



**the
ameliorate
group**
developing people

Consciously think differently

Consciously think differently to super power your workforce and accelerate business performance.

“Act differently to achieve different results.” (the ameliorate group)

Why should we consciously start to think differently? Our education, experience, and mindset define how we interpret the world. This interpretation happens subconsciously, so often without us questioning it. Living in a diverse world is not enough to make us think diverse - we need to consciously challenge our subconscious interpretations and think differently to be able to act differently. To stay relevant and ahead of the curve in today's fast paced ever changing business environment. If we do not think differently, not only do we run the risk of not keeping up, we will actually be left behind.

Shared vision
can limit
peoples
thinking and
capability

Alignment and creating a shared vision is important for any organization. This presents quite a challenge when working with people due to our different ways of interpreting the world. Often organizations are expecting their employees to embrace one direction and one way of working. This can run the risk of limiting peoples thinking and capability.

According to the 2018 World Economic Report the top 10 most desirable skills requiring development in employees by 2020 are:

1. Complex Problem Solving
2. Critical Thinking
3. Creativity
4. People Management
5. Coordinating with Others
6. Emotional Intelligence
7. Judgement and decision making
8. Service Orientation
9. Negotiation
10. Cognitive Flexibility

The ability to consciously think differently is the foundation of all these skills. The moment the organization consists of more than one, the spectrum of thinking differently multiplies exponentially. The key question therefore would be: 'What could be possible if organizations proactively embraced the diverse thinking that already exists within their organization?'

The moment an organization starts nurturing and encouraging different thinking it possibly becomes a new way of working and is leveraged to become their unique competitive advantage.

The role model for consciously think differently

Accenture realized the importance of nurturing different thinking and made it to the top of the Diversity and Inclusion Index, evaluated by Thomson Reuters. The Index examines company performance based on 24 metrics in the 4 different components of diversity, inclusion, people development and news controversy. Accenture managed to set themselves apart from other companies fostering not only gender and cultural diversity on the company's board but also within their global workforce – specifically in the number of female hires.

Top 25 Index ranking and their corresponding overall DEI percentage score (%)

1	Accenture PLC	84.25
2	Novartis AG	79.25
3	Medtronic PLC	79.00

Source: Thomson Reuters

The key to their success was that they consistently focused on training and development initiatives to raise awareness and effect behavioral change. They fostered more inclusiveness in the workplace, starting at the most senior levels, so they became more aware and intentional about consciously thinking differently. Ultimately, they developed a high level of ability to role model and demonstrate more inclusive behaviors, which transferred into a true sense of belonging and a positive felt experience throughout the workforce. Staff started mirroring the inclusive behaviors demonstrated by their leaders and the results were amplified throughout the organization.

The impact – Unlocking effective decision making, creativity, innovation, communication, collaboration, better leadership, more happiness at work and ultimately getting maximum results from your people.

Let's look at how our thinking works.

Imagine Paris for a moment!

When you imagine Paris vividly in your head a picture may appear.

That picture possibly looks beautiful. Beautiful is a subjective description and we may imagine a totally different version of Paris. Some may not see a picture of Paris as a beautiful city.

Some may think of Paris as famous! Depending on where you come from and your educational background.

We may think of a movie when we think about Paris.

Paris is whatever your line of thinking was. Maybe you started immediately picturing a map and the continent Paris is located in. The Americas, in specific Canada, the USA, Panama and of course in Europe – in France.

Imagine Paris!

Who is Paris?

Maybe you thought of a person with whom you visited Paris or a famous individual that you relate Paris with. If you thought of a woman, you may have thought of Paris Hilton or Paris Jackson, daughter of the King of Pop.



Source: TAG

If you like sports, you may have thought of Paris Cotton, an American football player or Paris Simmons, an English football player. (Just to remind of thinking differently: these two players, don't play the same sports!)

If you like reading, you may have thought of a fictional person such as Count Paris, a character from Shakespeare's *Romeo & Juliette*.

If you like James Bond, you may have thought of Paris Carver, in 'Tomorrow never dies'.

If you are a millennial, you may have, finally, thought of Paris Geller, a character from the 'Gilmore Girls'.

Paris is whatever your subconscious automatically referred to and although we may come to the same conclusions, we may still have different reference points based on our experience, on who we are and what we value. To illustrate the different reference points, let's think about the different superheroes and how their experiences shape their perspective.

Ways of thinking

Superman as in the compassionate, socially conscious and fair hero, has different reference points as opposed to Batman. Batman as a real person with real struggles who transformed into the great hero with tough training won't have the same thought process as Superman. Neither Superman nor Batman are wrong, they just think differently and perceive situations from different viewpoints.

To get the full picture of 'Paris', it requires to think differently or otherwise miss out, If Catwoman thinks of Paris, she may think of fashion jewelry to steal whilst Wonder Woman stays focused on the creative arts Paris has to offer.

Captain America may think about the Eiffel Tower, the monument that represents Paris across the world and Iron Man may think about how quick he can climb the 600 steps or reach the top.

Based on our skills, experience or knowledge (SEK) about geography, celebrities, literature or TV shows we immediately interpret the word Paris. We are used to these interpretations and our brain starts running on autopilot when we mention Paris. What if we stop that autopilot and take control over our thought process?

Like the superheroes take a different viewpoint, our human brain thinks in various distinct ways, which can be consciously challenged. And often we are not utilizing all the different aspects of ourselves that are on offer. We are limiting ourselves to our autopilot preferences rather than using the full spectrum of our internal super heroes. Organizations would run to the full capacity of the few people running the organization, which doesn't represent the full spectrum of their internal resources, unless they apply an approach of allowing their employees to consciously think differently.

Organizations need to access viewpoints that are not dictated by them to stay relevant

Consciously stepping outside of your subconscious automated & habitual thinking provides access to greater perspectives and choice and allows to tap into viewpoints that may have been suppressed and that could be leveraged. Bringing these viewpoints into new awareness can be helpful to any area in your organization where you need to evolve and start doing things differently.

Providing skills training for employees without providing opportunity to work on themselves to consciously think differently will only create short term gain if any gain at all. In order to create sustainable positive change and growth, awareness needs to be raised and perspectives broadened to access the clues and rich data that sits within the blind spots. Only then all the internal superheroes are ready to work.

That which remains unconscious will continue to affect lives in unpredictable ways. To future proof people and reduce the risk of uncertainty, intentionally developing the right skills in the resources available, means to enable people to consciously think differently. This only will set the successful organizations of the future apart.

Consciously vs. automated processes

Our subconsciousness makes our life easier in many situations. It also stops us, from doing things out of our ordinary way and being able to think outside our box.

How many people take the same route to work every day?

Many roads lead to Rome' and trying out different roads will surely keep you ahead of the game, the moment they close down your usual road. Avoiding the roads everyone takes also may get you home quicker, so consciously trying different roads starts making sense, right? If you nod, this is the moment the routine moves from a subconscious to a conscious action. Consciously think differently, means to get out of your routines because they operate subconsciously.

Consciously thinking differently means to learn new capabilities and extend our horizon and refocus our attention on the way home. Once we get used to the new way, we will stop thinking about it and it becomes one of our automated processes.

If you take different routes to work, this is a representation of your mindset being willing to accept different ways – or in other words your attitude, way of thinking, position, mentality, view of life.

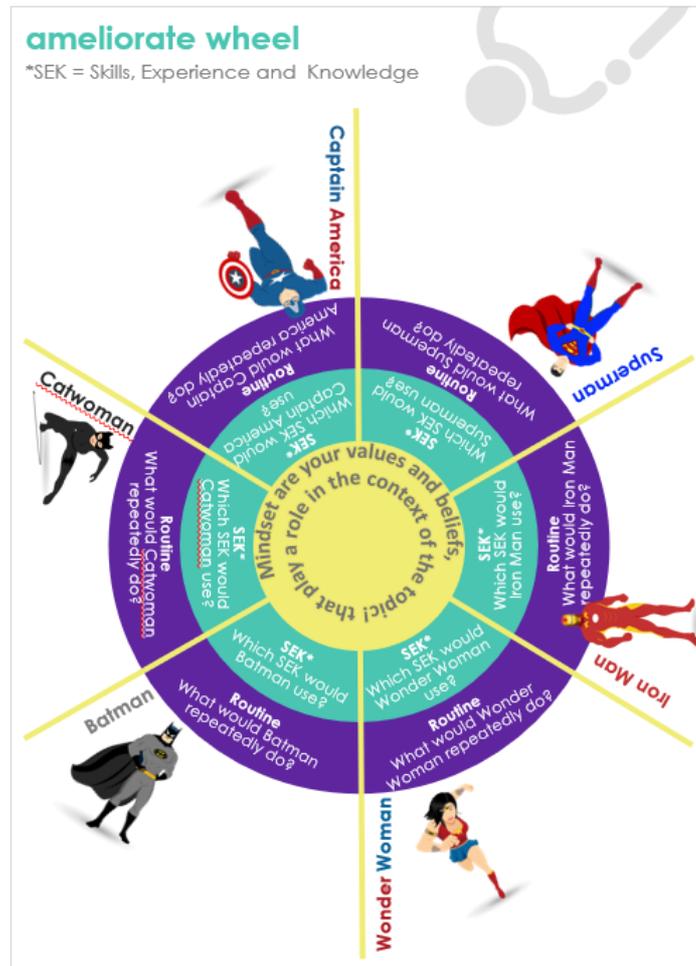
How people act is based on experience and if the experience is to get lost when exploring new routes, this is a mindset that may stop from learning a new route and prevent from gathering new experience. Everything is possible and if with effort training and coaching, we can start to consciously think differently.

It is crucial to believe that there is more than one way of doing things. For routines, skills, experiences and knowledges, ultimately the mindset, this means to ensure to view situations from different angles.

The tool that supports to consciously think differently is the ameliorate wheel, supported by a league of superheroes. It requires to use the different characters as a starting point to guide the automated thinking process in another direction.

It triggers the user to rethink the routines, skills, experiences and knowledge they would have as a superhero, to start think differently. Even if you are neither a Marvel or DC fan, just look at the different poses that represent main postures of these superheroes and start thinking you would pose like that. What would your routines be or your SEK?

ameliorate
wheel



Superman always has positive arguments, sees opportunities and advantages and is very motivated when it comes to what he does. He tends to be speculative and give Lex Luthor the benefit of doubt whenever he shouldn't.

Thinking about meeting new people, which skills, experiences or knowledge would superman tap into? His ability to provide people with hope, the experience that he puts a smile on peoples face and the fact that he knows how to get people out of a burning house.

Let's turn the ameliorate wheel to the exact opposite a pessimistic character, represented by Batman. Batman is a troubled hero that is loaded with problems and anxieties, like bats. Batman is driven by negative arguments and at the same time a risk taker.

Thinking about meeting new people, which skills, experiences or knowledge would batman use? His ability to focus on problems may be helpful to identify the real problem behind the topic of meeting new

people. What is the real problem with meeting new people? Batman has no super powers and relies on his high-tech equipment, trained martial arts abilities and scientific knowledge. Based on his experience of training and fighting he knows which fights he can win and has developed a routine on how beat the villains.

The other four superheroes represent different viewpoints and consciously thinking about their routines, their skills, experiences or knowledge help to consciously guide a different line of thinking.

Embrace doing things differently and remember, that you only consciously do things differently if you acknowledge that different viewpoints exist, and you start to consciously think differently.

By using all of our different internal superheroes and bringing them all to work with us we open up a whole new world of resource within people and organizations. Everything becomes super powered.

The article was written by Melissa L. Schlimm-Managing Partner, Executive Coach and People Developer at [The Ameliorate Group](#). The content is inspired by the work she does as Executive Coach with senior executives as well as her mentoring work for the voluntary mentoring platform The Link.

The Ameliorate Group is a leadership and corporate coaching consultancy offering a range of bite-sized learning solutions to long-term development programs incorporating executive coaching to achieve organizational goals. The Ameliorate Group aims to superpower your teams and individual capability beyond what you thought was possible.