

## Six thinking hats exercise 2

De Bono has suggested that the red and white hats might be considered to be, in a way, opposites. The white hat is about objective facts, while the red hat is not concerned with facts at all, but only with people's feelings. This might be a useful aid to remembering the six hats – think of them in pairs. Try the following exercises on the red and white hats.

1. Suppose a member of staff in a call centre has just finished speaking to an angry customer on the phone; the customer has been quite abusive. Now the member of staff is talking to her team leader. Write down three red hat-type things that might be said during this interchange, and three white hat-type things.
2. Suppose someone suggests to you that you should take up one of the following jobs. Do some white hat thinking on each for a couple of minutes. Then follow this with some red hat thinking. The jobs are:
  - a. Delivering pizzas by moped from 8pm to 1am.
  - b. Assisting with the handling of lap times data at every Formula 1 grand prix in the coming season.

De Bono has also suggested that the black and yellow hats might be considered together. With both hats there have to be reasons to support what you say – both hats are entirely logical. With the black hat we are concerned with truth and fitness for purpose – is a claim true? will what is proposed work? what are the weaknesses in the proposal? With the yellow hat we are concerned with benefits. Now try the following exercises on the black and yellow hats.

1. If you never read newspapers or listened to the news on TV or radio, and never read the news on the internet, what would happen? Do some black hat thinking on this, and then some yellow hat thinking.

2. Suppose that the newspapers and broadcast media have been reporting on the huge increases in profits that are being made by the UK's largest supermarket companies while small farmers struggle to stay in business. An MP has suggested that the all supermarkets should be legally obliged to pay farmers higher prices for their produce. Do some yellow hat thinking for three minutes on the proposal, and then follow this with three minutes of black hat thinking.

De Bono has suggested that the green and blue hats are opposites in the sense that the green hat is full of energy and the freedom to think in any direction, while the blue hat is concerned with controlling and directing the thinking. Try the exercises below.

1. Suppose you are running a newsagents and you cannot find anyone willing to deliver newspapers for you. Put on your green hat and make some suggestions.
2. Now suppose you are running a fast food business and a competitor opens another fast food outlet nearby. Your sales begin to fall. Put on your blue hat and decide the first three steps in your thinking. How should your thinking about the problem go?