



## Creative thinking and innovation

### Make your business stand out from the crowd

At SEA we have always recognised that many of the best ideas for developing a client's business are in the heads of the people who work in that business. Generating innovative thinking in an organisation means encouraging all staff to contribute ideas. But many owners, directors and managers are uncertain about how best to develop the talents and creativity of their people.

The ability to develop creative solutions makes problem solving a more productive and less daunting task. We will work with you using tools and techniques that **enhance the performance of your people and gain results.**

With guidance from our facilitators, your people will be challenged to examine and adapt the way they approach problem solving. They will be shown how to overcome personal barriers to creative thinking by using a range of creative thinking tools. These include:

**Six Thinking Hats®** was developed by Edward de Bono and you can get lots of detail from his very readable book (Penguin 1985). It does not involve sitting in a room wearing strange hats! The hats are a metaphor for six different styles of thinking. DeBono developed the technique to encourage creative thinking by moving away from a confrontational, argumentative approach and developing co-operative thinking. Each thinker puts forward his or her thoughts in co-operation with others - not by trying to find weaknesses in the arguments of others. Six Thinking Hats offers everyone the chance to think in a variety of ways. White hat thinking requires participants to be neutral and objective, whilst during red hat thinking you can be direct about your feelings. People may prefer one style of thinking to another, or be better at one than another. The important thing is that everyone gets the chance to try each style. Six Thinking Hats is not about trying to change the users' personality, but about providing the opportunity to adopt different behaviours.

Six Hats helps groups to improve their creative thinking and generate more ideas by:

- Providing an easy-to-understand process and sense of direction
- Encouraging the group to work co-operatively
- Enabling open, judgement-free dialogue

- Stimulating new thought processes and getting participants to think in different ways
- Channelling critical opinions to achieve a productive outcome
- Exploring the range of perspectives so that participants see the full picture

In effect, the process is like brainstorming with the help of a route map. We can adapt the language to suit it better to organisations where talk of coloured hats might put people off rather than fire up their enthusiasm!

**635 Brainwriting** aims to provide the time and structure for a group to generate ideas and to find connections and linkages among those ideas. This technique combines the energy of working as a group with the benefits of non-verbal, individual thinking.

**Inspiring Images** uses an image to inspire associations or analogies relevant to your problem. Again – this technique gives you the opportunity to work individually as well as with a group.

**Focusing the problem** shows how a well-targeted question can change your perspective on a problem. It can help you reframe, or see things from a different angle or take you into new territory where the really creative solution may be found. Techniques we use include: 'Six Universal Questions' and 'Why Five' - a favourite of Taiichi Ohno, the highly successful former Executive Vice-President of Toyota.

**Bisociation** is about combining concepts to produce new ideas. For example, Edwin Beard developed the rotary lawnmower by combining sharp metal blades with the wooden rotary technology he had observed in the cloth industry. Bisociation is based on the theory of 'creative synthesis' presented by Arthur Koestler in his book 'Act of Creation' (1964).

We use these tools with clients primarily to generate marketing and communications solutions. However, we have found that clients welcome our fresh, independent perspective and we also provide facilitation for clients across the whole spectrum of business issues.

Working with SEA will enable your people to generate new ideas and innovative solutions in a very short period. By participating in an SEA creative thinking group your people will feel valued, energised and committed to taking the business forward.