## Lateral Thinking

<table>
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<th>What is it?</th>
<th>What does it achieve?</th>
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<td>A thinking process extended beyond normal limits.</td>
<td>Encourages creative thinking by stepping outside our normal ‘thinking’ process.</td>
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### How to use it?

Take a problem / situation
Find out alternatives solutions by:
- Establishing logically the situation
- Generate options by lateral thinking
- Evaluate both logical and lateral options and collectively decide on the best course of action

### When to use it?

Usually best as part of the brainstorming process in:
- Developing objectives for solutions
- Developing possible solutions
- Developing action plans

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Dr Edward de Bono originated the concept of Lateral Thinking, defining it as a means whereby the brain steps outside the normal barriers of logic, custom and culture.

Complimenting the use of logical (vertical) thinking, Lateral Thinking can be used to:

- Break down the No Barrier – The mind can reject any concept it wishes. In these circumstances problem to solution may be difficult for the mind to travel in one jump. ‘Intermediate impossible’ could then be employed. Whilst not valid in itself it may enable the brain to pause briefly and move on to a viable option.

  For example: ‘we do not have enough firemen to combat this bush fire.

  Intermediate impossible – ‘make everyone a fireman’

- Random Juxtaposition – Brings into a discussion something new which generates a new set of ideas. Dr de Bono recommends a list of about twenty nouns from which you can choose.

  For example: In discussing ideas for improving supermarket visits – the addition of the word say – ‘cafe’ could open up new ideas in terms of somewhere to leave your trolley safely whilst you have a cup of tea.

- Challenging Accepted Outlooks/Statements – This technique brainstorms statements/outlooks and challenges their validity however well founded they may be. It also encompasses ‘negative brainstorming’ in which the group thinks of reasons why a particular idea would not work. These should be converted into positive images where appropriate.
Six Thinking Hats

The Six Thinking Hats method is designed to switch thinking away from the normal argument style to a map-making style. The first stage is to make the map. The second is to choose a route on the map. If the map is good enough the best route will often become obvious.

Each member of the team will choose a different coloured hat and develop their thinking in keeping with the colour of the hat they are wearing.

Each of the six hats puts one type of thinking on the map.

The great value of the hats is that they provide thinking roles. A thinker can take pride in playacting each of these roles. Without the formality of the hats, some thinkers would remain permanently stuck in one mode, usually the black hat mode.

The essence of the hat is:

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**White**
- Virgin white
- Pure facts
- Figures and information

**Black**
- Devil’s advocate
- Negative Judgment
- Why it will not work

**Red**
- Seeing red
- Emotions and feelings
- Hunch Intuition

**Green**
- Fertile
- Creative
- Plants springing from seeds
- Movement
- Provocation

**Yellow**
- Sunshine Brightness and optimism
- Positive
- Constructive
- Opportunity

**Blue**
- Cool and control
- Orchestra conductor
- Thinking about thinking

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Thinking is a skill, it can be developed and improved if one knows how”. “Logical (Vertical Thinking is for using ideas – Lateral Thinking is for changing them”

Edward de Bono