

Extract from LOCSU Leadership course 2017: Simone Mason's 'Leading Teams' blog.

The CCG had a proposal for a **Commissioning for Quality and Innovation (CQUIN)**, which the Primary Eyecare Company had to accept or reject within a short time period. The directors had different opinions. I personally wanted to accept it. I panicked because of the negative reactions to the proposal, and I wasn't sure how to go about it, as it would have to all be done by email as time was tight.

It became apparent that I was working with different personalities and as I researched Belbin's (1981,2007) work on team roles it was good to note that a high-performing team needs different team roles and thankfully, he says Individuals can show behaviours in more than one of the roles

## THE 9 BELBIN TEAM ROLES

			Team Role Contribution	Allowable Weakness
Thinking	Plant	PL 	<i>Creative, imaginative, free-thinking. Generates ideas &amp; solves hard problems.</i>	<i>Ignores incidentals. Too pre-occupied to fully communicate.</i>
	Monitor Evaluator	ME 	<i>Sober, strategic and discerning. Sees all options and judges accurately.</i>	<i>Lacks drive and ability to inspire others. Can be overly critical.</i>
	Specialist	SP 	<i>Single-minded, self-starting, dedicated. Provides rare knowledge and skills.</i>	<i>Contributes only on a narrow front. Dwells on technicalities.</i>
Action	Shaper	SH 	<i>Challenging, dynamic, thrives on pressure. Has drive to overcome obstacles.</i>	<i>Prone to provocation. Offends people's feelings.</i>
	Implementer	IMP 	<i>Practical, reliable, efficient. Turns ideas into actions and organizes tasks.</i>	<i>Somewhat inflexible. Slow to respond to new possibilities.</i>
	Completer Finisher	CF 	<i>Painstaking, conscientious, anxious. Finds errors. Polishes and perfects.</i>	<i>Inclined to worry unduly. Reluctant to delegate.</i>
People	Coordinator	CO 	<i>Mature, confident, identifies talent. Clarifies goals. Delegates effectively.</i>	<i>Can be seen as manipulative. Offloads own share of the work.</i>
	Team Worker	TW 	<i>Co-operative, perceptive and diplomatic. Listens and averts friction.</i>	<i>Indecisive in crunch situations. Avoids confrontation.</i>
	Resource Investigator	RI 	<i>Outgoing, enthusiastic, communicative. Explores opportunities, develops contacts.</i>	<i>Over-optimistic. Loses interest once initial enthusiasm expires.</i>

Source:

<https://s-media-cache-ak0.pinimg.com/originals/02/f7/7b/02f77bad1db2995bb19cc3108e2af405.jpg>

And so it was that this important proposal had to be agreed or declined all by the interactions of a 'virtual team' as Cannall (2009, p1) suggested that the virtual team 'may need to communicate by e-mail rather than face-to-face. Managing them is particularly difficult, not least because remote working can exacerbate misunderstanding.' Watson (2014) states that the critical factor of managing a virtual team is leadership skills. Yoo et al (2004) argues that a leader will emerge and be accepted as a leader in a virtual team. Their conclusions describe the emergent leader as:

- One who initiates the communication at the beginning of the project
- Their emails are usually longer than anyone else's!
- They send more emails than anyone else
- They are very focused on the task

- They effectively ‘integrate’ all the contributions raised by the individual team members

This study also has several implications for managers. First, to emerge and to be accepted as a leader in a virtual team, an individual needs to know how to communicate effectively with others via electronic media. As shown in our findings, demographic variables such as age, education level, job experiences, and gender did not seem to be related to emergent leadership in virtual teams.

Goleman (1998) stated ‘emotional intelligence is required to be an effective team leader: self-awareness, self-regulation, motivation, empathy and social skills’ as well as the influencing, persuading and negotiating skills.



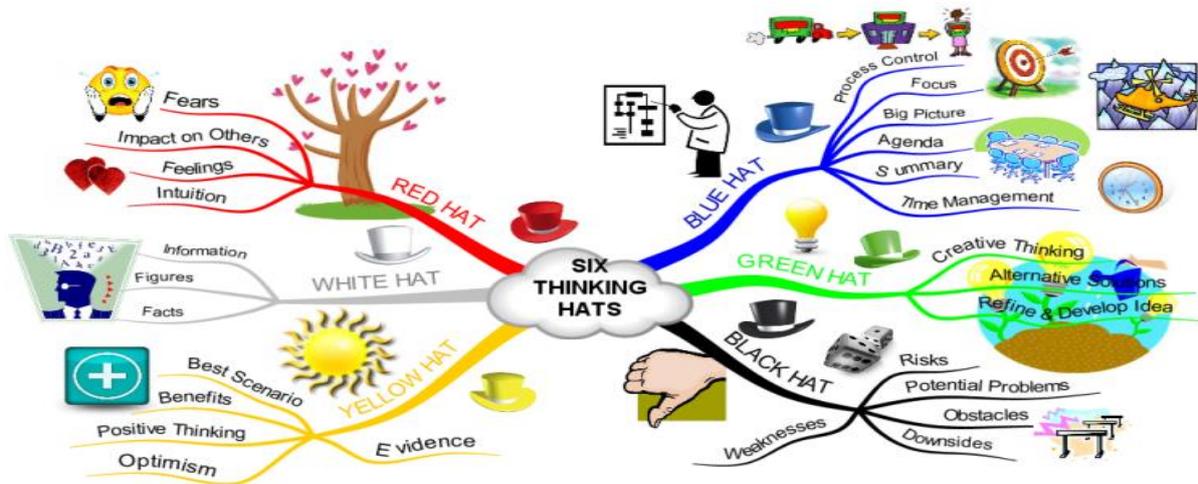
Source: [www.business2community.com/strategy/six-thinking-hats-01515213](http://www.business2community.com/strategy/six-thinking-hats-01515213)

It has been made all the more clearer by the ‘six thinking hats theory’ which is a problem-solving and decision-making technique. De Bono (2009) suggests we need to educate the brain into different ways of thinking, and this was one of the most valuable lessons from the LOCSU leadership course. He looks at each issue from six different perspectives.

- Wearing the blue hat – I explained the proposal
- When wearing the red hat – my gut instinct was to accept this proposal, but to also ask how we are all feeling now about the proposal
- With the white hat on – I shared all the information I had
- The black hat was worn by a director who highlighted the challenges and the weak points that enabled me to gain answers to his concerns
- Putting the ‘yellow hat’ I was able to share the good points
- The green hat would argue with alternative solutions and allow us to overcome the challenges. It allowed me to explore creative options and go back to the CCG with a new way of conducting this CQUIN, which was agreed.
- When wearing the red hat – How were we all feeling now about the proposal
- Finally - all were happy and so with the blue hat on I accepted the proposal with the CCG.

I realise now that I didn’t think of the concerns – I was only thinking with the positive hat on – because I felt I couldn’t say ‘No’ to the CCG, for fear of losing the MECS service. This coloured hat technique stood out to me as a great mechanism for making decisions allowing all factors and outcomes to be considered. I learnt that I could decline the proposal, ask for more time or negotiate with the CCG.

The collective knowledge of a team is diverse and exceeds that of any individual (Watson, 2014)



Source: [www.biggerplate.com/mapimages/xl/UbuRoAld\\_SIX-THINKING-HATS-mind-map.png](http://www.biggerplate.com/mapimages/xl/UbuRoAld_SIX-THINKING-HATS-mind-map.png)

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<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=oHiwpz7r4wY>