break Out!

I led a group of 20 project leaders of an oil company. These project leaders were working on different projects. Their aim is to develop different way of thinking in managing suppliers and contractors. Considering the nature of working conditions, market responses, trends & highly skilled engineering works, Lateral Thinking Tools were used to come up with creative ideas.

Some of the creative ideas were:
    Changing from one end product to multiple side products
    Focusing on utilizing the platform for other purposes
    Innovative approaches setting up platforms
    Innovative approaches to localization of parts and equipments

One of their main concerns was highly bureaucratic and hierarchical structures in approving contracts and requisitions. Time and labour cost grew high with the long processing procedures. Wastage increased and downtime escalated. One of the teams uses Random Entry with 'PO' Stove; some of the ideas came out were hot issue and fast actions. They suggested having local approving system and using their suppliers' site as their warehouse. This will speed up the approving process and reducing their downtime tremendously.

Several other initiatives for change were analyzed and discussed.

Some of them were:
    Staff morale is low due to long hours in an isolated place
    International legislation
    Regulatory Role Vs Developmental Role
    Norms to safety procedures

The participants actually used the Lateral Thinking tools to do an appreciative enquiry on the role of the project managers. Some of the resultant actions/ideas were communicated to the Senior Management.

To spark creativity in your team, particularly those with technical background, adopt the following guidelines:

**Challenge the status quo:** Never believe the current way of doing things is the best way. Challenge the object, the features and the values and try to look at different approach. You must be clear and precise in what you are challenging.

**Challenge our current thinking:** Different people have different ways of thinking. As Dr. de Bono puts it, it is better to spell out clearly what is in our mind and we challenge them in order to improve them. Dr de Bono introduced a Checklist called Current Thinking Checklist (Dominating Ideas, Boundaries, Assumptions, Essential Factors and Avoidance Factors) and asked us to challenge their necessity and the validity of reasons and the uniqueness of ideas.
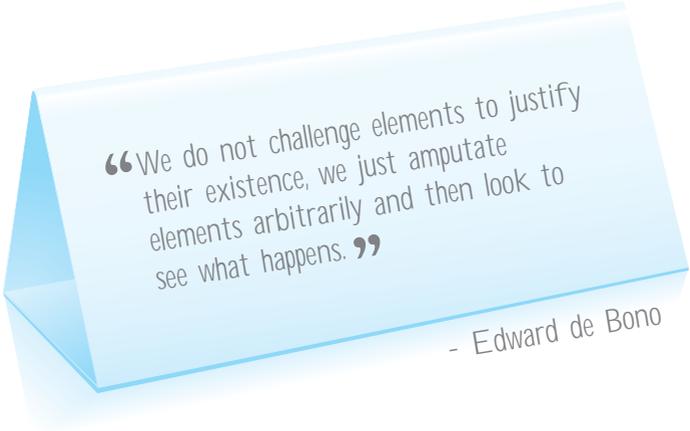
"We do not challenge elements to justify their existence, we just amputate elements arbitrarily and then look to see what happens."

– Edward de Bono

Challenge is a lateral thinking technique introduced by Dr. de Bono to challenge the status quo of a situation or what is in our mind. It challenges the existing features of an object or product and also challenge on what we are thinking in our mind.

Let say, you are designing a new version of i-phone, what are the features that you would challenge and what are the alternatives.

| Items to Challenge | Alternatives |
|---|---|
| 1. | |
| 2. | |
| 3. | |
| 4. | |
| 5. | |
| 6. | |
| 7. | |
| 8. | |

Now draw the new version of i-phone that you have just designed.

# Be Creative & Have Fun

I used Six Thinking Hats on a bicycle parts manufacturer. I involved the management team in cultivating a positive and innovative working culture project. Part of the problems faced were different work culture among the management staff and my role is to help the people to work together and to remove the communication barriers due to language.

Teaming is great and with Dr. de Bono's "Magic" I managed to introduce the Six Hats system in a form of survival game… Applying these methods, I trained 30 staff to understand the concept, apply practical working issues, and facilitate open meetings and planning focus group meetings… "The biggest problem is not teaching the Six Coloured Hats but to convince them of the power of parallel thinking in a team… that's when I used Six Thinking Hats Game, and it worked beautifully."

"I encouraged them to use the Hats to run their staff meetings with the 'coloured' top hats. I asked them to tell me the sequence of hats to be used in different situations such as quality meeting, meeting customer's delivery time, cost cutting projects and their response gave me a good sense of how well they understood and played their blue hat role."

Each department now has at least one focus group working on different projects. The management team was on the topic, 'Building a Positive and Innovative Workforce.' They came out with many ideas through Random Entry in the Green Hat session. Putting on their Yellow Hat, they found benefits and values of the ideas. Then followed by Black Hat, they cautioned themselves on the practicality and feasibility of the ideas. Later, they applied the Green Hat to remove all the barriers and had a quick Red Hat session.

The team put some of the selected ideas into action. For example, the idea on meeting only on selected day, standardization of minutes using Six Hat framework and having fun at work through coloured walls and flexible break hours.

One team use the Six Hats in their meeting and created its own "know your staff – a strategy to break down communication barrier."

Here are some ways you can use the Six Hats as a working culture:

**Hold a "Six Hats meeting":** Make a rule that all meetings must follow the Six Hat framework and record the minutes using the Six Hat template. You can use Six Hat in individual thinking and daily conversations too.

**Invite ideas from other department's colleagues:** Encourage others to contribute ideas and send them to your boss. Set up a Green Hat (Creativity) campaign. Chances are ideas from the floor are more practical than those though up in the boardroom.

**Have fun at work:** Enjoy your work, think of new ways of carrying out your duties and performing a task. For example: Communicate using the Hats in e-mails, decorate your workplace with the Six Hats as reminders to yourself and to your visitors.
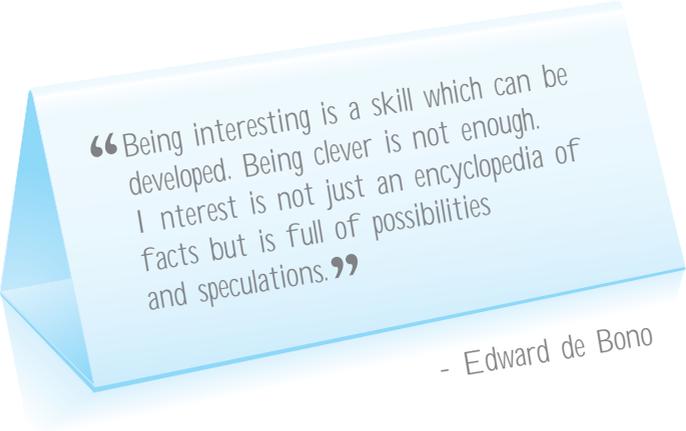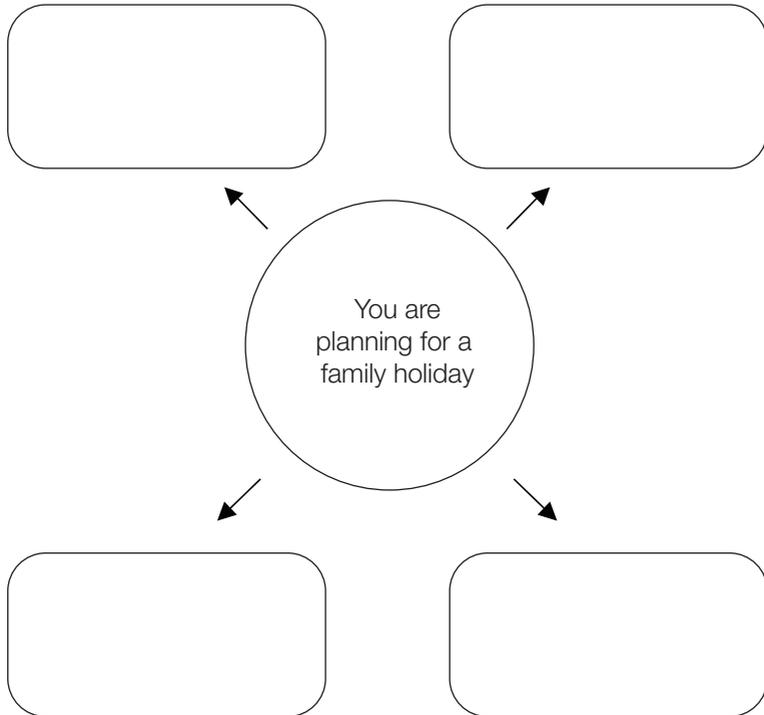
66 Being interesting is a skill which can be developed. Being clever is not enough. I nterest is not just an encyclopedia of facts but is full of possibilities and speculations. 99

– Edward de Bono

Put on your Green Hat and think of the alternative ideas in planning for a family holiday.

```
┌──────────────┐          ┌──────────────┐
│              │          │              │
│              │          │              │
│              │          │              │
└──────────────┘          └──────────────┘
         ↖              ↗
         ╭──────────────────╮
         │    You are       │
         │  planning for a  │
         │  family holiday  │
         ╰──────────────────╯
         ↙              ↘
┌──────────────┐          ┌──────────────┐
│              │          │              │
│              │          │              │
│              │          │              │
└──────────────┘          └──────────────┘
```

Teamwork and communication between departments have been lacking lately in your organisation. This indirectly has affected customer service and delayed in responding to customers.

Using the Six Thinking Hats Method set the sequence of hats and allocates time for each hat before you start to do the thinking.

| Hats (Minutes) | Discussions |
|---|---|
| _____ Hat | |
| _____ Hat | |
| _____ Hat | |
| _____ Hat | |
| _____ Hat | |
| _____ Hat | |

# Power Of Lateral Thinking

The Research & Development team of a car company were trained on Lateral Thinking & facilitated on Problem-Solving. The department is responsible for designing cars from sketching to designing and proto-typing. The department work is base on customers' feedback from the market survey and also the people's own initiatives. The work evolves around the production and assembly sections as well as the legal requirements from the authorities. The General Manager saw how Lateral Thinking was used in one of the seminars and took the initiative to train all his people in the R & D department. I was invited to meet them and to understand the nature of their work. We worked closely and within two weeks, we were able to put together the modules for this team of designers.

The purpose focus areas were:
- Ideas for new car designs that appeal to Malaysians
- Ways to reduce the prototyping process
- Ideas to cut down cost of parts

It was a difficult task to facilitate this team, as there were several items on the checklist for current thinking that were difficult to challenge. Random Entry was used and ideas generated were treated before implementation. The entire team is now using PO and Challenge to generate ideas in finding new ways of carrying out the annual plan.

Eventually, a new car design was conceived and the designers were able to come up with creative ideas in a deliberate manner! Earlier R & D was focused on design, but with a change in focus, they were able to think of creative ways to manage customers' perception. They discovered that the marketing team could play an important role in this process and this could make their work easier!

Here are some ideas on how you can reap the power of lateral thinking:

**Applying lateral thinking in daily chores:** Spend time to write down your daily chores; ask yourself, "How can I do these differently? Or Do I have to do these?" Some lateral thinking might save a lot of time.

**Reward yourself and your staff for best ideas:** Pamper yourself a bit if you come up with an idea in your thinking task. Don't forget to reward your staff that comes up with an idea for new improvement, give him cash money or treat him to lunch.

**Challenge the norm:** Lateral thinking means a process that encourages out of the box thinking. You need to challenge your routines and habitual behaviour. Use the LT tools (i.e. Random Entry, Concept Triangle, Challenge & Provocation) to think differently; Jot down the ideas and do a quick harvest. Some ideas are practical and some are interesting starters that need further thinking.
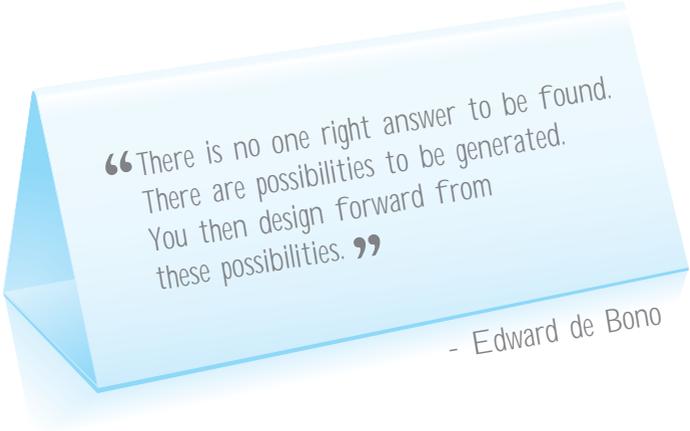
66 There is no one right answer to be found. There are possibilities to be generated. You then design forward from these possibilities. 99

– Edward de Bono

Concept is a general way to carry out an idea and an idea is a specific way of executing a concept. According to Dr. de Bono, the concept triangle technique consists of the following components:

a. Define the focus or objectives.
b. Identify the starting idea.
c. Extract a suitable concept from the starting idea.
d. Generate new ideas from the concept extracted.

Focus: How to improve the quality of life among employees in an organisation?

| Idea | Concept | New Ideas |
|------|---------|-----------|
|      |         |           |
|      |         |           |
|      |         |           |

# Be Discipline

A new GM was appointed in 1998, inheriting a culture of complacency in this toy manufacturer. Being part of a worldwide group, the staff were complacent and not interested in change. The new GM wanted to implement a change initiative that would work effectively in the company. However, his biggest problem was the core management team of 20 & staff of 250. As a kick off to the change process, he announced his intentions of changing the way the people think. I was invited to deliver 1 1/2-hour long presentation on Lateral Thinking. This was followed by the Workshop conducted for the core management team.

Alternatives, PO & Challenge were used immediately during and after the training. The Specific Focus Areas included public perception of the high cost of the premium toys, high cost of materials and rigid customers specifications etc.

Practical exercises were built in and some significant results followed, i.e. Changing of public perception campaign and involving children in providing feedbacks. Results were amazing! The GM reported 25 % increase in staff productivity when the customers' feedbacks are positive and the toy designer came up with many alternative ideas following the market trend of the children. Later, I heard that everyone has started to do creative thinking in their normal operation meetings.

Here are some principles to keep in mind when using thinking tools:

**Discipline of focus:** be clear of what you are thinking about at the moment. What decision or output do you want at the end?

**Discipline of method:** knowing exactly what you are trying to do at every moment. What is the method that you are using and which step in the method are you thinking about?

**Discipline of time:** be time conscious; set yourself a time limit and try to work within that time. This will indirectly translate your energy to the thinking task.
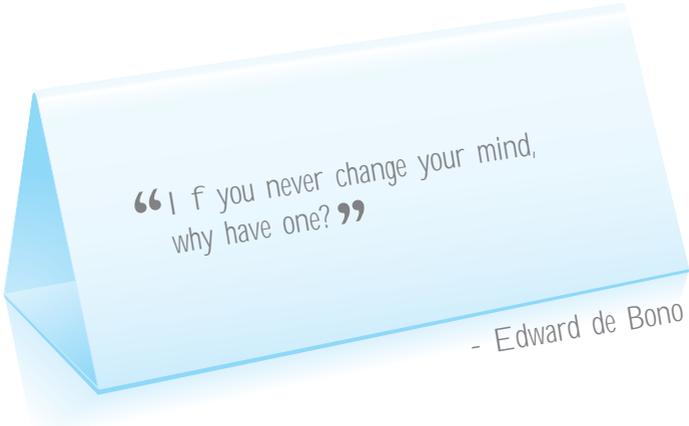
> **"**If you never change your mind, why have one?**"**
>
> – Edward de Bono

## Activity 17

Dr. de Bono believes that instead of waiting for the right focus, it would be better to refine the focus in different ways and hopefully it will pinpoint us to the right focus.

For example: the house is too small.

In redefining the focus,

1. Maybe the furniture are over sized or
2. Too many furniture in the house or
3. The furniture are not arranged properly or
4. Too many occupants in the house.

Now, you try to redefine the focus of lack of safety and security measures at the shop floor.

1. _____
2. _____
3. _____
4. _____
5. _____
6. _____
7. _____
8. _____
9. _____
10. _____

# CASE 11
## Productive Meetings

German Semiconductor Manufacturer Increases
Customer Service with Six Thinking Hats

The Managing Director believes that properly trained employees will be more productive and effective. He put this belief into practice while developing employees through the company's in-house training.

As competition intensifies, cost cutting is a norm in the company; staff morale is low, everyone is afraid to voice out their departmental concerns and customer service is affected. The MD noticed the significant value of Six Hats System in promoting team efforts and wasted no time in putting the programme to work. I was invited to conduct the Six Hats courses for all the management staff and heads of departments.

I trained a few classes of 20 people each. I shared the Six Hats concept and the facilitation techniques using the Hats system. Participants then worked at separate tables of 6-8 persons each, using the Six Hats to develop new ideas on "How to service the clients."

During the training sessions itself, the participants managed to generate a number of interesting ideas and together with Six Hats framework, they discussed and agreed on some actions. Among other ideas, the most promising one is "Educating the client on the new product development. " Not only is this idea refreshing for the company but it also helps to reduce product components cost.

The story does not end there. The trained personnel started to market the Six Hats system in the company and even built a LCD that contains the Six Hats and what the people should think when there wear a particular hat in meetings. They documented the minutes in Six Hats format for standardization in data gathering.

To make sure your meeting is productive in using the Six Hats, consider the following:

Prioritizing your decision: You will always face with limited resources when you want to make decisions; learn to prioritize the problems as well as decisions. As Dr. de Bono says, "In choosing priorities, ask yourself the two questions,

1. Without this, the action or project could not go ahead. What is this?

2. Without this, the action or project would not be worth doing. What is this?

Let the Blue Hat rule: The Blue Hat is a process control. He sets the hats sequence and controls the rules for other hats. Let it be known that anyone who is trained in Six Hats can be a blue hat and he plays a vital role in facilitating team meeting.

"Thinking is the ultimate human resource"

– Edward de Bono
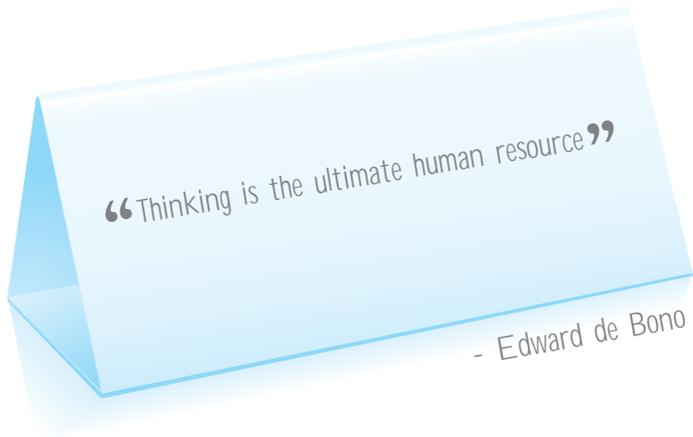
K.V.I (Key Values Involved) is another thinking tool introduced by Dr. de Bono in the Management Perception programme. This tool looks at the values involved in a situation both in checking our own values and the values of others.

Let's say you are buying a car. You will have some high values and low values.

**High Values:** Cost, Brand, Types, Appearance or Good Mileage
**Low Values:** Avoiding hassle in servicing your car, modifying your car or joining the car club

High values are given more importance and the low values are also considered.

Do a K.V.I on choosing a place for holiday. List both the high values and low values.

**High Values – More important**

**Low Values – Less important**

## Activity 19

In Six Hats Method, the sequencing of hats is dependent on the purpose of your thinking and desire outcomes. There is no set sequence in using the hats.

Let's say customer rejects a delivery of your services / shipments of product due to quality issue. Putting on your Blue Hat, decide on the sequence of hats and explain why you select the particular hat in the sequence.

| Hats | Why do you choose the hat |
|---|---|
| _____ Hat | |
| _____ Hat | |
| _____ Hat | |
| _____ Hat | |
| _____ Hat | |
| _____ Hat | |
| _____ Hat | |
| _____ Hat | |

# Datt Is Good For Business …
## (And Don't Forget Family & Community)

I was enthusiastic with the Direct Attention Thinking Tools, which drew the attention of the middle level staff in an electronics factory. They asked me to train them on how to make problem solving easier!

According to one of the participants, "When decisions are made at our level, the impact is great. The market demand moves quickly, problems arise anytime, and employees from levels are called upon to solve them."

Their decision – how thoroughly they think about them – can have a major impact on the bottom line for their company, for better or worse. It's interesting to see how employing DATT's tools for problem solving can make the difference between good and bad decisions.

I led a class of 20 middle level engineers and taught them on the 10 DATT tools. Once they learned the tools, they began to see situations all around them; they might have averted problems for their daily operational issues. One of the participants explained, "We used some of these tools but I find the DATT tools more structured and comprehensive. When I see the tools are effective, I use them daily."

For example, one issue is to source for substitute materials for a new product line. The whole issue was saved, as the substituted materials will affect the quality of the product and not fulfilling the customer's specification. The tools used were tools CAF (Consider All Factors) and KVI (Key Values Involved) and the other tools were used initially to analyze the potential outcome.

Problems with safety at the corridor in a factory represent another example where CAF might have improved hazard signage and prevented accident and medical costs. To demonstrate the need of Consequences & Sequel, I presented cases of cutting away vendors during bad times, and then finding them again when the economy starts picking up.

How can you be sure you are using the thinking tools correctly? Consider these suggestions:

**Keep it simple and practical:** Thinking tools are aimed at simplifying your thinking process and not bolt you down with too much information. Be focus and practical.

**Does not have to be group thinking:** One head is better than many heads if the person is taught how to use it properly. Thinking does not have to be in groups as individuals must be able to think on their own by using the tools skillfully.

**Be supportive and be confident:** Do not discourage yourself or others by the poor thinking output. Sometimes possible ideas are more important that practical ideas. You must know precisely how to use the thinking tools and build confidence slowly.
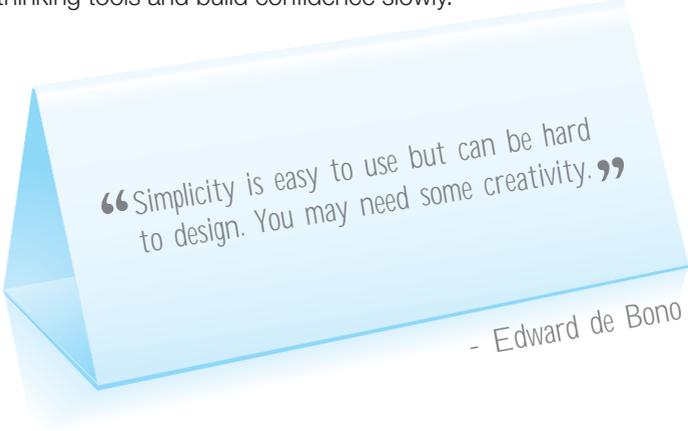
> " Simplicity is easy to use but can be hard to design. You may need some creativity. "
>
> – Edward de Bono

## Activity 20

Look at the image below. What do you see? List down as many possibilities as you can.



Possibilities:

1. _____

2. _____

3. _____

4. _____

5. _____

## Activity 21

Look at the pictures below. Generate some ideas on how to build creativity among students in schools using the following pictures.



**Ideas**



**Ideas**

# Do Managers Need Lateral Thinking?

A Malaysian company certainly thinks so. The company engaged me to provide training in Dr. de Bono's lateral thinking techniques that are now used throughout the business. The results have been impressive. The Kuala Lumpur office ran a Lateral Thinking session for a new product development. According to the company deputy General Manager, "We used the normal brainstorming approach first and with lateral thinking techniques we came up with a finished proposal quickly and client feedback was very encouraging."

All the management staff are trained in Lateral Thinking and they are now able to see things broadly and are positive in receiving ideas from their own staffs. One of the managers says that "Lateral Thinking has changed the way we perceive things and now is used by everyone in product development and running our business."

The key benefits have been:

– Good creative ideas are generated within hours rather than days
– Every management member dares to try new plans and new ways of implementing projects.
– The lateral thinking tools help to unlock some hidden experiences of the team
– Lateral Thinking techniques keep the creative juices flowing when ideas begin to run dry.

After an initial phase of management level training, the company is now ready for a second phase of Dr. de Bono's thinking skills. According to the Human Resource Manager, "This course has certainly been a mind opener and will provide each one of us with a Creative tool box... We need to think creatively harnessing on the people potential and available technologies."

Lateral thinking can be applied in groups. Here are some ideas for doing it:

**Involve everyone:** In-group and team LT application involve everyone. Keep the pace fast, encourage participation from the team members but make sure you keep the thinking task clear.

**Don't criticize:** Allow everyone to suggest ideas, never criticize no matter how stupid the ideas seem to be. Criticism will provoke defense and all energy will be used in argument. Criticism will also direct your mind to see faults, deficiencies and problems only.

**Do the basic brainstorming first:** You have to recognize and acknowledge experiences, therefore it is always better to do basic brainstorming first to churn out all the ideas in a team before applying any LT tools. This will also prevent the creative members to work backwards and to pretend that the idea came about through LT process.
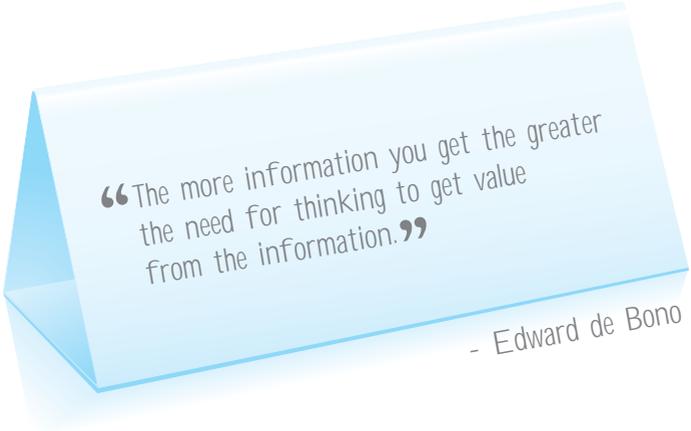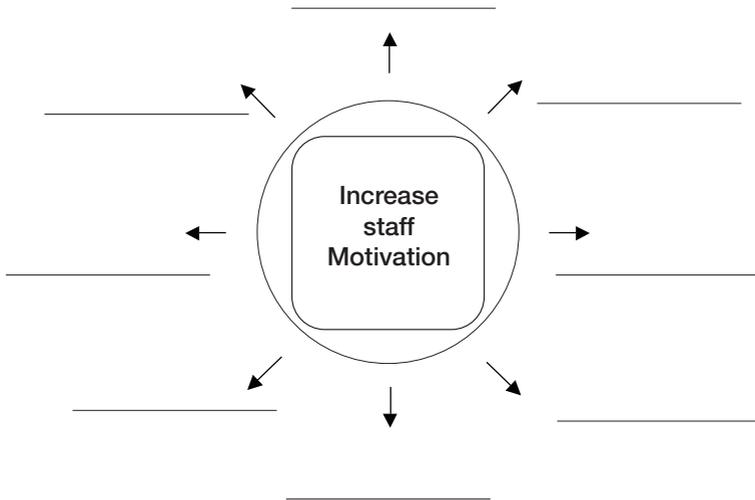
> "The more information you get the greater the need for thinking to get value from the information."
>
> – Edward de Bono

## Activity 22

Your company would like to increase the staff motivation. Think of as many ideas as possible

# Culture Of Creativity

This company is a subsidiary of a multinational conglomerate covering industries in Steel, Motor, Tyres, Computers, Food, Phamaceuticals, Retails, Property and Finanace & Insurance. The computer division has evolved from being the pioneer in computer manufacturing into large scale manufacturing of personal computer components and computer peripherals.

The company has more than 2,500 staff of different nationalities. The management believed that a diverse structure of product areas, staff that have different histories, different hierarchies, different thinking patterns and different ways to communicate have hindered the effectiveness in carrying out their work. In any project, these differences are the main barriers and it is necessary to get the most out of the limited meeting time.

I introduced the Six Thinking Hats techniques to them and the techniques have helped them tremendously to minimize the various differences in thinking, status & attitude and rapidly proceed with the real issues. Furthermore, they helped to convince operation people of the importance of thinking parallel despite earlier, less successful experiences especially in operation meetings. It was possible to stop previous seemingly endless discussions about operation issues; problems findings focus on ideas & procedure to support the departmental and company's goals.

## Outcomes
- Reduction of intercultural, hierarchical barriers which improves communication and encourages staff involvement.
- To enable staff to focus not only on problems but also tasks, opportunities and improvement issues
- Meeting time cut down tremendously as people are more focus.
- Easier to communicate and conduct counselling especially to senior staffs as it changed their mindset.
- The use of coloured Hats is fun and people enjoy them.

Here are a few things you can do to help you build a creative culture:

**Setting up micro culture of creativity:** According to Dr. de Bono, there must be a list of targets for your creative effort. Everyone must know what he or she is going to think creatively about. The 'Creative Hit List' defines areas that need creative thinking and the list can be changed from time to time. This will helps you to set up a micro-culture of creativity.

**Making the thinking agenda alive:** Do not develop long-term agenda and blindly stick to it. Have a rough long-term agenda but be flexible and willing to change when necessary. Communicate to everyone and make it alive.

**Listen to yourself and others:** Listening is the best policy. Listen to your people, your suppliers, your customers, your stakeholders and yourself too. Some unsaid and hidden behaviour are more important than visible products.
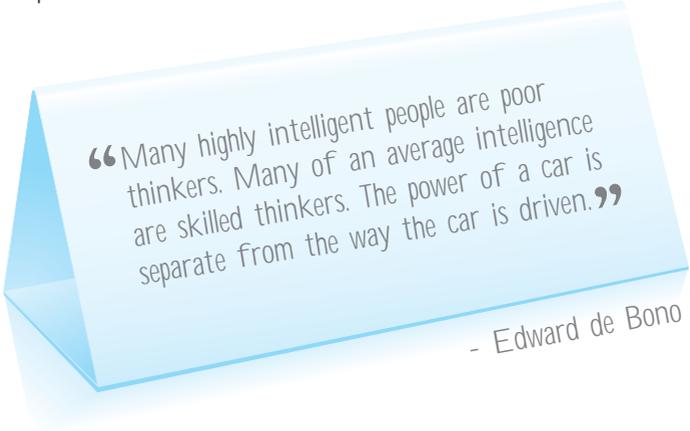
> "Many highly intelligent people are poor thinkers. Many of an average intelligence are skilled thinkers. The power of a car is separate from the way the car is driven."
>
> – Edward de Bono

According to Dr. de Bono, skilled creative thinkers should be able to direct creativity at some kind of a focus. Therefore, individual and teams need a list of defined targets for their creative efforts. Some of the lists relate to problems, tasks, improvements and also general focus.

As a Safety Manager, try to list down the focus statement in compiling a Creative Hit List.

Problem Focus Statements:

1.
2.
3.

Task Focus Statements:

1.
2.
3.

Improvement Focus Statements:

1.
2.
3.

General Focus Statements:

1.
2.
3.

# Put Your Ideas Into Actions

One of the largest foreign banks in Malaysia conducted Lateral Thinking for their 25 Senior Branch Managers & Departmental Managers. Being consumer-driven in their corporate culture, they believe that competitive advantage belongs to those who continually find new ways to add value.

The General Area Focus & Specific Focus Areas were:
    Increasing customer service at branches level
    Staff motivation
    Bank deposits and segmentation of customers
    Localization of services

Early results indicate that some of the Senior Managers have started using Random Entry and Challenge in their operation meetings.

Another project led by one of the senior managers in the bank used Lateral Thinking to find ways to boast up loans to local SMIs and SMEs in supporting the government's call for more funding. "These SMIs and SMEs culturally dislike loans and always depends on internal funding rather than external funding. Another group of them who wants loan usually does not have enough documentations and collateral. It is difficult to convince those who do not need loans. The security collateral is always not enough when they apply!"

"There were several factors contributing to the difficulty tasks," says the senior manager, "In most cases, the family run businesses were not systematic and lack structure and technology. Because of the slow-down in economy, the traditional approach was to layoff and retrench workers. Morale is low and the management is not interested in growing, only focusing on income."

"It was a really tough situation with the current high non-performing loans", recalls the senior manager, "but we have to increase our sales and we need a solution."

Through an initial brainstorming session, the team proceeds to use Challenge and PO techniques and was able to generate a list of 20 possible solutions. Some of the ideas were a compulsory weeklong education and training program for the family run businesses and working together with other technology and financial partners to provide them with a one stop financial service package.

The market response was positive and lately the bank had set up a SME division and held road show around the country.

Here are some things that you can do to put your ideas into actions:

**Treating your idea:** After a deliberate effort of harvesting we could treat the creative ideas. As de Bono puts it, there are various systematic tools to treat an idea namely shaping, tailoring, strengthening, faults corrections, concept extraction and focus of the difference. The purpose is to make the idea more practical and usable.

**Preliminary assessment:** You may use the Six Hats method in the preliminary assessment. Sequence the hats and apply the hats one by one. Alternatively, you may list down your criteria basing it on the situation at the moment.

**Project management:** Once the idea has been treated and assessed, the next sensible thing that you need is a good project management plan to carry out the idea. Ask yourself the seven basic questions (What? Who? What? Where? When? How? And How Much?) in project management.
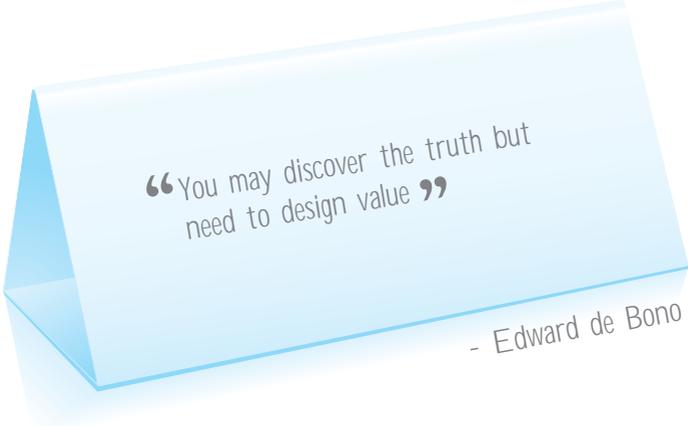
"You may discover the truth but need to design value"

- Edward de Bono

Usually after we have produced some ideas in creative thinking, we should proceed to evaluation and implementation. What happen if the ideas are not yet ready to proceed to evaluation? Some ideas could be concepts by themselves and we need to convert them into usable ideas. This is what Dr. de Bono said about treatment of ideas. Instead of rejecting the ideas due to perception of "the same as", it is advisable to "focus on the difference" (one of the methods of getting movement). This can be countered with a request for Yellow Hat thinking and some more Green Hat thinking.

Let's say you are in a taskforce of improving the transport system in your town. What are the ideas that come into your mind? List them below:

a. Idea Generations

Idea 1:

Idea 2:

Idea 3:

b. List down the constraints or limitations of the ideas.

| Constraintsl | dea 1 | Idea 2 | Idea 3 |
|---|---|---|---|
| 1. | | | |
| 2. | | | |
| 3. | | | |

c. Use the constraints and limitations to "shape" the idea into a more suitable form. (For e.g. This idea is too time consuming. Can we shorten it? As this idea would pose a risk to the user, can we make it safer? Or This idea may open to abuse. Can we prevent this?

Idea 1:

Idea 2:

Idea 3:

d. Evaluation of ideas.
   Generate a list of criteria and use them to evaluate the ideas through a matrix. Put a + for good and – for weaknesses (For e.g. The idea is to use integrated payment system and the criteria is time factor, put a + as the idea save commuters time in payment)

Using the Six Thinking Hats Method, discuss on this focus and try to find solutions to overcome this problem.

| Ideas | Criteria (E.g. Cost, Time, People) | | |
|-------|---|---|---|
| 1. | + / - | | |
| 2. | | | |
| 3. | | | |

e. Selected Ideas

f. Implementation

| Actions | Who is involved | Deadline | Resources required |
|---------|-----------------|----------|--------------------|
| | | | |
| | | | |
| | | | |
| | | | |

# Spread The Creativity Tools

Looking for an innovative way to write a business plan, a freight forwarding company invited me to facilitate their annual meeting in a retreat. The HR department invited all the senior management team and their overseas partners in the training, as they believe that this initiative was not going to be easy.

One of the key concerns is how to make the company more competitive with increasing competition from other freight forwarding and courier companies.

Since 1996, I have worked with the company's staff in corporate Human Resources on their policy, procedures to improve staff compensation, training and human relations for all the three (3) branches in Malaysia. I spent months in their office, ports and warehouse, learning about their work to build an environment for learning.

The Financial Controller said, "One of the local company's objectives is to become the regional learning centre both for trainees and developmental programme if we want to be competitive; and that can happen only if every staff has the culture of lifelong learning. We are in the service industry and people skills are very important."

Many of the staff in supervisory grade and below lacks education, even some members of management are not interested in self-development. The Human Resource department has taken the risk of pulling entire teams out of office for 3 day training per session. At the training session, teams learn the Six Thinking Hats and Lateral Thinking techniques and gained experiential knowledge in using the tools. I follow up by going to the sites, their workplace with the teams to reinforce practical application.

The project seems to have paid off. A new branch manager was appointed and he has initiated many training programmes for the staff. He has passion in self-learning and always seek new ways of improving daily work. Generally, the staff are more motivated, absenteeism

dropped from eight per month to one a month after the staff learned to use Dr. de Bono's Six Hats.

Changes of policy and new IT system were implemented without much resistance, not like before. Now everyone is positive and looking forward to changes. Even though there is a lot of late nights work, staff are not complaining too!

"In the case of new direction for the business plan," reports the Financial Controller, "we came out with the idea of one stop logistic centre…. but one of the biggest hindrances is the budget and licence requirements. So, we shaped the idea and worked with selected partners in the short term. We are definitely moving forward and tapping into warehousing & logistics market. It was a bold move but I think it helps us to get started."

 It has been felt that there have been two other effects which though secondary, contribute in no small way to the ongoing success of the thinking tools within the company.

These are:
• Using the thinking tools has helped to reduce miscommunication between branches as the tools are used for listening to and under standing each other.
• Staff started to focus on the issue which arises and finding a solution rather than on the person where as people tend to be very reluctant to change their opinion
• Spillover to suppliers and customers on the benefits of Six Hats and Lateral Thinking.

Here are some confidence building lessons to help you to spread the creativity tools:

**Simplify the tools:** Easy and simple tools will encourage people to use them. Use templates, symbols, diagrams and pictures to ease learning. You should tailor the creativity tools according to your own needs. Customize and fit into your environment but ensure that you learn the proper way first before you apply them directly into your work.

**Training others:** The best learning process is to teach others. Take it upon yourself to seek out training. Be a facilitator and apply the creative tools in all kinds of situations.

**Communicate the big picture:** Everyone wants to know the end results and the expectations. Tell everyone the big picture and your commitment to achieve them. This will serve as a motivator to everyone.

"You can analyse the past but you have to design the future"

- Edward de Bono"
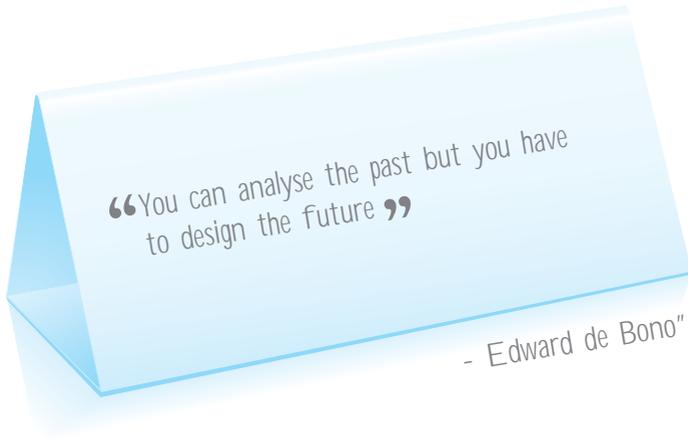
Put together a sequence of hats which might be used to think about the following subject: Each hat may be used as often as you like.

a. The safety record of a department in your organisation is poor and getting worse. What can be done about this?

b. There is an arising cost of doing business and the company cannot afford to pay extra expenses and higher wages as demanded by the employees.

c. You want to invest for your family future. What can be done? The investment portfolios could include property, unit trust, stocks, foreign currencies or businesses. Or there might be some other ideas. Suggest your sequence below.

1. _____ HAT       6. _____ HAT

2. _____ HAT       7. _____ HAT

3. _____ HAT       8. _____ HAT

4. _____ HAT       9. _____ HAT

5. _____ HAT       10. _____ HAT

## CASE 17

# Making A Difference In Thinking

This company is a semi-government institution, which values the performance of its people especially their managers, their involvement and contribution in making this difference and enhancing the company's long-term goals.

Many reasons could be put forward for this ongoing success, but high on the list would be the CEO firm belief that their greatest asset truly lies in the people thinking power and their creativity potential.

Key areas of this change process are:
- A change in the management approach
- The evolution from a rather bureaucratic management style to participative style
- The overall approach taken towards quality projects shifted from being reactive by annual planning to a more pro-active approach.

The human resource development strategies have managed to nurture the development of a unique working culture and management style which focuses on encouraging the 'creative values" of the people.

The Direct Attention Thinking Tools was seen as a key contributor towards the development process of the company's mindset – as tool to repair defects and prevent further problems in all quality projects in the company.

Implementation strategies for company-wide training and applications were developed as part of the company's human resource development strategy. The company called the programme "THINK-TOOLS".

The objectives were:
- to improve communication between management level and operation level
- to increase the level of employees' creativity to support the achievement of the company's goals

- to improve teamwork through improved human relations and open communication at the workplace
- to develop pride and self-esteem especially among senior staff
- to contribute towards the human resource development strategy

All employees were introduced to 10-tools: C&S, P.M.I., RAD, CAF, A.G.O., A.P.C., O.P.V., K.V.I., FIP, DOCA. Members of management were also trained in Six Hats. As employees were exposed to Dr de Bono's thinking tools, they began to gain more empathy for each other and also confidence in their own thinking, regardless of previous academic achievement, status and experience.

The Human Resource Manager has managed to transfer the tools from classroom training to the workplace by integrating their use in:

- Quality Control Circle activities (e.g. audit exercise, meetings, health & safety projects)
- Focus group meetings which are organized by the company for their respective departments (Initially, the manager in the respective departments list down the purpose focus in supporting the current year's plan, then facilitators assist in the meetings and generating ideas or solving problems through the use of the tools.)
- Training programmes (e.g. Part of the company's induction & leadership development programmes)
- The company idea campaign (The idea campaign has been initiated to help employees structure their thinking about suggestions. It encourages them to generate different alternatives (APC) and evaluate each idea (PMI) before forwarding it to sponsors.)
- Conducting operation meetings in a structured manner thus saving on time and it's more constructive

The company created a logo THINK-TOOLS to project the company's initiative and to give the employees an identity. The HRD department has developed an employee manual in simple thinking tools, which was shared to all company employees through a monthly gathering. They even set up a THINK-TOOLS bulletin to disseminate successes & projects in the company. DATT Charts have been posted in most departments & meeting room too.

Here are ways that you can incorporate thinking tools into your toolbox:

**The tools' names:** Remember Dr. de Bono's thinking tools (i.e. C&S, P.M.I., RAD, CAF, A.G.O., A.P.C., O.P.V., K.V.I., FIP, DOCA. According to de Bono, the names are deliberate. The tools are self-instruction to the thinker and provide a mechanism for referring directly to thinking operations.

**Single tools use:** "In most cases, it is sufficient to use a single thinking tool", says Dr. de Bono. Some of the situations are evaluation (use P.M.I. or C & S), exploration (use RAD, CAF, O.P.V. or A.P.C.), seeking values (use K.V.I. or FIP) and taking actions (use A.G.O., A.P.C., or DOCA)

**Sequence use of tools:** There is no right sequence because the sequence will depend on the subject matter, the people involved and the circumstances. You may decide on the sequence based on your purpose of thinking.
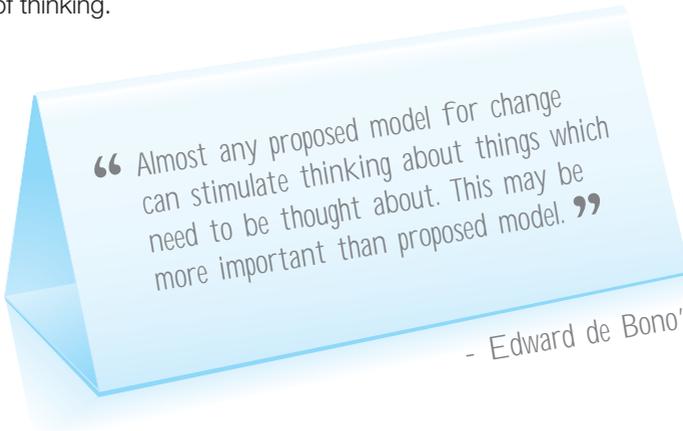
> " Almost any proposed model for change can stimulate thinking about things which need to be thought about. This may be more important than proposed model. "
>
> – Edward de Bono"

## Activity 26

According to Dr. de Bono, quite often it is enough to use a single tool. For example, you are designing a new set of rules and regulations for a park. In theory, you might do CAF, O.P.V., C & S, K.V.I. and FIP. In practice, it might be enough to do a CAF because of overlapping of the Thinking Tools.

| USE | TOOLS |
|---|---|
| Evaluation | Plus, Minus, Interesting (P.M.I) <br> Consequence and Sequel (C&S) |
| Exploration | Recognize, Analyze, Divide (RAD) <br> Consider All Factors (CAF) <br> Other People's Views (O.P.V) <br> Alternatives, Possibilities, Choices (A.P.C) |
| Value | Key Values Involved (K.V.I) <br> First Important Priorities (FIP) |
| Action | Aims, Goals, Objectives (A.G.O) <br> Alternatives, Possibilities, Choice (A.P.C) <br> Decision/Design, Outcome, Channels, Action (DOCA) |

Which single tool would you choose to use in each of the following situations?

| SITUATION | SINGLE TOOL |
|---|---|
| You are always in hurry to attend to your work | |
| Your employee has failed to carry out an important task | |
| In a social gathering, an associates claim to be your long lost friend | |
| You have to persuade your customer to try your new products / services | |
| You need to buy a special gift for your Mother In Law | |
| Your company has just lost a contract due to incompetence of your staff | |
| In response to an authority request for an immediate audit of certain procedures | |
| You are designing a game for your company family day | |

# CASE 18

## Encourage Creativity

All of regional 12-Country Managers from the Networking & System Solutions Company attended Lateral Thinking workshops. They were exposed to LT tools & techniques a week before preparation of a 3-year strategic plan. I was invited to share the concept of Lateral Thinking in a 2-day training session. All the managers are very open-minded and willing to accept new ideas. Eventhough I had some difficulties initially with their languages and thinking methods, we had a good session when they worked in teams to work out their problems. Later, by using Alternatives & Challenge, it helped them to review the way in which they managed their business. In spite of being the leader in networking, there are serious threats to the business and if there was no new business development in future, sales will be affected. The slower consumer demand and market sentiment were also the key reasons to finding easier & better ways to do business.

One of the country managers says, "To be competitive today, organizations need to bring the innovative idea and concept into actions and get them out to the market place faster than others. It is not enough to merely generate ideas and keep exploring."

The team came up with creative ideas and opportunities in their strategic plan. One of them is to certify and authorize resellers who specialize in their products. In addition, they also decided to provide certified networking engineers courses. This approach has diversified their business plan and at the same time protecting their product market share. The team quickly came out with an action plan based on the available resources. They continued the process of training other managers in lateral thinking. Since then, the company has had significant results with their new business model. Newer products, services, rate structures had contributed significantly to their annual sales.

There are things that you can do to encourage your creative ideas:

**Extracting concepts:** It is important to be disciplined and precise in the efforts to generate alternatives. Dr de Bono created a powerful LT technique, which is called concept triangle. You have to make serious effort to extract concept from alternatives and to use concepts to generate further alternatives.

**Jumping out the boundaries:** We always think within certain boundaries and most of the time, the boundaries are valid. In creativity, you need to challenge the boundaries in order to escape from them or to generate other alternatives.

**Dare to try new things:** Mindset is the key hindrance in creativity; Six Hats provide the tool to encourage parallel thinking. You need to separate out thinking into six different modes. In the Green Hat, you have to deliberately look for new ideas, possibilities and alternatives.
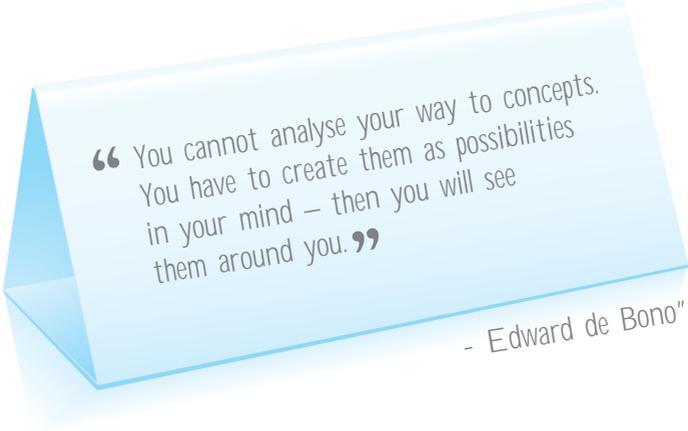
" You cannot analyse your way to concepts. You have to create them as possibilities in your mind — then you will see them around you. "

– Edward de Bono"

Full sequence of Concept Fan

Focus: How to improve the quality of life among employees in an organisation?

| Idea | Concept | New Ideas |
|---|---|---|
| 1. | 1.1 | 1.1.1 |
| | | 1.1.2 |
| 2. | 2.1 | 2.1.1 |
| | | 2.1.2 |
| 3. | 3.1 | 3.1.1 |
| | | 3.1.2 |
| Selected Idea | Concept | More Ideas |
| | | |
| | | |
| | | |
| | | |
| | | |
| | | |

Put on your Green Hat and think of the alternative ideas in spending your time with your family during school holiday.

Spend time with family during school holiday
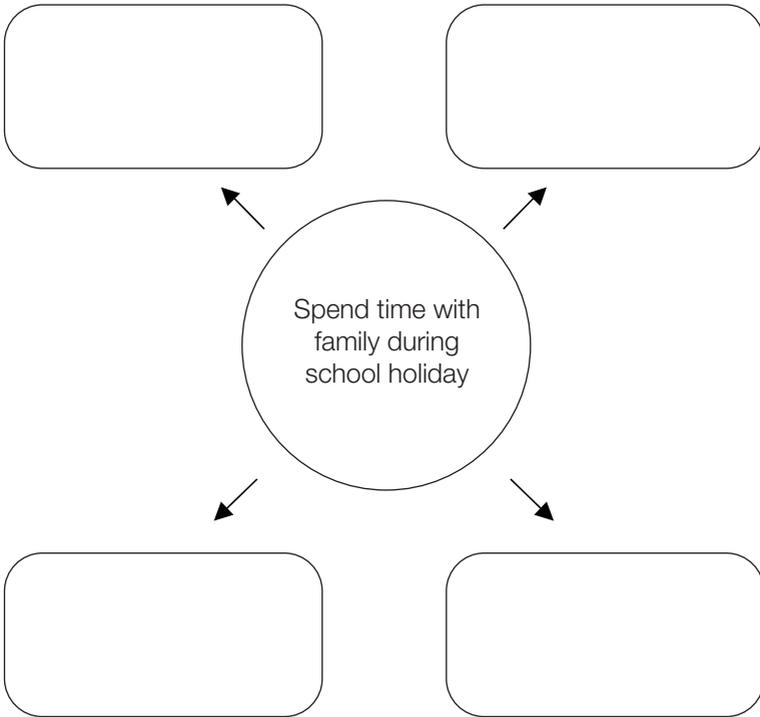
# CASE 19

# Managing Change

As one of the world's largest insurance and reinsurance companies, they continue to experience rapid growth. The Asia Pacific Regional business has been expanding and part of that success can be attributed to their emphasis on staff training. The local company has been focusing on staff training for five years and Six Thinking Hats has become one of the most successful components of that training.

The company has identified several key corporate issues for which Six Thinking Hats offered solutions:

- The need for employees to work together and cross functionally
- The strive for improvement in staff productivity
- Fierce competition, not only from other insurance companies, but also from financial institutions.
- Environmental Change, such as consumer lifestyles and corporate clients needs.

The CEO knows that in order to meet the challenges of all these issues, he has to change the mindset of the people and their style of working. He saw Six Thinking Hats as a method for cultivating creativity and improving team productivity.

I trained the management team and the middle managers and executives on Six Thinking Hats. According to them, after one-year's implementation of Six Thinking Hats, the staff has identified these results:
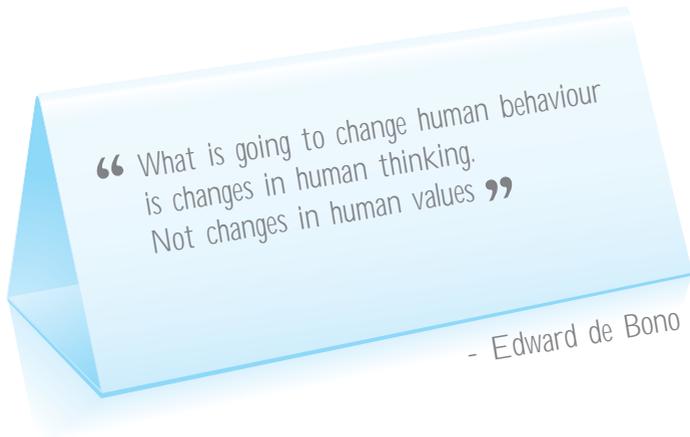
1. Meeting times have been cut by about 30%.
2. The working culture has become more positive and staff is more helpful and is able to think for others.
3. Customer satisfaction level has increased by 25% due to more interaction and better service by frontline staff.

Here are things that you can do to incorporate creativity in managing change:

**Change for betterment:** The Six Hats method is an excellent tool to manage change. Introduce the method as a means of informal framework to evaluate the positive, the negative and the values of change. By sitting down and discussing changes with your people, it will remove the resistance barriers

**Touch the ground:** Be realistic and accept the relevant fact and information. Try to avoid Red Hat in considering sensitive issues before using Yellow Hat, Black Hat and Green Hat.

**Think of changes that will or would take place:** Be prepared at all times, Consider All Factors (CAF) and run Consequences & Sequels (C & S) in you mind before making a decision. You may insert other thinking tools such as O.P.V., K.V.I and FIP.

66 What is going to change human behaviour is changes in human thinking. Not changes in human values 99

– Edward de Bono

Using Six Hats Method, it helps to promote parallel thinking and increase team discussion productivity.

There is a suggestion that passengers can decide on the amount of taxi fares in order to get taxi especially during peak hours. Putting on your Blue Hat, decide on the sequence of hats and write down the thinking output.

| Hats | Think of the outcome of the hats |
|---|---|
| _____ Hat | |
| _____ Hat | |
| _____ Hat | |
| _____ Hat | |
| _____ Hat | |
| _____ Hat | |
| _____ Hat | |
| _____ Hat | |

An organisation wants to retain staff talent and develop their workforce. One of the strategies is to increase the staff wages and to train them according to their skill group.

Consider All The Factors (CAF) that are necessary and think of the Consequences & Sequels (C & S) of the idea.

| CAF | C & S |
|-----|-------|
|     |       |
|     |       |
|     |       |
|     |       |
|     |       |
|     |       |
|     |       |
|     |       |

Decide whether it is a viable idea. Why?

# CASE 20

# Leaping Forward

As one of the country's biggest entertainment outfit, the organisation depends much on the operational staff in running and monitoring day-to-day activities. The HR team discovered that creative thinking and innovation habits are lacking among their people. Their yearly training plan has used Six Thinking Hats as one of the more successful programmes that has changed their people's mindset.

A series of training was conducted for all the operational staff in the key divisions, started from selected core business activities and customers' demands. The staff was put through a 2 day off-the-job training and followed through by a day on-the-job application.

Everyone was very excited and the energy was high. The divisional managers divided their people in teams and implemented the hats system in daily operational tasks. One significant change is at the frontline staff. The customer service, guest relations and cashiers have changed the attitude in handling customers. They are proactive, well mannered and have kept up with the service quality.

The marketing and business development team managed to come up with some unique ideas in attracting new customer base by introducing various tour packages and activities. One of the most significant and successful idea is to provide direct transportation from neighboring countries and also from the airports. This provides convenience to visitors to commute to the resort and hence increase the flow of visitors. Amongst other ideas are improved surveillance & security, better procedures in hotel check in, higher staff morale and teamwork. These ideas are generated through team project improvement campaign.

Here are things that you can do to encourage creative thinking as a tool in leaping forward:

**Dare to change:** The Six Hats method is useful to manage adversarial thinking. The system allows a person to segregate their thinking in six different modes of thinking before deciding on a decision. It provides the framework of thinking.

**Simple and practical:** The Hats system is simple to remember and practical to use for all levels of people. The response rate is fast and contributes to work productivity significantly.

**Willing to explore:** One must be willing to explore and try new ideas under the Green Hat thinking. Do not make judgment and reject ideas simply because it has been used before and seemed not practical initially.
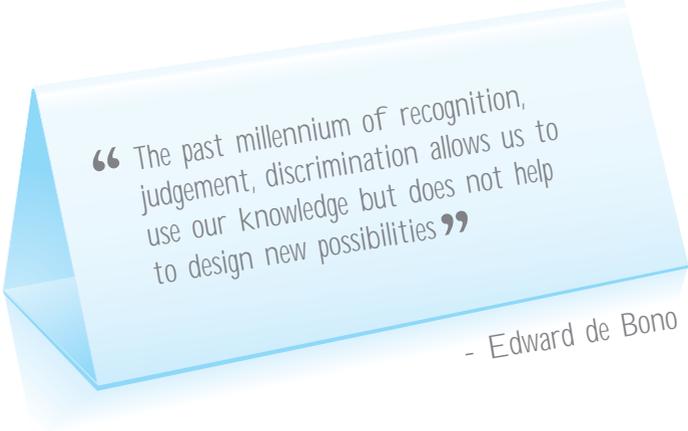
" The past millennium of recognition, judgement, discrimination allows us to use our knowledge but does not help to design new possibilities "

- Edward de Bono

Using Six Thinking Hats Method as a framework of thinking, select one of the following purpose focus and discuss accordingly.

1. Flexi-hours to promote a balance life style among the employees.
2. Car-pooling for staff driving to work.
3. Community work for traffic offenders.
4. All school going children are given a notebook to replace their books.
5. House assessment rates to be included into house mortgage loan.

| Hats | Thinking Output |
|---|---|
| _____ Hat | |
| _____ Hat | |
| _____ Hat | |
| _____ Hat | |
| _____ Hat | |
| _____ Hat | |
| _____ Hat | |
| _____ Hat | |

In Six Thinking Hats Method, Green Hat thinking means creative ideas, alternatives, possibilities and provocations.

Write one problem that you are facing now and list all the items that come across your mind with regards to the problem.

1.
2.
3.
4.
5.

Identify the steps that you should take to overcome this problem. Do not judge the ideas in order to allow those ideas to flourish. Logic is not necessary at this moment.

# Innovate To Compete

I have the opportunity to train and work with a diversified organisation that has businesses in power generation, manufacturing, entertainment and leisure. The HRD director saw the potential of Six Hats Method during my training and quickly proposed to the management to incorporate this in one of their core training activities for 2 years.

I was requested to customise the training into their nature of businesses as the people that I was going to train are from various backgrounds and business units. I incorporated the Six Hats Tools in their daily work problems and they managed to come up with some interesting ideas. One of the ideas was to redefine the focus and the issue at hand. Immediately they saw another potential use for their services. This would open up a new market for their existing customer base.

Another successful idea was to simplify their outlet operation proce-dures. Traditionally, there were many rules and procedures which made the employees confused and bogged down with paperwork. The idea of simplifying the standard operating procedure in serving customers, handling feedbacks and response to customers' special needs have earned praises and acknowledgements. The staff morale increased and this led to higher work productivity and teamwork.

Many procedures were removed, restructured and replaced with shorter and simpler approaches. For example, the usage of innovated digital system for customer bookings through kiosk, online and short messaging system has allowed the customers different options in booking. The new approach also increased business sales and cater for those who favour the use of information technology in their lives.

I remembered one of the manager elaborating "We are able to solve an old operation problem by looking at it in a different perspective. For example, there was a case where we keep thinking of new strategies to increase our customers without looking at the potential or new customers who were not using our services yet. We came up with an idea to educate potential new customers of our services and true

true enough, we now have to design a new package for this group of people." I believe the redefinition of issues would help us to unlock our creativity and also explore new turf.

Here are things you innovate in order to stay competitive:

**Explore the new territory:** The Six Hats method allows one's thinking in six different dimensions. This provides an opportunity for one to explore a challenge or issues at different viewpoint. For example, in Green Hat, one can use the provocation technique to further develop ideas which initially does not seem logical or even perceived to be possible.

**Simplify your operations:** Complexity is always failed simplicity. Removing all the red tapes help to relieve the administrative work burden, shorten the time and reduce the costs.



&#8220;&#8220; Thinking is a skill but intelligence is action. &#8221;&#8221;

– Edward de Bono
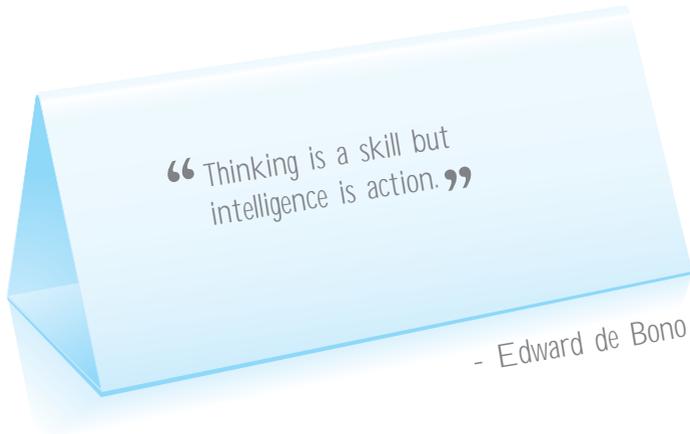
Removal is often used in simplification as it examines every aspect of what is currently being done and removing all the unnecessary aspects.

Focus Statement:
    Look at the current LCD television. What features can you remove in order to maintain the quality and ease in usage of televisions?

Things that can be removed:

-
-
-
-
-

## Activity 34 ▬▬▬▬▬▬▬▬▬▬

One of the tools for removal in simplification is historical review. This tool looks for and removes what is no longer needed. We design what is needed at a particular time. As time passes, we may no longer need some parts of that design.

Focus Statement:
The steps for taking orders from customers until delivery of goods and collection of money.

| Steps | Historical basis |
| --- | --- |
| 1. | |
| 2. | |
| 3. | |
| 4. | |
| 5. | |

# CASE 22

# Moving Forward With Creativity

Companies that focus on continuous improvement usually need a team of people to work on various projects both in cutting operation costs and at the same time to improve efficiency and effectiveness of the systems.

One local public listed company recently embarked on a creativity and innovation exercise. The purpose is to increase sales for the company through creativity. The management team believes that De Bono's Six Hats Method is able to change staff mindset and help in team productivity. The Managing Director liked what I shared and immediately arranged for their people to be trained. All the staff was briefed and given a project to work on even before they underwent training proper.

As most of them are involved in projects, planning, implementing and monitoring of tasks; breakdowns and resources deployment are of utmost importance. The project leaders found that Six Hats helped them to expedite the project meetings with their clients. "This has helped us to convince our clients based on our thorough planning and proactive actions", explained the Project Manager. "We used Six Hats to plan our projects, looking into all the six aspects of thinking. The hats system also helped us in discussing tasks breakdowns, timelines and resources required for project implementations."

In the Green Hat (creativity) thinking, the project team members focused on idea generation. One of the team members reflected, "We were able to explore new areas, came out with some interesting ideas for quality improvement in project reviews." "People are more creative and are willing to develop and build on other ideas". Finally the Blue Hatter will make a suitable decision after the team had put on other thinking hats.

"We were able to achieve higher success rate in business proposals in forecasting the clients' needs and demands. Some of the IT programmers were amazed with the framework in aligning the team's discussions", says the team leader.

In addition, a special team was set up to look into the efforts of creativity in their company improvement projects. Amongst other things that they did were:

- Incorporate the six hats method in their project planning, implementation and monitoring.
- Each team is assigned a work-related project on a quarterly basis.
- Sharing of project results and problems in using the six hats on a quarterly basis.
- Measuring the effectiveness of projects' bidding rate using the six hats method.

Here are things that you can do to encourage staff to move forward with creativity:

**Creative projects:** Assign employees with specific creative team projects. These would motivate the team to think and come up with creative and innovative ideas.

**Forecast your client's needs:** Use lateral thinking to explore and think for unusual and unorthodox ideas. Challenge the current practices by encouraging the operations staff to contribute ideas and voice their suggestions.

**Quality improvement:** Six Value Medals uses the value system to assess the impact of a decision towards an organisation. The method helps you to scan, identify and prioritize values in making decisions. The six value medal asks what the implications for quality are and how the decision at hand will impact the quality of what we do.
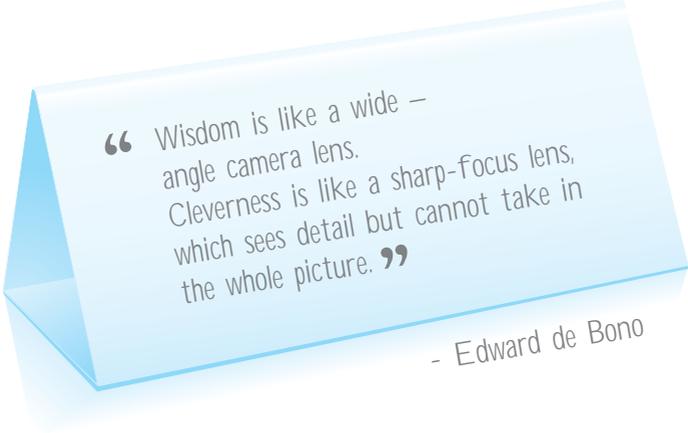
> " Wisdom is like a wide – angle camera lens. Cleverness is like a sharp-focus lens, which sees detail but cannot take in the whole picture. "
>
> – Edward de Bono

There are two types of Challenge techniques as introduced by Dr. de Bono. I.e. to challenge the existing features of an object and challenge on what we are thinking in our minds.

In this exercise, we want to challenge what we are thinking. The purpose focus is to improve the quality of lecturers in all institutes of higher learning in delivery, research and publication duties. What are the items on your mind that you would like to challenge and what are the alternative ideas?

| Items to Challenge | Alternative Ideas |
|---|---|
| 1. What controls your mind? | |
| 2. What are the assumptions on the current situation? | |
| 3. What are the constraints or hindrances currently? | |
| 4. What are the important factors affecting the current situation? | |
| 5. What are the factors you plan to avoid? | |

MOVING FORWARD WITH CREATIVITY

# New Approach In Merchandising

One company recently used Six Hats in merchandising planning. A group of channel managers and sales executives were trained using the Six Hats method. One of the main discussions was:

The Key Focus

"Use Edward de Bono's Six Thinking Hats Method to improve the merchandising planning in modern trade".

The Approaches Taken

*Step 1:*  Redefine the initial focus statement using the ladder approach – Asking questions on "What's stopping us to improve the merchandising planning in modern trade.

*Step 2:*  White Hat thinking to find out the existing approach and strategies in merchandising planning. What were the current problems and successes in the approaches?

*Step 3:*  Green Hat thinking to generate list of ideas. (15 ideas generated)

*Step 4:*  Use of "Random Entry" technique. (10 more ideas – Total 25 ideas)

*Step 5:*  Use Red Hat selection of five (5) most promising and unique ideas to work on.

*Step 6:*  Putting on Yellow Hat to look at the benefits and Black Hat to assess the impact of the selected ideas.

*Step 7:*  White Hat thinking is used to seek additional information on the five (5) ideas.

*Step 8:*  Next, Black Hat is used to look at the potential weaknesses and impact of the ideas.

*Step 9:*    Subsequently, Green Hat is used to look for alternative ways and options
in implementing the five (5) ideas.

*Step 10:*   Finally, Red Hat thinking is used to select the short-term and long-term ideas for implementation.

Thinking Outcome

The business meeting using the Six Hats method has helped the team to explore new approaches in marketing the merchandise, formulate a good plan for product launching and adopt a more collaborative approach in competing with other market players.

Here are things that you can apply creativity in Merchandising:

**New approach:** In Green Hat thinking, the focus in on creativity, alternatives, possibilities and provocation. Use this action hat to open up possibilities. For example, "Let us think of some green hat ideas to take advantage of the current economic situation…."

**Selecting ideas:** You may use an evaluation matrix to evaluate ideas for selection. The criteria should be based on positive values (i.e. items that you must have and the importance of the criteria). In addition, the criteria for selection can also include the negative values (i.e. items that you want to avoid and of the least importance to the criteria).

**Collaborative approach:** Six hats allows one to think collaboratively in a situation. When considering a suggestion, always start using the Yellow Hat in assessing the value and positi aspects of an idea before evaluating the negative impact or its weaknesses.
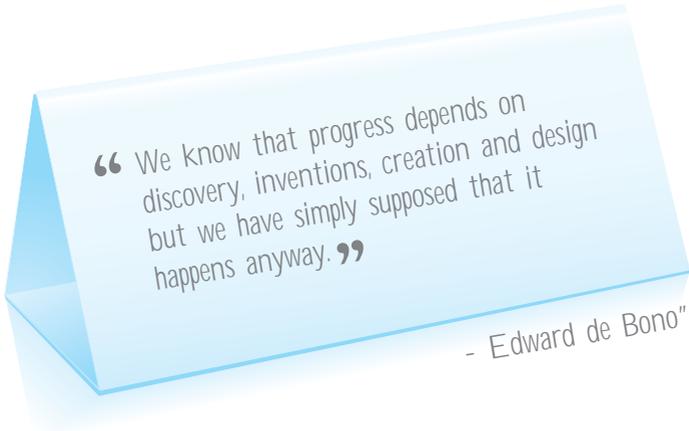
> 66 We know that progress depends on discovery, inventions, creation and design but we have simply supposed that it happens anyway. 99
>
> – Edward de Bono"

Let say, you and your team of tourism committee is directed to solve the problem below.

There is a suggestion to promote Malaysia as a shopping haven in conjunction with the yearly Mega Sale Carnival. Think of possible ideas and don't pre-judge the ideas. Let the ideas expand.
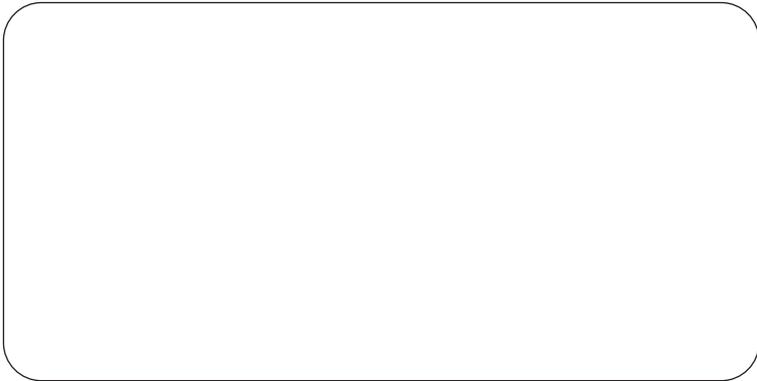
Later, using a Yellow Hat, list down the benefits from the ideas generated under the Green hat. State how the ideas can be improved.
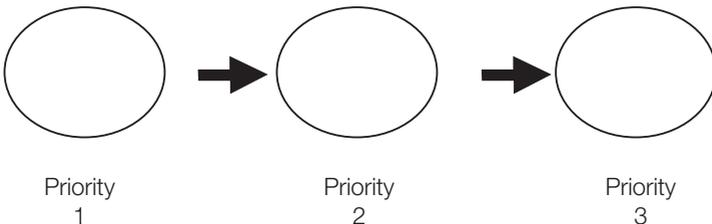
In making a decision, one has to "Consider All Factors (CAF)" affecting the idea, be clear about the objective "Aims, Goals and Objectives (A.G.O)" and identify the priority "First Important Priority (FIP)".

Let say there is an idea to implement a whole day of schooling for all primary school children in the country. You are required to make a decision using the following thinking tools.

Consider All Factors

Factor 1:

Factor 2:

Factor 3:

Aims, Goals and Objectives (AGO)

A.G.O 1:

A.G.O 2:

A.G.O 3:

First Important Priorities

Priority 1  →  Priority 2  →  Priority 3

EDWARD DE BONO METHODS – APPLICATION IN MALAYSIA CONTEXT

# Public Sector Innovativeness

A human development unit in a state government values the performance of its people especially their Grade 1 staff in leading the frontliners and their participation and services to the public, embarked on a revolutionary project. This learning project was aimed to transform the civil servants' mindset to be people friendly, competent, creativite and to have a fast service delivery.

Key areas of this change process were:
• A change in the approach to meet the client charter policies.
• The evolution from a bureaucratic style to people friendly style.
• The overall approach towards fast service delivery was through simplification of procedures.

The human resource development's strategies have managed to nurture a unique working culture and management style which focused on encouraging the 'creative values" of the people.

*Simplicity*™ training programme was seen as a key to revamp the public service procedures and change the people's mindset. The Removing tool focuses in cutting the unnecessary items and procedures. Next the Restructuring tool is used to reorganize the existing processes and lastly Replacement Tool is used to change the unnecessary items – this structured thinking process enabled them to think systematically and shift group thinking to a 'challenge' mode, moving from complex to simple outcomes.

The objectives were:
• Reducing unnecessary duplication of efforts between the various agencies and departments.
• Removing old barriers such as red tapes, documentations, which will increase employee and public satisfaction
• Encourage the public servant to think through new ideas more quickly, leading to improved public service and delivery.
• to increase the level of civil servants' creativity and innovativeness in discharging their duties.

- to improve teamwork through improved human relations and open communication at the workplace
- to develop teamwork through simplification among the civil servants

All of them were trained using the Simplicity™ tools: Removing, Replacing, Restructuring, Taking a Very Broad or Narrow View. Members of management were also having the opportunity to simulate the tools on the actual work problems.

The civil servants were grouped into teams to discuss on specific topics. Among others were:

- Allocation of funds for the people (e.g. disaster, study and festival fund projects)
- Applications of licenses (e.g. citizenship, campaigns and business licenses projects)
- Application of studies (e.g. Universities, colleges and special training programme projects)
- Employment and recruitment of new staff (e.g. Hiring teachers, staff and contractors projects)
- Public services (e.g. hospital, library, museum and garbage collection service projects)

These projects were discussed and deliberated with the assistance of a certified facilitator. The *Simplicity*™ tools encouraged them to streamline processes, thereby becoming more effective, efficient and user-friendly. They are taught to end habits that are no longer necessary, stop duplication of tasks, and challenge every aspect of services.

Here are things that you can do to simplify processes in the public sector:

**Simplify the operation procedures:** Simplicity uncomplicates and streamline products and processes, thereby making institutions more effective, efficient and user-friendly. Remove the historical reasons why a process or regulation exist, combine the processes, shift and delegate the roles or duties, challenge the processes from different viewpoints and also consider dropping a value to make it simpler.

**Replacement:** This is a second fundamental approach to simplification. When we cannot find anything to remove, we may be able to find a replacement that is simpler. Ask "Wouldn't it be nice if…" and then seek a way to make the concept practical.

**Open mind to change:** This can be done using "Provocative Amputation". This tool forcibly removes something that may be necessary. For example, "Remove the check in counter at the hotel. What would happen?" or "The screen on a mobile phone has been removed. What would happen?"

> "Complexity means distracted effort. Simplicity means focused effort."
>
> – Edward de Bono"
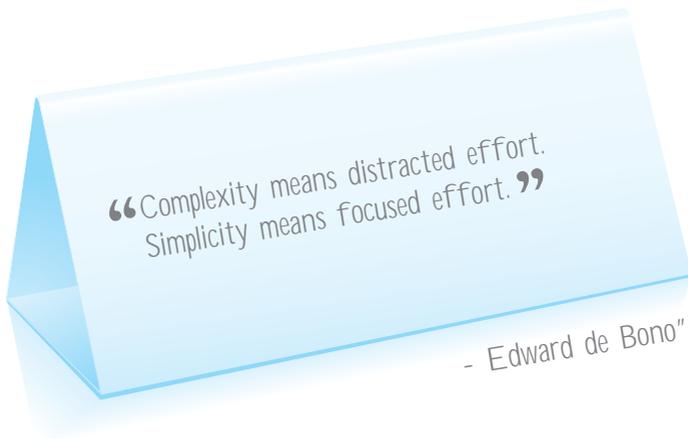
Provocation technique as introduced by Dr. de Bono aims to generate ideas which are initially thought to be not possible. According to Dr. de Bono, provocation can be set up using one of the following ways:

• Spontaneity
• Escape or reject items that are important
• Reverse the normal direction of actions
• Use imagination and fantasy

Let say, the purpose focus is to improve house owner security. The provocation statements could be one of the followings:

| Provocation Statement | Ideas |
|---|---|
| • Spontaneous<br>  - All house owners are<br>    given free alarm systems | 1.<br><br>2. |
| • Escape or reject items<br>  that are important<br>  - Alarm system without siren | 1.<br><br>2. |
| • Reverse the normal<br>  direction of actions<br>  - Police to inform the<br>    house owner | 1.<br><br>2. |
| • Use imagination and fantasy<br>  - Wouldn't it be nice<br>    if the house owner<br>    can predict when a<br>    burglary will strike | 1.<br><br>2. |

You can develop more rational and practical ideas from the provocative statements earlier using one of the techniques below:

1.  Extract a concept from the provocative statement and move to new ideas
    For example, for "All house owners are given a free alarm system". The concept could be "Free" and by moving forward, possible ideas are developer to install alarm for all new houses before Certificate of Occupancy is issued.

2.  List down all the positives of the provocative statement and move to new ideas
    For example for "Alarm system without siren", the positive values are silence or no disturbance. The possible ideas are all house alarms should be connected to police station and it is compulsory by law that every house must have an alarm system.

3.  Imagine what would happen if the provocative statement is put into actions.
    For example if we imagine that "Police to inform house owner" is real, it means that the authority pre-empt the house owner of any potential threats. A possible idea is to implement a guarded community and house owners are to register their houses with the police when they are away for a long period of time.

In order to replace a process, one can use wishful thinking tool to make the matter less complicated and more efficient. Start by asking question like "wouldn't it be nice if we can…"

Lets say, we want to replace the passport application process with a more effective and efficient system. Write down the questions before and try to move forward to get the new ideas.

Wishful thinking:
- For example: Wouldn't it be nice if we can apply passport online and the passport is sent to us directly.

-

-

Practical Ideas:
- One of the possible practical ideas is setting up an agency to manage, control and implement the online application process but the immigration office to audit and issue the passport.

-

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# CASE 25

# Creativity As A Core Competency

The management of a conglomerate recognises the value of investing in its human resources through a holistic approach. At the Education Division, they strived to provide the dynamics of fostering continuous life long learning and to enhance competencies among the workforce in the Group. Emphasis is given on the concept of "The Total Learning Approach" in meeting the challenges of intellectual human capital development.

Amongst other competencies, creativity is given the priority in developing the staff leadership dimensions. During one of my training, the department was experiencing high staff turnover and was looking for ways to encourage the current staff to expand their responsibilities. In using the Concept Triangle technique, the group discussed how to encourage employees to perform beyond the normal call of duty. Some of the exciting ideas proposed were:

- To establish an Authority Manual, clearly highlighting the type of decisions that can be made by respective levels of staff.
- To allow staff to determine KPI criteria hand-in-hand with management in order to gain staff commitment.
- To allow staff to determine deadlines with focus on balanced work life between family and work.
- To create a fun working environment.
- To encourage flexibility of work from home.
- To give PDAs to staff to enhance communication while staff's on the move.
- To implement performance point-reward system and fast track career programme to motivate Generation Y staff.

Another concern of the company is shortage of car park space. This parking availability surprisingly had implications on staff morale. The team leader whilst using the challenge technique, suggested some promising ideas that could address this challenge. These are, valet parking for staff, a double-deck car-park system, up-front payment based on hourly rate and arranging a car pooling option.

The company also acknowledged that employees are often frustrated with long working hours. Some employees are worried that they spent too much time at the office and not with the family. For the single and unmarried staff, they want more time for their social lives too. The creative team members believed that job satisfaction will improve significantly when there is a balanced work life among the employees. The project team used random word technique and suggested to build a childcare centre at the workplace so that parents could bring their children to work and have family participation in corporate team building initiatives. Other ideas generated include:
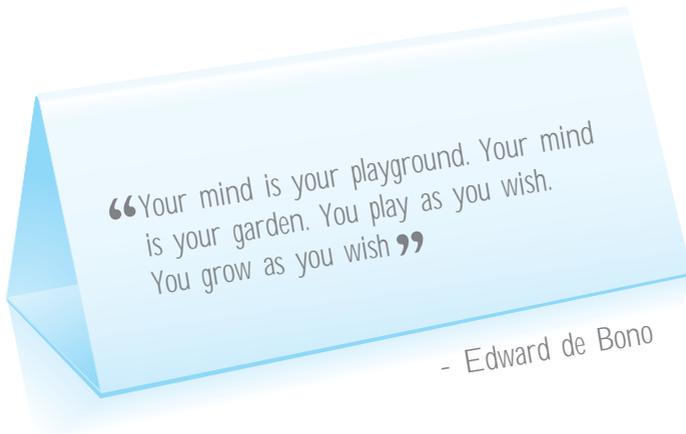
• Special visiting time during business hours for spouses or friends.
• Discourage staff to stay back after office hours by turning off utilities automatically after official working hours.
• Hold meetings and discussions at staff's residence on a rotational basis. This could also foster closer fellowship amongst staff and their families.

Here are things that you can do to build creative thinking as core competency among the staff:

**Use creative thinking tools:** Creativity should be a permanent fashion. This means that organisations should encourage creativity in all competencies. Creativity should be treated as the building block for organisational competency. Incorporate creative thinking in all personal, work and industry wide competencies.

**New ideas:** A good idea should have elements of novelty and effectiveness. Use 'alternatives tool' in lateral thinking to extract concepts as breeding ground for new ideas. For example, "the concept of a meeting is a gathering of people and the alternatives could be web meeting, meeting at employees' houses on rotation or even meeting while standing."

**Restructure:** In simplicity, restructuring is the third approach. This means reorganizing existing pieces and operations in a different way. The change pieces already exist, so the change process is much easier than starting afresh.

> **"**Your mind is your playground. Your mind is your garden. You play as you wish. You grow as you wish **"**
>
> – Edward de Bono

## Activity 40

Restructuring means reorganizing existing parts and processes differently. The change parts are there already, so the change process is much easier than starting anew. In restructuring, we may do the following:

• Try doing B before A in an existing sequence.
• Try changing a line of control and flow of processes.
• Try shifting responsibilities.

Let us say, we want to restructure the process of car park system in the city currently. How can you restructure to make the process simpler?

---

Rearrange the process of car park system in the city

1.
2.
3.
4.
5.
6.
7.
8.
9.
10.

We know that organisations should encourage creativity among their employees. Creativity should be treated as the building key for organisational competency.

Let's say you are the team leader in championing creativity and you need to identify the strategies that your company should take. What are the possible ideas?
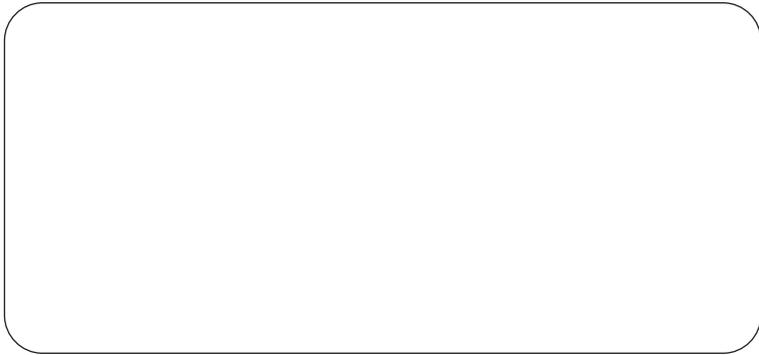
# Lateral Thinking In Finance

The company is one of the first international air-express company to set up operations in Malaysia in handling customers' air express and freight needs. The company has always commit to the highest level of quality and service in a total logistic solution with over 800 staff stationed at 25 strategically located service centres throughout Malaysia. The company also has 5 international Gateways to channel all cross-border movements. These Gateway facilities are the largest and most advanced among the air express companies in the country and have the capacity and the capability to move shipments quickly and efficiently.

The Finance department invited me to train the staff to be more open minded, think creatively and willing to explore new strategies in order to improve their collection, maintain loyal customers among others.

One of the department's main concerns is to drive team performance in collection. The team started to discuss on restructuring team members' roles, identify causes of non-performance and cross functional involvement in order to improve collection. In using the concept 'fan technique', the concepts extracted were outsourcing collection, giving incentives and sharing information between departments. Finally, the team came out with the alternative to only outsource collections for small value and exceeding 180 days accounts; self funding incentives for accounts more than 180 days and making heads of departments focus on delinquent accounts.

Here are things that you can do to apply creativity in Finance:

**Be receptive to new ideas:** Don't judge an idea too quickly. When you explore for creative ideas, use the green hat thinking to source for new ideas followed by yellow hat thinking. Search for additional information to complete the thinking process if necessary.

**Explore possibilities:** Think of unusual ideas when solving problems. Use Recognise, Analyse and Divide (RAD) tool to help you look at what is familiar in a new situation.  As soon as you recognise something, then you'll know what to do about it. Then use Consider All Factor (CAF) tool to explore all factors in a situation. What should we bring to mind? What must we not leave out? You may also use Alternative, Possibilities and Choices (A.P.C.) tool to deliberately try to find alternatives.
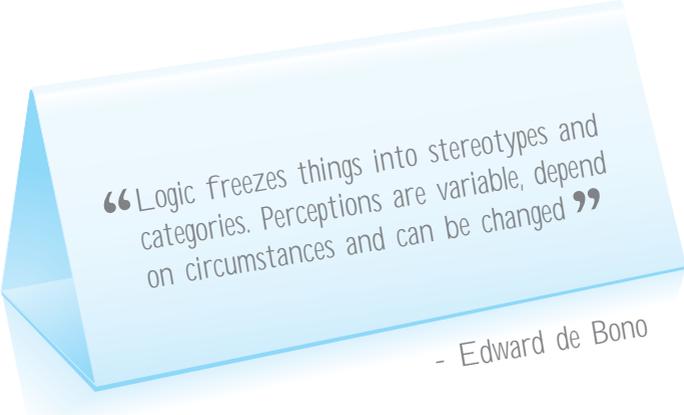
> "Logic freezes things into stereotypes and categories. Perceptions are variable, depend on circumstances and can be changed"
>
> – Edward de Bono

## Activity 42

Recognise, Analyse and Divide (RAD) tool helps us look for what is familiar in a new situation. As soon as we recognise something, we will know what to do. However, though it works well in most situation, it is not good for a changing environment.

The "analysis" is for more complex situations. We need to break them down into recognizable parts. We have to ask ourselves, "What are the elements? What are the parts?"

The "divide" part is based on our choices. We can choose to divide something for convenience. These divisions may or may not result from the parts produced by analysis. The divisions are for the purpose of guiding our attention.

For instance, your company wants to improve the quality of life for the staff. How would you propose to recognise, analyse or divide the situation?

Recognise:

Analyse:

Divide:

## Activity 43

Factors are like headings for the information required. After we have the headings, we look for that information. Consider all the factors (CAF) that you wish to know based on the situation above.

Consider All Factors

Using the Alternatives, Possibilities and Choices (A.P.C.) tool, we look for creative ideas, imagination and possibilities. Visualise the ideas in your mind and get information about them.

Based on the situation above, do an APC.

APC

# CASE 27

# Transformation Of Institution

An institute of higher learning offers a wide range of engineering and technology programmes at undergraduate and postgraduate levels complemented with a strong focus on research and development. Their vision is to be a leader in technology education and centre for creativity and innovation and their objective is to produce well-rounded graduates who are creative and innovative.

As their aim is to nurture creativity and innovativeness through technology and education, the HR department had organised a series of Lateral Thinking training for both the academic and non academic staff. I worked together with the lecturers and staff in identifying their operation problems and incorporate those issues in the training.

In one of the training, the staff discussed on how to instill leaderships in the institute of higher learning and using a random word technique, the group thought of ideas in implementing clear KPIs, research projects, grooming upcoming lecturers, to cultivating leadership among staff. This has helped them to chart their own career development path.

Another issue that the institute plans to embark on is to increase the number of post graduate students. The lecturers came together to explore some ideas such as increase the number of top researchers, offer more taught courses in research area and also offer a better sponsorship scheme for postgraduate students. Using the 'fan technique' concept, they extracted some relevant concepts which generated more alternative ideas. Amongst other ideas are, compulsory program for undergraduates to pursue their studies until master degree, set up a centre of excellence for research, provide tax-free scheme for post-graduate studies, collaborate with employers to provide guaranteed promotion for their staff who pursue post graduate programs.

Here are things that you can do to transform your workforce into creative people:

**Random Word:** Random word uses the power of the mind to move from a random starting point to a new idea and also enable you to use this ability at will. This technique helps you to explore new ideas especially when you want a quick idea or is in a Greenfield situation.

**Use Concepts to think for ideas:** Concepts is a general method or way of doing something. When we use concept to think of alternative ideas, it is advisable to extract the relevant concept.
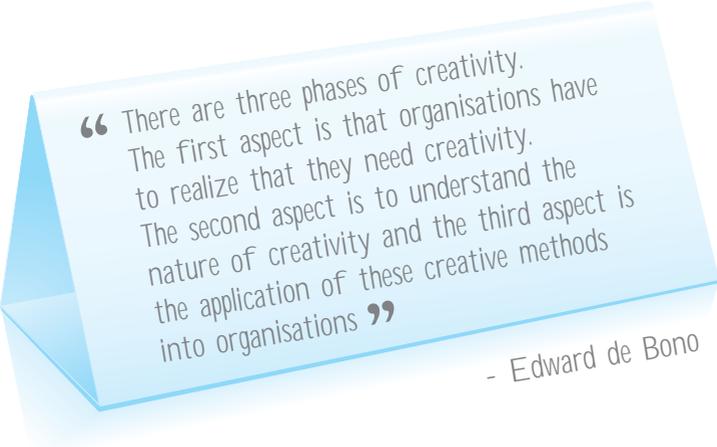
66 There are three phases of creativity. The first aspect is that organisations have to realize that they need creativity. The second aspect is to understand the nature of creativity and the third aspect is the application of these creative methods into organisations 99

– Edward de Bono

## Activity 45

As I explained in case 5, random entry technique is using a noun / word randomly to generate ideas using the associations identified.

Let's say, you are required to transform your employees using the Key Performance Indicators (KPIs) system.

| Idea 1 | | Idea 2 |
|---|---|---|
| | Telescope | |
| Idea 3 | | Idea 4 |
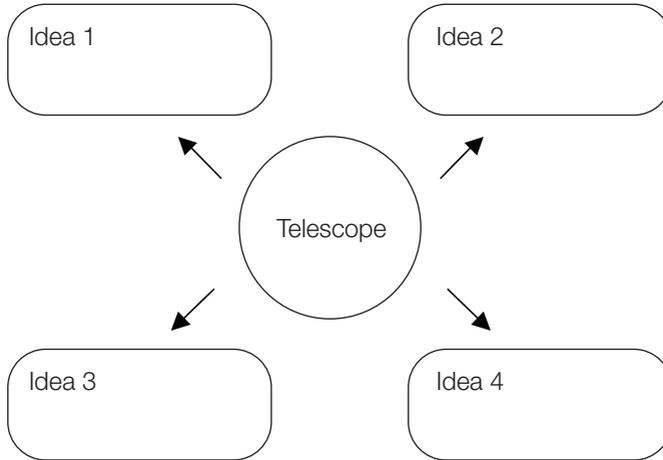
## Activity 46

Concept is a general way to carry out an idea and an idea is a specific way of executing a concept. Select 2 ideas from the previous activity and extract a concept from it. Try to generate some new ideas from the concept.

| Idea(s) | Concept | New Ideas |
|---|---|---|
| Idea 1 | | |
| | | |
| Idea 2 | | |
| | | |

# CASE 28

## Creativity And Innovation

This is a homegrown company which has grown in leaps and bounds over the years to become one of the largest and fastest growing multilevel marketing companies in South East Asia.

The company offers a broad spectrum of products across 5 distinct product lines such as nutritional and health, personal care and cosmetics, food and beverages, household and auto care, and other exclusive consumer items.

The company started in the late 1980's when three aspiring entrepreneurs teamed up to build a network marketing company with the vision to introduce a solid business plan that would enable just about anyone to start their own business with minimum capital. Now the business has developed into one of the major players in the direct selling industry in Malaysia. Recently, despite the economy slowdown, the company continues to grow and expand their businesses through their innovative product and marketing strategies.

I was invited to devise a training program focusing in creative and innovative thinking in order to transform their talent pool into a more dynamic team. The training team was involved from the beginning in designing a series of training workshops. The core of the training was to enable the talent pool to learn the know-how technique in creative and innovative thinking. The teams were advise to use the tools learned in managing a creative project that was relevant to their business operations.

Subsequently, each team was requested to prepare and implement an agreed project once it was approved by their superior.

Among some of the projects that were discussed, presented and approved were:

1.  How to attract more people to purchase their restaurant meal card?

    They came out with some unique ideas in pricing the card with different values and validity dates. Besides this, the group also planned to enhance their business operation by allowing pre-order services through phone calls. This will shorten the food lead waiting time and for the working people in the surrounding area, they can pre-order their food and the food will be delivered the next morning.

2.  How to convert all Malaysians to be their company users?

    The group agreed on the following ideas: FREE memberships, FREE drinks to school children, FREE Coffee for business centres, recruit junior members, members' day and company's loyalty member card.

3.  How can we increase our corporate sales with our new marketing strategies?

    Later on, the group refined their focus statement into 'to increase sales through new teams of sales persons'. Subsequently, the group members generated the idea of using re-branding and new marketing incentive to aggressively promote the company's products.

4.  How to increase sales of the new product launched?

    The group harvested a series of ideas and treated these ideas for implementation. They planned to design refill container pack that can be recycled, to engage celebrities as product ambassadors, to position the product with high quality packaging and to incorporate the element of fun, enjoyment and life style in using the product..

5.  How to revamp corporate branding image through employee grooming?

    The group decided to form a committee to build the women market by selecting a spoke person to represent their image and to develop employees' grooming in all aspects i.e. physical fitness, emotions, attire, practice company slogans and rituals.

Here are things that you can do to build a creative thinking culture among the staff:

**Setting up a creativity project team:** The staff should be grouped into teams and be assigned creative projects. This would encourage them to work together to solve operational problems and also allows them to explore new ideas. Each team should have a team leader, team members, project sponsors and a project manager to ensure the project is successful. Organise gatherings and team presentations to motivate them too.

**Teach lateral thinking to all:** When everyone understands and knows how to use lateral thinking, the team projects would be easier. It is recommended to appoint process champions to drive the creativity culture and also to assist in team projects.

**Reward creative ideas:** Obviously, one of the most important driving force is to reward the ideas. Everyone is excited and will feel proud to be recognized and be given incentives. Reward can be monetary or non-monetary but the most important is that the team knows that their efforts are appreciated.
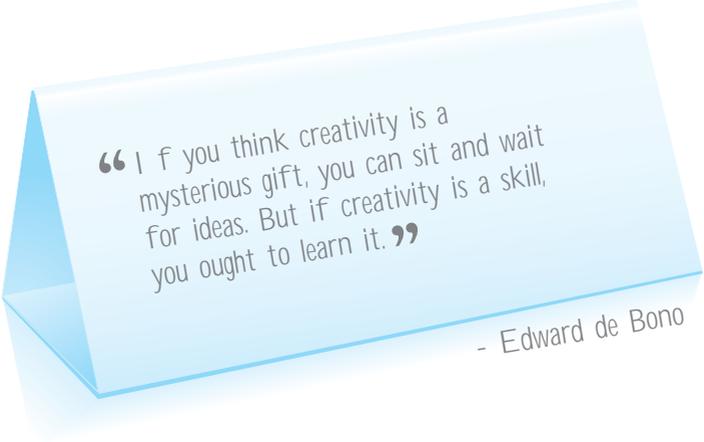
66 I f you think creativity is a mysterious gift, you can sit and wait for ideas. But if creativity is a skill, you ought to learn it. 99

– Edward de Bono

a. Let's say you are the team leader in setting up and executing the creative projects, what are the hindrances and barriers that can affect the effectiveness of creative team projects?

Hindrances and Barriers

1. _____

2. _____

3. _____

4. _____

5. _____

b. Let's say you are the team leader in setting up and executing the creative projects, what are the hindrances and barriers that can affect the effectiveness of creative team projects?

| Monetary rewards | Non-monetary rewards |
|---|---|
|  |  |

# Be Innovative To Capture Market Shares

This is a group consisting of three main companies whose responsibilities are different. One is responsible for the sales, marketing, and distribution of all vehicles as well as after sales service and spare parts operations. The second company is responsible for the manufacturing of vehicles and the last company is focused on the assembly of vehicle engines and also manufacturing of selected engine component parts.

The total number of manpower was about 10,000 staff with the plant production capacity of 250,000 units per annum on 2-shift cycle. The company also has 42 sales branches and 139 sales dealers nationwide to serve its customers efficiently. It also has 43 service branches and 119 service outlets throughout Malaysia for customers' convenience.

The company believes in constantly motivating and developing their work force. As the company continues to grow, one of the strategies to remain focused on achieving their corporate goals is by having competent and qualified employees. The group training department initiated the idea of developing a group of talented employees to groom them to assume managerial positions. The department carefully tailored their training programmes to suit the organization and this group of employees' needs.

One of the special modules in the talent pool development program is creativity and innovation skills. I was invited to deliver a series of training for this group of employees as part of talent management to enable them to think creatively and solve problems critically. Their operation problems were discussed thoroughly during the training.

Among some of the issues discussed were:

1. Ideas to increase customers' satisfaction at service centres.

2. How to maintain the image as a market leader in the car market segment?

3. How to enhance the image of sales people in the car showrooms?

4. Ways to motivate young talents to think outside the box.

One of the teams came up with an interesting idea of up-selling the services to car owners at the service centres by educating the customers on car care and life-style of owning a car. One member suggested increasing the efficiency of service booking system, make-shift service lanes during festivals and also outsourcing the car services to authorised 3rd parties.

In order to maintain as the market leader, the sales team proposed to enlarge their target market to include graduates, housewives and also arrange an easy financing plan for them. They also planned to focus on selling the cars as the 1st car for all Malaysians.

The participants also agreed that motivated and dynamic sales personnel are very important in changing public image towards the company. All sales personnel needed basic grooming and social etiquette skills in dealing with customers. In addition, they should also dare to try new strategies in attracting potential customers. Some suggested ideas on mobile advertising, test drive car at public places such as hypermarkets, banks, hospitals, post offices etc. Some had ideas to work together with MLM companies and franchise companies to promote the car as entry level corporate cars.

Here are things that you can do to help your organisation be innovative:

**Provoke the normal thinking process:** Provocation can be used to explore and move our thinking process forward in order to generate unorthodox ideas. It is recommended that you encourage your staff to continuously provoke themselves by asking "what if.." and explore the future situation.

**Challenge existing policies:** In the challenging process, you can challenge your team's thinking process in terms of the necessity of the ideas or the validity of the reasons or the uniqueness of the ideas. The key is to consistently challenge the current practices in order to try new approaches.
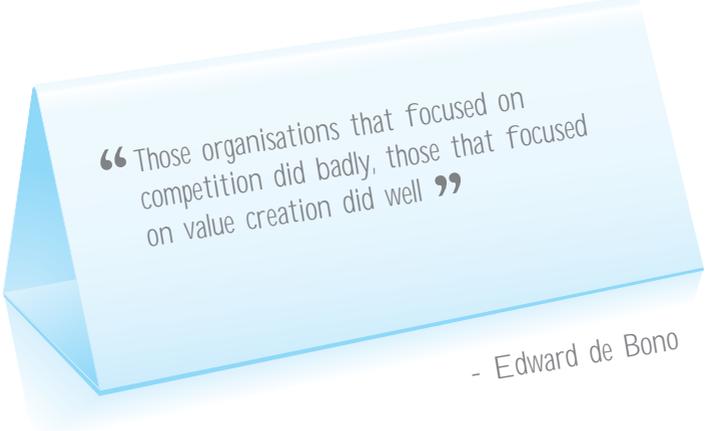
" Those organisations that focused on competition did badly, those that focused on value creation did well "

- Edward de Bono

## Activity 48

As discussed in previous cases, provocation technique is a method of generating ideas by using statements that initially would not make any sense. Subsequently, move our mind forward from the provocative statement to generate some practical ideas.

Let's say the school runs a campaign to encourage students to learn about saving habits. As you are involved in the Parents Teachers Association (PTA), you would like to propose some ideas using the wishful thinking technique.

> "Wouldn't it be nice if teachers take a pay cut and donate the money to the school"
>
> Try to come out with some ideas based on the above provocation:
>
> Idea 1.
>
> Idea 2.
>
> Idea 3.
>
> Idea 4.
>
> Idea 5.

## Activity 49

Select two (2) ideas from the previous activity and try to challenge them to improve the ideas. The challenging process could include some of the following questions:

1. What are the dominating features or functions of the ideas? Can we remove them?

2. What are the barriers? Can we cut them?

3. Are there any assumptions existing? Do we have any other alternatives?

4. What are the most important factors that affect the ideas?

5. Are there are factors that we should be concerned about?

# CASE 30

# Think, Think And Think

The Company is an investment holding company of a group of subsidiaries whose principal activities relate to Power Generation, Gaming, Leisure and Property Investment. One of the subsidiaries operates the film exhibition business in Malaysia through 13 multiplexes located in Kuala Lumpur, Selangor, Penang, Perak, Seremban, and Johor.

The company believes that the best people working together create best results. The Group invited me for a discussion on how to transform their people to be more creative and innovative. I was asked to design and customize the Six Hats to suit their needs and the staff's working culture. A series of training programmes were planned and rolled out for the employees in the group.

I remembered in one of the group discussions we spoke on how to reduce customer complaints. Using a random word tool, the group discovered the following ideas:

• Form Fun Club to foster better relationship with the customers.
• Using incentive to encourage staff to improve their service level such as giving holidays, promotion for staff who meet KPIs and rewarding staff for good service level.
• Create opportunity for staff to develop their talents and empower them to make decisions.
• Reward for extra skill-sets when the staff makes extra effort in assisting the customers.

Subsequently, the group proceeded to use another LT tool called concept triangle and generated more possibilities:

• Improve staff welfare such as insurance schemes, family day, medical benefits and subsidized meals.
• Provide education benefit to retain talents which includes scholar ships and interest free loans.
• Increase recognition for staff through performance based promotion, increment and holiday trips.
• Provide health care services to motivate staff like free medical check-ups, fitness concepts or health talks.

Eventhough they agreed that all the ideas are not feasible to be implemented, they draw up an action plan immediately to address the purpose focus. The fundamental learning point in the group is that lateral thinking tools have helped them to explore and generate new ideas and the six hats method was helpful in evaluating the ideas and subsequently put into action.

Here are things that you can do to improve your staff thinking process:

**Roles of a manager:** The skills you require to successfully build a creative thinking culture are the two big items: Ability to apply the 'Creativity Tools' and lots of 'Motivation'. In creativity, tools and techniques are essential to help you think outside the boundaries whereas motivation means that you are willing to accept changes in life and at work. Adopting new procedures by implementing a new way of doing things is uneasy and difficult if you are comfortable with your current way.

**Challenges as a staff:** The staff that are involved in the day to day work are often the best people to improve the work process which is driven by top-down and/or bottom-up. In taking up the role you should consider the following challenges; accepting the part, attending a creative thinking training and participate in creativity projects.
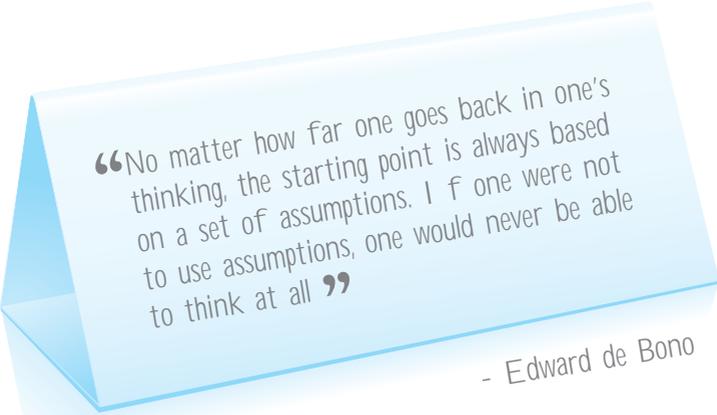
> "No matter how far one goes back in one's thinking, the starting point is always based on a set of assumptions. If one were not to use assumptions, one would never be able to think at all"
>
> – Edward de Bono

As discussed earlier, managers are required to apply the 'Creativity Tools' and lots of 'Motivation' in order to implement the creative team projects.

List down all the possible roles a manager needs to ensure successful implementation of a creative project.

_____          _____

_____    **Roles of a Manager**    _____

_____          _____
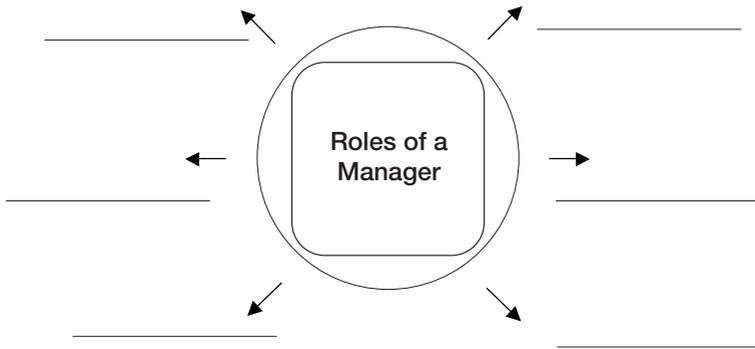
# A PLAN FOR MY CREATIVE THINKING SKILLS

Developing a plan of action to hone your creative thinking skills is not difficult. However, the implementation requires some discipline and effort. But not to worry, it is worth your effort and time definitely, because it will improve your thinking abilities, thus in turn improve your job performance, job satisfaction and quality of life.

Usually we think creative thinking is only needed when solving problems. Not so, as creative thinking applies to all situations and everyone. There is always room for improvement, even for good thinkers and creative folks. To create a plan, please follow these three steps.

**STEP 1:** Take stock of your current creative thinking skills. Examine and list each knowledge and skill that affects your life and your job performance.

**STEP 2:** Define your creative thinking objective. Rate each of your knowledge and skill areas from 1 to 5, 1 being poor and 5 being excellent.

**STEP 3:** Develop your creative thinking action plan. An action plan should include thinking goals and a timeline.

# STEP 1: Take Stock of Your Creative Thinking Skills

Before you can start your creative thinking action plan, you must take stock of your skill inventory. Look over the list of skills and rate each skill 1 to 6:

**Little skills** ← **Excellent**

| 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 | 6 |
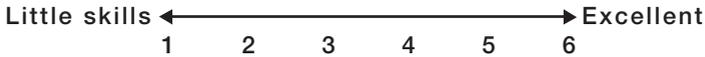
You will use these ratings in your creative thinking action plan:

| | |
|---|---|
| | Positive perception towards others |
| | Knowledge of creative thinking tools |
| | Understanding of personal thinking styles |
| | Ability to think creatively |
| | Ability to solve problems at work |
| | Recognising the issues and challenges at hand |
| | Analysing information and designing ideas |
| | Managing creative project teams |
| | Ability to think outside the box |
| | Selection of ideas |
| | Understanding how to seek information |
| | Handling emotions in thinking |
| | Explore possibilities |
| | Ability to manage negative thoughts |
| | Recognising the importance of logical thinking |
| | Accepting facts and information |
| | Making commitment and decision |
| | Remaining neutral in thinking process |
| | Putting yourself into another person's position |
| | Considering all factors |

Other skills you need in your life or at work:

# STEP 2: Define Your Creative Thinking Objectives

A creative thinking action plan involves activities that will lead to the improvement of your creativity skills. Set realistic objectives and activities. Your plan does not have to be complexed. Keep your plan basic and as simple as ABC.

A – Establish a creative thinking objective. If you can, quantify your objective. For example, "Bring ideas into market by 20% faster or reduce the red tape of approval by 3 steps or improve my financial position by USD 5,000.00 per month."

B - List activities that you are willing to participate in that will lead to creative thinking skills. These activities could include generating new ideas in solving problems, putting the ideas into practice, attending a creative thinking training workshop, watching a training video or go for a coaching programme.

C - For every skill area that you rate 3 and below on the previous page, develop a clear and quantifiable objective.

# STEP 3: Develop Your Creative Thinking Action Plan

Here is an example of how your creative action plan should look.

| Creative Thinking Knowledge and Skills | Objective | Activities |
|---|---|---|
| 1. Positive perception towards others. | Become a better problem solver: Reduce the negative assumptions which might affect the information collection and generation of ideas. | Read: Edward de Bono's book, I'm right and You are wrong. Use the ideas and improve my water thinking logic as opposed to rock thinking logic. |
| 2. Ability to think creatively. | Be able to use the creativity tools in generating ideas and solving problems both in personal and work aspects. | Attend Lateral Thinking Application training. Learn and practice the thinking tools consistently. |
| 3. Handling emotions in thinking. | Be able to think objectively and logically | Practice Six thinking Hats to segregate my thinking into six different dimensions. |

# CREATIVE THINKING ACTION PLAN

| Knowledge and skills needing improvement | Objective | Activities | Completion Date |
|---|---|---|---|
| | | | |
| | | | |
| | | | |
| | | | |
| | | | |
| | | | |
| | | | |
| | | | |
| | | | |
| | | | |

# … Some of Dr de Bono's Thinking Methods Success Stories

A group of workshops for the ISCOR steel company generated 21,000 ideas that afternoon. It took nine months to sort through these ideas.

In the UK, the government has the New Deal programme for unemployed youngsters. Teaching these youngsters thinking, directly, for just six hours increased the employment rate 500 percent.

Xerox (UK) tells how using the thinking techniques enabled them to achieve in less than a day what would otherwise have taken a week.

J.P. Morgan said that using the Six Hats has reduced their meeting time by 80% and changed their culture across Europe.

ABB Finland used to spend 30 days on their multi-national discussion. Today, they do it in two days – through using parallel thinking.

In the Karee platinum mine in South Africa, there used to be 210 fights a month between the seven tribes working there. When thinking was taught directly to miners who had never been to school – even for one day – the number of fights dropped to just 4.

Channel 4 Television (UK) said that as a result of the training they had generated more ideas in two days than they had in the previous six months.

Du Pont as a result of Lateral Thinking expanded the use of Lyra and hence the market for it

Statoil in Norway had a problem with an oilrig, which was costing them $ 100,000 a day. They had been thinking about it for some time. Paralleling thinking ( Six Thinking Hats) was introduced and the problem was solved in twelve minutes-with a saving of $ 10 million.

A Swedish company, using Dr. Edward de Bono's thinking concept, came up with ideas that helped increase its profits from $ 7 million to over $ 70 million in two-and-a-half years, and its market valuation from $ 60 million to $ 1.2 billion.

The head of research at 3M, one of the most innovative US corpora-
tions, credits a Dr. Edward de Bono's talk with having a more positive
effect on the thinking of their research staff than anything else they had
ever done. 3M director Leon Royer sums up the importance of devel-
oping creativity and creative people; " Either you'll learn to acquire and
cultivate them or you'll be eaten alive."

British Airport Authority implemented a completely new approach to
parking at Heathrow Airport. The idea was developed using Lateral
Thinking. The results: lower costs, reduced traffic and improved
customer satisfaction.

"Dr.Bono's course builds up
your thinking skills quickly and
enjoyably and then you find
yourself using the skills
instinctively in approaching all
situations."
PAUL MACREADY
AERO VIROMENT

" What de Bono is doing to
teach people how to think
maybe the most important thing
going on in the world today."
GEOGE GALLUP

"You'll do no better
than to attend Edward
de Bono's seminar on
creativity."
TOM PETERS

"I am an admirer of Dr. de
Bono. We live in an
information economy
where we have to live by
what comes out of our
minds."
JOHN SCULLEY
APPLE COMPUTER,INC

"De Bono's course should be
essential curriculum for the
human race."
ALEX CROLL,
Young and Rubicam

"Dr.de Bono does not claim to
be able to turn us all into
Miltons, da Vincis or
Einsteins.......... but his
techniques provide alternatives
to just sitting around
waiting for the Muse to appear."
THE TIMES OF LONDON

"Our key professionals have
embraced Edward de Bono's creative
thinking techniques. They are having
a profound impact on the quality of
our thinking at IBM.
JACK SMULOWITZ IBM

"It's a function of the clarity of de
Bono's approach that his thinking
course works equally well with
school children or executives
JOHN NAISBITT
AUTHOR OF MEGATRENS 2000

# OTHER FEEDBACKS ON DR. ALEX OW'S TRAINING

1. "Shown me a structured technique of brainstorming for new ideas. The aspects of mining for concepts and alternative ideas will be most beneficial."

2. "The exercises are very good and very useful."

3. "I feel it opens my mindset. Now I understand why kids are more creative because they always challenge and generate ideas.

4. "Excellent course. Video presentation was very clear and easy to understand."

5. "Course Leader points out the appropriate application of different hat and he gives guidance in using the appropriate hats."

6. "Ideas are simple and explanations given are adequate. Training meets expectations."

7. "Simple, structured and easy to apply. Top management staff should attend this."

8. "New concept of thinking. This course did more than meet my expectations."

9. "Clear delivery, not boring (with jokes in between), assistance/guidance provided during team work."

10. "Modules are expressed clearly and systematically. The Random Entry method would be the most useful in helping me to use Lateral Thinking."

11. "Mentally stimulating and invigorating stretches the mind!"

12. "Able to train us on parallel thinking, which is less conflicting and is able to help us make accurate and effective decisions."

13. "Fantastic! Looking forward to any follow-up training in future."

14. "Exciting! Realized how "narrow" and under-utilize our minds are."

15. "Group discussions and various activities used during the training helped a lot for better understanding and better application."

16. "Excellent. This course is comprehensive enough with lots of information."

17. "The strength lies in the examples given by the Trainer and the discussions after each role-play."

18. "Great! The Trainer understands our operations/job, therefore the exercises/examples given were relevant and useful to us."

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## Send in your creativity experience!

I value your comments and writing this simple book was a great sharing experience. Please send in your creativity experience and how we can apply Dr. de Bono's thinking tools. Tell me what you like to read and learn in creativity.

All contributors whose stories and illustrations are accepted for inclusion in my next book will receive a free copy of the book.

Write to: alex@irs-training.com

If you want to be our Creativity User Circle members and share your views, please log onto our website and join us in our forums and activities.

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