

Six thinking hats to re-define processes

PROBLEM

Connex is an operator on the Romania's mobile telecom communications market, with a mayor share on the market, a network which covers 80% of the country. The company was founded in 1997. To sustain its position as market leader the company realized that it needed to keep up high levels of creativity and innovation. The company identified a number of employees with high potential to become leaders to boost innovation in the company, however they needed to boost their leadership skills (especially bearing in mind that it was only 10 years before that Romania had adopted the free market). The challenge was thus to ensure to find and train company leaders who would be "*creative, risk-taking entrepreneurs, capable of making sound decisions and empowering others*". At the same they would need to start thinking and working to re-engineer the business processes and face the new business challenges lying ahead.

SOLUTION

Connex decided to have two pilot groups of potential leaders to be trained in Six Thinking Hats and Lateral Thinking, starting of first with Six Thinking Hats to develop their ability to think and work together, and then move on to Lateral Thinking to develop their creative abilities. Based upon the feedback from the participants, who participated in the training, showed that the company would benefit from using the tools. As such the Six Thinking Hats as became a fundamental element of the new Business Process Reengineering initiative.

A detailed analysis of the changing market conditions and the rapid growth of the customer base identified 13 processes to be reengineered. For each process a functional team was set up, who using, the six thinking hats techniques thought about ways to improve the process in order to meet the business objectives as set out, such as better customer service or shorter activation processes. The results were evident with an improvement in indicators (for example average speed of answer to customer service calls was reduced from 225 seconds to 40 seconds).

WHAT CAN WE LEARN FROM THIS

Creativity techniques are not only used for idea generation or creating new, or improving existing products or services, but can also be used to improve the internal processes of an organization. In fact it started out as a techniques to make meetings more efficient.

Source: <http://debonoconsulting.com/wp-content/uploads/2016/08/de-bono-case-study-connex.pdf>
Last accessed 17.10.2018

QUESTIONS FOR THE LEARNER:

1. Why do think Six Thinking Hats lead to the desired business improvements?
2. Would you apply this technique for idea generation, product/service innovation or for business processes?
3. How would you implement it?