

The Six Action Shoes Framework

Most situations in business and in life are ambiguous and confusing. And confusion is the greatest enemy of purposeful action. The brilliant and equally amazing "Six Action Shoes" model of lateral thinking - developed by cognitive scientist Edward de Bono - helps users assess situations so they can control and respond to them in effective ways. Following routines, responding in a sophisticated way, overcoming obstacles, gathering information, taking action - there is a shoe and a framework for action for six basic situations. Successful implementation occurs when all action modes are known and can also be combined according to the situation. The Six Action Shoes framework allows users to reflect on potential problems and risks in order to develop adequate action.

The basic idea of this approach is to create a useful decision framework for each situation. Each of the individual shoes has its own color and type, which conform to the requirements of the style of action. However, it is not a matter of creating analytical frameworks, but of building a concrete framework for action. Here, the shoe metaphor is used to suggest modes of action. The different types and colors of shoes used describe different types of actions to be taken. These actions should be determined by the circumstances. The question should be asked as to what type of action should be used in that particular situation. In spirit, the right pair of shoes must be put on and action taken according to the underlying principles.

In any situation, feeling is a critical factor for success, i.e. the attitude of all factors involved. These can generally only be developed through experience and perception. The mind normally recognizes only what it is prepared to recognize and perceives only what it expects. Experience, on the other hand, keeps the mind perceiving events according to familiar patterns. The action system of the six shoes makes it possible to flexibly combine action plans. Different combinations of action frames can be chosen so that they can be tailored to the individual situation. This creates additional flexibility of the action framework when implementing the strategy.

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The metaphor of shoes stands for acting, whereby the choice of the right action methodology is decisive in successful project implementation. There must be a desire to absolutely turn a goal into reality and the selection of the right implementation strategy. The six different pairs of shoes also enable the correct handling of problems and obstacles that arise. The following is a brief summary of the characteristics of the different types of shoes:

1. the formal shoes in dark blue represent routine and a formal approach. If this method of action is used, the safety factor comes first and mistakes must be avoided at all costs. However, this method of action stifles initiative and flexibility.
2. gray sneakers represent exploration, investigation and the collection of evidence. The main purpose is to get new information. These shoes are quiet, comfortable and relaxed. It is about situation research, although it is not known what will be found.
3. brown Budapest shoes represent practicality and pragmatism. They are applied in a situational use. The approach has flexibility as a core aspect, whereby it is about adapting one's behavior to changing situations.
4. orange rubber boots are used in emergency situations. When a situation is assessed as an emergency, priorities also change. Therefore, new rules for action are developed and used in these cases.

5. pink slippers embody caring, compassion, and the approach to human feelings and sensitivities. It is all about feelings, compassion and gentle care. This mode adds a touch of humanity to the other actions.
6. purple riding boots represent authority. The purple action mode indicates an authoritarian role for the user. People in leadership roles act with power thoughts in these roles and react in the roles they are assigned. They know they are powerful in their role.

Optimal implementation of an action strategy may also require a combination of different shoes. For example, in a balanced combination, two types of actions are used for completion. In an uncertain situation, different colors are used to cover all possibilities. In a changing situation, one type of action is used as a priority, but another type of action acts as a modifier. This gives the strategy even more flexibility and potential for success in implementation.

Using the Six Shoes action framework in projects

The management of a project primarily involves reacting appropriately and in a success-oriented manner to the various situations that a project presents. The demands placed on the management of projects change depending on the implementation phase; different skills are required during project planning than during implementation and completion. Nevertheless, problems can arise in every phase of the project to which the manager must find the right answer. Which action pattern is used depends on the problem to be managed. There is nothing unusual about using multiple modes of action.

The six different shoes or "action modes" represent different action styles and approaches that are necessary in the implementation phase. They can be shared among participants in this or an adapted form, or they can be understood as steps through which an entire group moves to address all the important aspects of a solution implementation. However, the use of action methods has shown that the "Six Shoes Action" approach is not suitable for the implementation of complex projects.

For the successful implementation of a project, the approach offers some advantages. For example, the probability of successfully completing a project is increased. The structured way of implementation - which includes all competencies available in the project team - fully utilizes the potential within the team and enables the team to be at its best. Another aspect lies in the minimization of risks during planning, implementation and integration into the company's daily routine, as a detailed risk analysis reveals the potential dangers to successful implementation.