

Six Thinking Hats in action at STATOIL



From Jens Aarup, Training Manager at STATOIL in Norway, who is certified in both Six Thinking Hats and Lateral Thinking

Creative Thinking in Practice

THE CASE

A number of wells are to be drilled into a large reservoir from a platform in the North Sea. The wells vary in character - production wells, injection wells, etc. - and this requires that the platform be re-tooled and the equipment adjusted for each new drilling programme. All the wells are to be drilled from the same platform in a planned sequence and the equipment required for each re-tooling has been ordered for delivery in accordance with a strict timetable.

When one of the wells unexpectedly turns out to be “dry” - showing no hydrocarbonates - it is decided from headquarters to remove the next well from the planned sequence. The drilling manager must choose whether to half the drilling programme for a week or two (60 people + 1 million kroner per day) until the equipment/material for the next-but-one well arrives in accordance with the original plan - or find an alternative solution.

The alternatives are innumerable, the situation is very complicated. Moreover, welding is forbidden on board for fear of explosion since it is a gas-producing platform. Management and technical staff on land and offshore communicate back and forth in an attempt to find a realistic solution. A week later, no solution is in sight.

THE SOLUTION

At the end of the week, the drilling manager is attending a training course with a project group that will be working on a similar sequence of wells. During the course they learn about Creative Thinking and Six Thinking Hats. The drilling manager presents his situation as a case study. It takes about 4 minutes to present the case to the group. They then work at parallel thinking for about 12 minutes (setting up a self-chosen sequence of 6 hats). The results are presented.

Not only do the participants go through all aspects of the problem in a tidy manner, but they also present a couple of creative solutions of which one is chosen as the preferred solution. This consists of disassembling certain parts of the topside and transporting it ashore by helicopter. The necessary welding is performed and it is flown back to the rig.

The drilling goes on, and millions are saved.

With hindsight, a genial solution - not planned and not foreseeable in advance.



Statoil

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