

The “Five Hats” Technique

Appear Like a Leader By Using
Meaningless Systems

Chapter Outline

- What IS Five Hats?
- Why use Five Hats?
- The Five Hats in action
- A Five Hats scenario

What IS Five Hats?

- A teamwork-decision making tool
- Each person is assigned a different “hat” for the discussion
- Each “hat” plays a different “role” in the conversation
- This “solution” results in “synergy”
- In other words, it beats the “daylights” out of “us”

Why Use Five Hats?

- In real world businesses, it is important to appear like a leader
 - More money in it for you
 - You can boss around subordinates
 - One word: Power
- The stereotypical leader is not just a problem solver and a people person, but somebody who gets things done
- Chances are, you're none of these things
- But Five Hats can make other people think that you are!

Gold Hat

- This hat is worn by the leader (You)
- Your job is to govern the meeting by letting other people do all the work
- You should also make occasional observations so that your minions think you're paying attention
 - Begin your observations like this: "If I might make an observation, here..."
- Keep your observations vague, and make them sound slightly disapproving
 - Try to keep your minions going in circles for about an hour before "settling" on a decision
- Eventually, employees will become so fearful of your meetings that they will accept your decisions unquestioningly

Mauve Hat

- Affectionately known as the “Idiot’s Hat”
- Assign this hat to anybody that you know will make poor recommendations
- If anything goes sour in your plans, just blame it on the mauve hat guys
 - You might say something like: “Well, what do you expect from the MAUVE hat guys?”
- Basically, the morons take hits for you
- Sure, it’s despicable. But this is business.

Red Hat

- This is the “standard hat” that is given to all your expendable minions
- These people are all powerless and desperate for your approval as leader
- They will often trample each other, trying to impress you with their ideas
- These people do not accomplish much
- But it's funny to watch

Black Hat

- This is the “Trouble Maker’s” hat
- They will disrupt your meetings and get in the way of your progress
- Tag them early with this hat so that you know who they are
- Take them aside. Tell them, if they don’t shape up, you’ll have to stick them in the mauve hat group
- That should shut them up!

☠ Hat of Doom ☠

- This is not technically a functional hat, but a prank hat used to lighten meetings
- It is designed to burst into flames at unexpected moments
 - A patented, self-contained fire extinguisher quickly puts out the fire to prevent undue suffering and/or death
- It can be painted to resemble any other hat
 - Make it a gold hat and pretend the victim is “leader for a day”
- Hey, leaders have to laugh, too!

A Five Hats Scenario

- Let's say that your department is unable to ship some software by the deadline because none of your programmers understand C++ or Linux
- Also, your second-in-command is really getting on your case about the deadline, and is threatening to inform your superior
- This is a job for Five Hats!

A Five Hats Scenario

- Call a meeting; tell everyone that it's going to be a "Five Hats" meeting
 - They won't know what that is, so they will feel compelled to come
- As your employees come in:
 - Give the known morons Mauve Hats
 - Give your second-in-command the Black Hat
 - You take the Gold Hat
 - Give everybody else Red Hats

A Five Hats Scenario

- Begin the meeting by opening the floor to suggestions
 - Watch in amusement as your Red Hats begin to fight and argue over who's fault to the delay is, and the Mauve Hats begin to screw things up even worse than they already are
- Eventually, your Black Hat-wearing second-in-command will criticize your leadership because the meeting is going nowhere
- Send him to join the Mauve Hat group!
 - This is an excellent time to slip him the Hat of Doom

A Five Hats Scenario

- Results: Your Second-In-Command loses all credibility because he was told off by the leader
- Also, his hat mysteriously burst into flames
- When your superiors demand to know why the product is late, blame your incompetent Mauve-Hat second-in-command! He'll get fired instead of you
- Promote an new underling to second-in-command
- Make sure he's a trouble maker, so that you can repeat this process as needed

Chapter Summary

- “Five Hats” is a powerful leadership tool
- Use it to increase your image, and decrease your rival’s image
- It will make you look smarter, more efficient, and better prepared
- Can you BELIEVE we’re giving these tips away for FREE?