

Motorola used Six Thinking Hats and Lateral Thinking to develop a high-tech, hand-held communications device



Motorola is a global leader in communications technologies. Motorola already manufactured a product for people who make time management a priority. Another product targeted people whose top priority is keeping in touch with friends and relatives. A third product, often purchased by the rich and famous, was aimed at “status seekers.”

But in 2002, Motorola wanted to create a “product for the future.”

The company planned a three-day event for its product managers with the focus of developing a new high-tech, hand-held device for people who want cutting edge technology, but don’t want to spend more than \$800. To ensure that the event went as smoothly as possible, Motorola decided to enlist the help of Master Trainer Jay Wenberg.

On the first day, consumer profiles, based on exhaustive research, were constructed for each existing product. Product presentation and framing with regional perspective was offered to the group. The goal of the first day was for product managers to gain detailed understanding of each product’s target market. They discussed every aspect of the consumers’ traits, including age, income, educational background, cultural beliefs and daily habits. This gave the managers a detailed picture of Motorola’s customers.

The second day began with a “technology soak,” which defined the capabilities and limitations of existing technology. Then Jay gave an overview of the Six Thinking Hats and Lateral Thinking. He led the group through a Green Hat session in order to generate ideas for the “product for the future.”

During the Green Hat session, the group used the Lateral Thinking technique of Reverse Provocation to challenge the physical limitations of technology. Jay handed out trinkets from a dime store to assist in a Random Objects exercise. After all Green Hat ideas had been offered, each one was evaluated using Yellow and Black Hat thinking. Finally, the group used Red Hat thinking to prioritize the best ideas.

The final result of the Green Hat session was a technologically advanced product called the Accompli. The device functioned as a mobile business tool or “virtual office” complete with a full keyboard. Its wireless network connection provided fast Internet access across the globe. In addition, consumers could install additional business applications on the Accompli and even play an assortment of games.

The group then took the White Hat information gathered from the consumer profiles to practice a “day in the life” of an Accompli owner. They discussed how consumers might use the new device from the time they woke up to the time they went to bed. The team noted all the additional features the Accompli might need to make the user’s life easier. For instance, could it have an alarm? Could it play MP3 music files? What should the greeting sound like? The group dissected the consumer’s day hour by hour to ensure that the Accompli was the idea product for the target market.

At the end of the event, the product managers were excited about the outcome of their hard work, and even people who didn’t attend the event heard about its success. Shortly thereafter, Motorola introduced the Accompli in North America, Europe and Asia.

Challenge:

- Create an ultra high-tech device with the price tag of less than \$800

Methods:

- Use Concept Generation, Concept Extraction, Reverse Provocation, Random Object and Six Thinking Hats to develop the ideal product

Results:

- Motorola develops and markets the Accompli 009 Personal Communicator



MOTOROLA

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