

JanSport—Packing Up the Creativity



Several Departments within JanSport revolutionize their thought process with **Six Thinking Hats® & Lateral Thinking™**

The Mission

A while back JanSport realized the human side of their organization was experiencing a transition...the transition into a project-based work force. To capitalize and nurture these project driven areas in the organization JanSport decided to evaluate it's training offerings and tailor them to meet the demands of this new breed of individuals.

After research and analysis of the JanSport culture the need for training in the practices of thinking became overwhelmingly apparent. New nationwide surveys are showing that 40% of managers believe employees don't receive training to improve thinking skills yet 66% of workers say they are pressured to come up with solutions to think out new solutions.

Now that the human resource team at JanSport realized the need for critical thinking skills they decided their entire workforce needed them and wanted to use JanSport's top executives as the example by learning it themselves. The only challenge was finding a way to energize upper management with new options in training and development. Certified Edward de Bono Thinking Methods Trainer Jay Wenberg was invited as part of the professional development team to assist with these new training and facilitation responsibilities.

The Project

After conducting focus groups and analysis to find some of the needs of the organization and match them with the offerings of VF Services they selected one day of Six Thinking Hats® and one day of Lateral Thinking™. A group of 125 people attended four days of workshops, Among the topics were Presentation Skills and Work Process Analysis included training and facilitation using the Six Hats process and selected tools from Lateral Thinking™.

Overwhelmingly, all of the 125 people who attended all four day of workshops responded to the HR department that they received the most benefit from the Six Hats and Lateral Thinking™ sessions.

Quotes from some of the participants:

"In life and in work this is the most practical and applicable training that I've had in my career it is changing the way we think and work at JanSport"

Dir. of Prod Development Brand Teams

"This is the best training JanSport has EVER had. We've had a lot of people through here in the past and it doesn't seem to go far, it's too warm and fuzzy at times."

VP of Sales for major Brand & Senior VP of Sales

*"If I want hugs I'll go home,
Training is often warm and fuzzy but this stuff works-skills that work"*

Participant in Training and Session

Due to this overwhelming response HR collaborated with the executives using "blue hat" to move forward with a strategy to train all salaried employees in Six Thinking Hats®. To help this migration using the process Jay was brought back for an additional week to finish the

Six Hats training and facilitate for the remainder of the week for different groups, teams, and focuses.

Jay was amazed at how fast it was spreading; he was stopped in the middle of the week by someone who works with the tech teams members after the training

"This is wonderful we have a common language around here now" I can stop in the middle of a conversation and gauge red hat asking for value"

The Results

On a rigorous schedule Jay worked with three teams per day that were comprised of:

5 Different Brand Teams

4 Non Brand Teams (specific work teams with non-product focuses)

"I have spent 18 years as development manager doing all kinds of training from coaching to performance management. I have never in my career within organizations or in my own business have I been able to see the results of my training or consulting show up in product-new product or existing products. It has only been since my certification in all the de Bono programs have I been able to achieve this." -Jay Wenberg

IDEA GENERATION WITH Lateral Thinking™

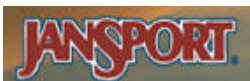
The Brand Team, a very diverse group from financial analysts to design coordinators, found success on the particular topic of developing New Product Ideas for a very successful type of back pack.

After starting green hat with top of the head ideas on what this pack can be in the future for JanSport's customers the team generated 35 ideas. Next Jay used a Lateral Thinking™ method using concept extraction and random entry the team came up with 50 more ideas. After organizing all the ideas the team took a look at the top 30 ideas from the 85, 95% of the ideas came from using the Lateral Thinking™ insertion.

The brand manager was so impressed by this session and its output he flew Jay back in to meet with people from their ad agency, sales force, and marketing trend organizations to facilitate focuses on this particular pack and what it would look like going forward this session generated an 40 ideas to the original 85.

NOT JUST THE EXECUTIVES

On the factory floor Jay did a 90-minute facilitation session on work processes that intertwined loosely the Six Thinking Hats®. After using "red hat" to gauge what the true areas that needed to be focused on in the process, the group moved into the green hat to find alternatives to these functions that were not working followed by yellow and black to get selected solutions to a point where the next steps could be taken. *Just another example of how continuous improvement and quality needs creativity to work.*



JanSport has been the leader for over 30 years in premium packs, travel, and outdoor gear. Since 1986 they have been part of the VF Corporate Family where Jay Wenberg is a Certified de Bono Instructor in addition to his own consulting firm SkillWorks. VFC is one of the worlds largest apparel manufacturers who's been in the game for over 100 years-proving that you can never be too old or too big to learn something new.

"VF isn't waiting for the future to begin. We're creating it ourselves."

-Mackey McDonald
CEO and VF Visionary