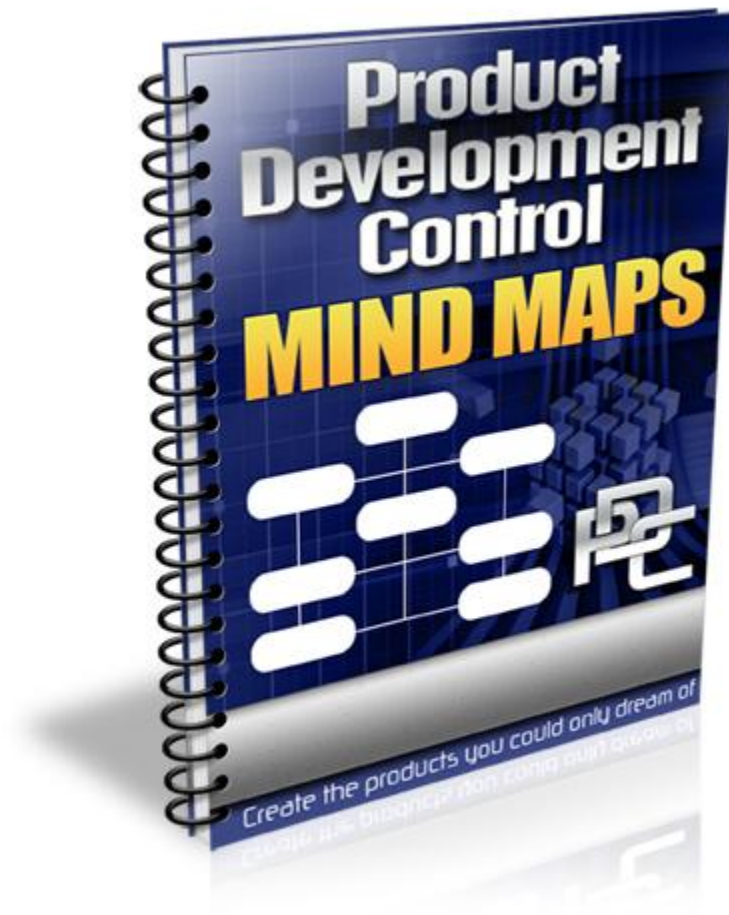


Product Development Control Mind Maps



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Chapter 1: What are Mind Maps?

Sometimes it so happens that in order for you to explain things better, or to make sure that the person to whom you are explaining something to, gets your point, you draw out a diagram so that he or she understands your point. After all, they say a picture is worth a thousand words, let us not forget that. Now there is a word for the diagram that you just drew to make your idea come across to other people in the dictionary, it is called a mind map. The illustrations or figures that you draw that usually correspond to words, different ideas, assignments which are either linked to or surround around one main word or idea. By implementing the concept of mind mapping, one can produce, envisage, configure, and categorise ideas and thoughts better; also mind mapping helps to classify and review concepts and information much better. Mind maps also helps to solve problems easily, help in taking quick decisions and also to write out what you are thinking about if you draw a mind map which will make it easier for you to infer the conclusion from the illustration. To put it in simple words, mind mapping can be translated as 'visual thinking'.

Mind mapping involves illustrations that actually showcase the working of our brain. Since our brain does not stop working and usually jumps from one train of thought to another one, the diagrams that are usually attached while implementing the notion of mind mapping is structured in a way that closely resembles the working of our brain.



Source: imindmaps.com Free Mindmap Software

The above illustration can give you a feel as to how mind mapping works. Just as when we are brainstorming within our minds, one train of thought is immediately followed by another train of thought, in the same way if you just draw an illustration of the brainstorming that you are performing within your mind instead on a piece of paper, the above diagram will be your end result. What usually is the pattern in a mind map is one central idea or theme and just like a tree, several other sub themes or ideas that are conceived from the main idea branch out, making it look both like a tree as well as a spider. However the concept of visual thinking or trying to solve problems with the help of illustrations is not new and has been in use since the time of Aristotle. To make learning, brainstorming, visual thinking easier and to also improve one's memory and solve problems set by others, educators, engineers and psychologists suggest mind mapping as a tool that it make the entire process of developing the idea and the theme relatively easy.

The first recorded person to have used the technique of mind mapping is Porphyry of tyros, who was a distinguished thinker of the 3rd century. With the help of diagrams and pictograms, he branched out the studies of Aristotle to make his works easier to understand for people. This technique was again later taken up by the philosopher Ramon Llull in the 14th century. But these techniques were developed much more extensively in the 1950s and in the 1960's under Allan M. Collins and M. Ross Quillian as they tried to build a model that looks forward to understand the process of human learning. But the modern system of mind mapping is said to be created by the British psychology author Tony Buzan. Buzan says that he hit upon this idea while researching the discipline of General Semantics created by Alfred Korzybski. Korzybski's theory was also made popular by science fiction writers – Robert A. Heinlein and A.E. van Vogt. According to Buzan, even though the traditional and accepted norm was that readers read from left top hand side and move towards the right bottom hand side, what the readers actually do before they start reading is that quickly scan the whole page in a non linear method. In fact Buzan was the person who promoted mind mapping a valid technique of taking down notes from class lectures, which makes it easier to refer to it while revising or going through he notes that you have written down.

To put it very simply, mind maps are is an explicit way of taking down notes, which will make it easy to relate to the notes later on when you are going through the notes. The fact that it is aided by pictures, images and diagrams, makes it easy to differentiate one word or idea or theme from one another especially if you use different colours and symbols while developing a mind map. A mind map usually develops in a hierarchical order or in the tree branch form in which the various ideas or themes branches out from the main idea or theme in sub branches. Mind maps allow creativity to blossom while taking down ideas or words as it gives the person who is taking down the notes a chance to associate the diagram or the image with the word, theme or idea. Mind maps usually deal with only one central idea, theme or word. A key feature of mind maps is that there is no right or wrong in a mind map as it depends on the capricious nature of our mind and way of thinking. It is quite similar to the system of mnemonics which help us to remember things by associating the facts with things that are easy to remember and also can be related to the data that easily as well. In a mind map, a UML image or a network of semantics is used to explain the key concept or idea with lines projecting out from the main

concept and forming sub branches, which are labelled in order for people to understand the relationship that exists. A mind map help in improving memory and also helps to learn to organise better.

Closely related to mind maps are concept map that was developed later than the mind maps, in the 1970's by educators. The structure of both is the same as both start with a radial and then move towards branches and sub branches, but the difference is that mind maps are most simplified in the sense that it revolves around one main key idea or theme while concept maps revolve around more than one idea or theme. The best definition of concept maps was given by Inge Jonassen who said that concept maps are "representations of concepts and their interrelationship that are intended to represent the knowledge structures that humans stored in their minds." It has been found out in a comparison that concept maps are created with the help of nodes which are characterised lexical labels and links which are characterised by lines with each node having an individual label, mind maps are free from all these complexities as they are more freely styled than that of a concept map. Also they are much more visual in nature and not all the nodes and links are always labelled to perfect effect. Thus taking in consideration the definition of concept maps and the above illustrated difference between concept maps and mind maps, Eric Bruillard came to the following conclusion regarding concept maps:

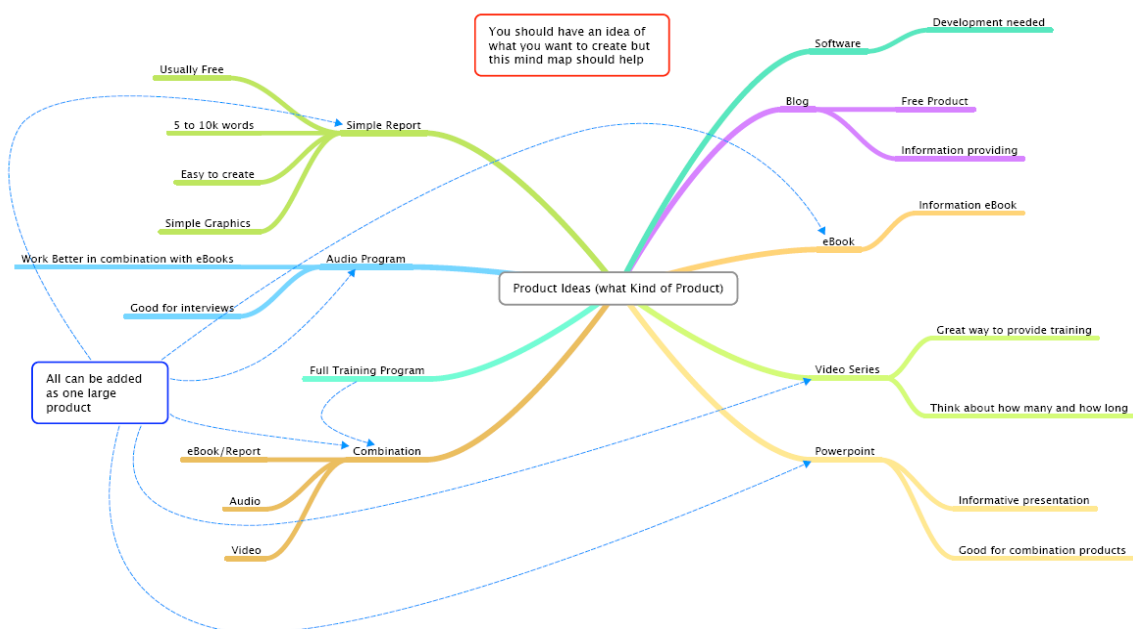
- "Concept maps help to access representation as a given state in learning, which can be more easily produced by children since it involves more of drawing than of writing process.
- Concept maps are communicational tools that are used to share ideas and content in their complexity.
- Complex maps are useful for collaborative activities, where existing representations can be easily modified if it is created using computer tools. If however it is created on a piece of paper with the help of a pen, it will be very difficult to modify it and even if it is possible to modify it, the map will become very messy.

Concept maps have been proved to be useful techniques of teaching a lesson at school which is designed in such a way so as to identify the key concepts and their relationship to one another, thus building the whole structure of the curriculum as a content analysis tool in itself, while during the progress of the learning phase it represents a change in the learner's mind compared to previous states of knowledge, thus representing the knowledge map of the learner." The last point was added by Kaszas Company of Communications which deals in marketing consulting, business writing, web writing etc. Even though no one can prove it strictly that concept maps and mind maps have helped significantly in the learning process, it has been revealed in studies that the system of mind maps and concept maps developed in the scientific literature with the use of visualisations and links and modes have led to effective learning methods and is considered to be a constructive approach of teaching and learning.

Chapter 2: Using Mind Maps in Online Business Ventures

In the recent years, mind mapping has become a popular tool of teaching and educating as a diagram really makes it easy to grasp the concept. Mind maps can be useful in any application whether it be the family background, educational or expanding business, summarising, or taking down points or to make a complicated idea simpler. In fact in the recent years mind mapping has become quite a rave while starting an online business venture. Take a look at the diagram below which will make it a little easy for you to understand how the technique can help your online business prospect.

Click to [enlarge in PDF format](#)



The above diagram illustrates easy steps for you to follow which will almost certainly guarantee success in your online business venture. The first step involves – **Passion**. It is passion that will keep you motivated and keep you going when you find out that the road you have chosen is not exactly a bed of roses. You might say that passion is a must essential for most who venture into business. If you are able to create a fine mix of your passion, knowledge and skills, you will be able to stir up enough enthusiasm within yourself as well as your prospective business partners or clients. You do not necessarily have to be a connoisseur at what you are doing, but you do have to exhibit enough enthusiasm and passion to let others know that you are willing to learn and in a short period of time. Offline business mainly depends upon the location of where you have set up your business. Usually only those business take off where the footfall of the people is greater, but in the case of online business prospects, you usually sell off your knowledge so whatever knowledge you have, make sure you have the right version of it so as to not to make a fool of yourself. Your task will be to create a target market that is looking for certain information which only you can feed, which is how you attract your first customers.

The second step involves – **Researching the Market**. Targeting an intended market is the most important aspect for any business venture and it is just about the same for online business ventures too. So to begin with, keep it in mind that the knowledge and skills that you possess whether it will be enough to guarantee a market for your subject and if there is a demand for it in the market as well. Usually it is found out that no matter how off beat a subject you are taking up to sell to consumers, there will be a market of sorts, but the real question remains if you will be able to blend in with it and perform well. When you are doing your research on your market just ask two questions and if you have satisfactory answers to both of them then you are allowed to move on to the next step. The most important thing to choose is off course the role that you will play and figure out if you have enough knowledge about it to be able to sell it to the consumers. The two questions that you should ask is: what number of people are looking forward to what I have to offer? And what competition will I be facing once I start my business? It is not a question of answering these questions in affirmative or negative but to see if you can answer them at all is a huge enough deal.

The third step involves – **the Set Up of the business**. You have to decide whether you want to create your own website in order to sell your product or would you rather create a blog and write on it about the product of your intended sell from time to time or let us say every time you think you have something important to say regarding your product which will ensure a greater participation on the part of the consumers. But to start blogging just because everyone is doing is like a death sentence in your business venture as you have to see and research the market and then decide as to which option – website or blog will serve your purpose better and suit your needs accordingly. It is usually taken to understand that if you are the owner of a small online business, blogging will bring about its end eventually, because blogging is generally considered to be a hobby rather than a valid way of conducting your online business. Blogs serve the best purpose if you look to promote a news based site or sites that talk about or promote the latest update or thought of the day. Blogs are usually best for a person who wants to keep the people visiting the site with the latest information and news almost in a commentary fashion a blog is about you rather than your own online business website. Blogging is however not applicable for all business, but if you find out that it will serve your purpose and help expand your business then by all means continue with blogging.

The fourth step involves – **to Create Content**. Good content will never let you down and is the first step of keeping your business afloat in this very competitive world of business. The way to go about it is to write about it and memorise it in such a fashion that you can repeat it even in your sleep; you should never forget anything that you have written under any circumstances and so do whatever it takes to remember the things that you have written because if you do not, you will be portrayed in a bad light which will restrict the growth prospect of your business. Also you should make sure that once you have good content, you should structure it accordingly and properly so that you generate interest within your readers. What you are trying to achieve by your blog or website is trying to sell a specified and specialised knowledge which you have the ability to sell and it is something that the client wants. Your business will flourish if you are able to deliver on time excellent information which people need. So if a tech savvy client is looking for a particular solution and if that knowledge happens to be your field of specialisation, make sure you take full advantage of that fact and provide all the information possible to

the satisfaction of the client. But before you venture out on your business is perform a quick evaluation of yourself. Just think it to yourself, what possible information or knowledge you have that would make others be interested in what you have to say and make them realise that you have some tricks up your sleeve that will be worth for others to know. If you are able to answer those questions to your satisfaction, then you can step into your business venture. The key to run a successful online business prospect is by making sure that your site or blog is enriched with information to draw in the customer and provide excellent information.

The fifth step involves – **to Generate Traffic**. The best and the only way to ensure that consumers visit your website or blog is by creating a good enough content that will guarantee the consumers interest and will also look forward to sustain it, so the only way to ensure that the customers interest is kept up by providing a good enough content. Also by providing good content you will ensure good traffic meaning a greater number of people will visit your blog or website. If you model your blog or website according to the above steps then it will have the tendency to have a higher rank in the search engines due to the use of great content. When people are searching for information and if you happen to be promoting the same then it will be a boom for you. If you can ensure a good traffic flow, then you will automatically ensure a good payday for yourself.

What the customers are seeking is knowledge and the only thing that you can do when you are the new kid in the block is provide your viewers with the knowledge that they desire. What you should look forward to do is convert your knowledge into a content that is in demand and thereafter slowly people will get to know of you and your blog or website which will rise in popularity. Also make sure that the content you write about in your blog or website is topical, even if it is evergreen make sure that the topic which you are covering is still relevant and discussed in today's times.

Once your blogs or websites rank higher in the search engines when people are searching for particular information which you are providing, it will lead to your increase in pay rate with the increase in traffic. What you have to look forward to do is aim to achieve a sense of trust from strangers; do not forget that since you are conducting your business via the internet, you too are a stranger to your clients so it is of utmost importance to gain their trust. The way to gain the trust and confidence of these complete strangers is by delivering on time, not only a good content, but it should also be informative, helpful, relevant and original. Your customers will appreciate your originality and they will like it even more if you modulate and edit the information you want to share with them in your way and take your customers in your confidence, because that is another thing they will appreciate – your trust. The customers will be glad and relieved to know you have already put forward your trust in them which will in turn make them drop their guards and trust you as well, making your job a little easier.

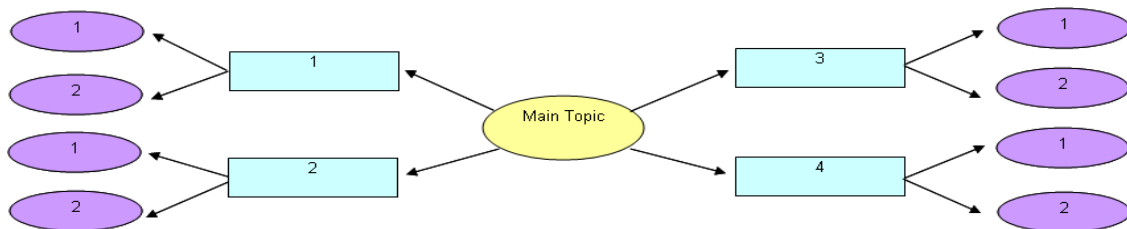
The sixth step involves the idea of – **Pre-selling your work**. This concept of pre-selling is a major one as it determines the fate of most online business ventures. You should be able to present yourself as a credible business person and the only way you can do that online is by providing good, informative, knowledgeable content that will provide the clients with what they are looking for. Once you start doing that, people will realise that you are a person who can be trusted and that you are trying to build a relationship with your clients, a fact they will appreciate too, because you are not choosing to

impersonal even if you are conducting business via the internet. The way to go about it is by not creating a too fancy a web page or blog to advertise your product. This will make you look pompous and your clients will not look up to you as someone trustworthy. So go about your advertising business very quietly, without creating too much of a fuss. Once they land on your website and see for themselves what it is that you are advertising, they will make up their mind whether what you are advertising for is worth their attention or not. What you have to do is convert this interest that you have generated within the customers into sales prospect. If you keep the content in your web real and connect with your clients, half of the job is done for you.

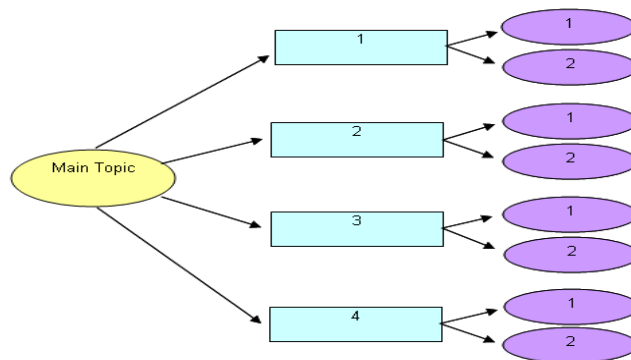
The seventh is about – **Making Money**. This is the last step of the entire process; once you have guaranteed good and competent content for your website or blog, which will in turn ensure a good traffic flow and a lot of visitors to your site, and if you have able to generate the required interest within your clients and visitors, only then can you look forward to make money. You can decide on your money making strategy at the very beginning of your business venture, but then it will have to come to a stop and this strategy has to come to a hold until and unless you have implemented the above six steps. Once you have generated interest from the clients and visitors, only then can you start making your money and you have the option of even multiplying your money making strategy after you see that money is coming into your business, but all these strategies of making money has to be preceded by the above six steps which will have you well on the way to generating an income.

Chapter 3: Types of Mind Maps

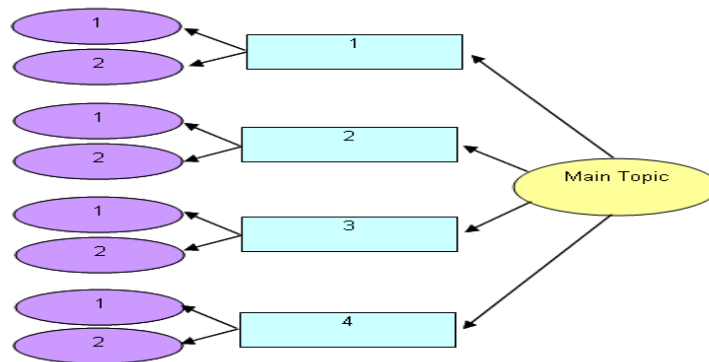
In the recent years, mind mapping has become a popular tool of teaching and educating as a diagram really makes it easy to grasp the concept. Mind maps can be useful in any application when taking down points or to make a complicated idea simpler. Mind maps can be drawn by hand as the above diagram shows, which is usually done when taking down notes or when you are brainstorming, but nowadays you have software with the help of which you can create much more sophisticated mind maps. If you do the former, what you do is compromise the quality a little bit, as mind maps drawn by hand do have a tendency to become a little messy, but if you employ the various software that are available in the market today then you will be guaranteed of a neat mind map. Mind maps are usually developed or drawn by following any of the three techniques that is listed below - radial mind maps, right columnar mind maps and left columnar mind maps.



The above is a radial mind map in which the main topic is at the centre and ideas branch out from both its left and right.



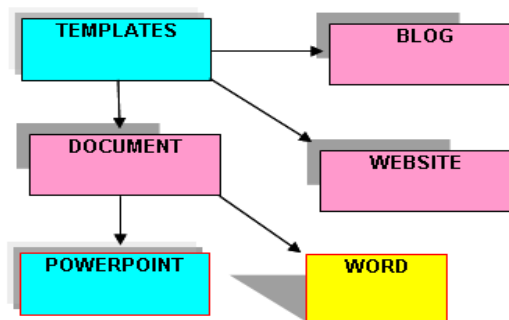
The above is a right columnar mind map in which the main idea remains at the left and the various ideas branch out only to the right in the form of columns.



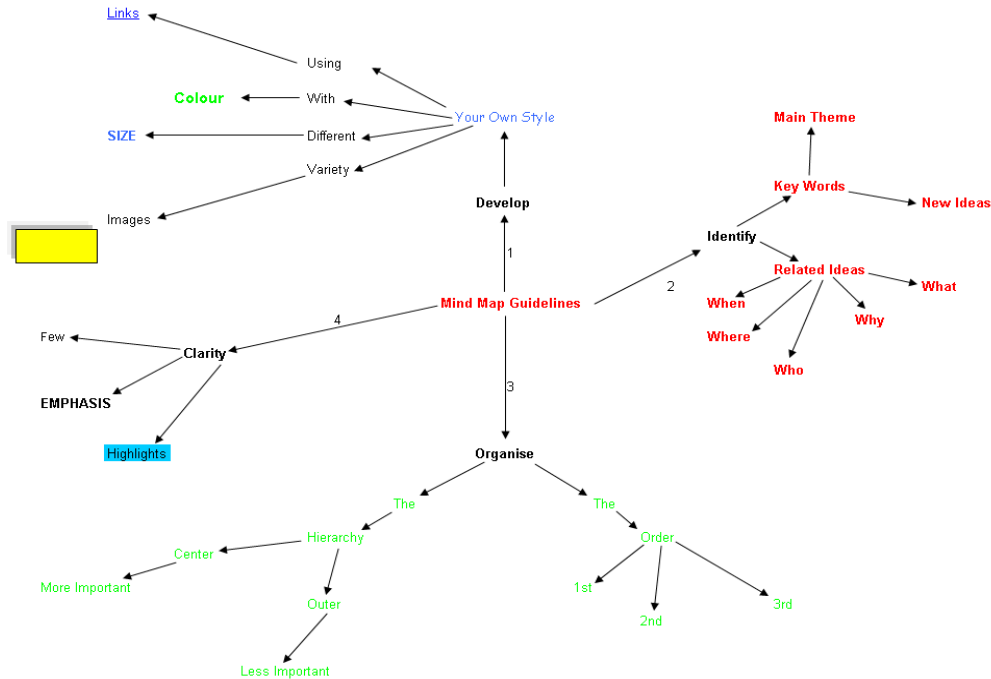
The above is a left columnar mind map in which the main idea remains at the right and the various ideas that strike you branch out from the left in the form of columns. To start a mind map, it is best to start off in the middle of a blank page and then branch out your ideas from there on. It is also best to use the landscape orientation while you are drawing for your mind maps. The next step should be to develop. You should look forward to develop your sub themes and ideas around the central idea by connecting them with a line. The final step involves repeating the same process as once you start brainstorming, your mind automatically 'sees' the various ideas that are attached to the central idea, so the sub themes will have sub sub theme and the process will continue. It is always best to use colourful pens and pencils so that all of your ideas that you present stand out and do not get overshadowed or mixed up in the mess. The technique of mind mapping was developed solely to examine problems and develop strategies to solve those very problems in a non linear pattern. The creators of mind maps use felt tip pens on flip chart papers, or even markers on a white board or some might even use the computer software that is available to create their own mind maps. Accomplished mind maps include phrases, lines that connect one idea to another, arrows in the correct directions to point the correct sub branch that emerges from the main branch along with the drawings and diagrams to make the idea or concept easier to understand. There can be a variety of mind maps, and the important ones are listed below.

Problem Solving Maps - A mind map was originally generated to solve problems and during the course of a brainstorming session because it is imminent that during the brainstorming session, one must come up with ideas and solutions rapidly and in quick succession if they are turned down. If one uses a mind map to showcase a solution to a particular problem it will instil a greater effect on the other participants in the brainstorming session as the visual image that is held in front of them will help in coming up with more viable solutions. Problem solving maps usually follow the pattern of radial mind maps as at the very initial stage the main theme or concept or idea is written at the middle of the board or paper, from where onwards the solutions and other ideas branch out in both directions. What all the team members suggest as solutions are recorded in the form of sub branches as the brainstorming session progresses, which is highlighted by different colours and the entire diagram, takes the shape of a wheel with several spokes jutting out to point to various possible solutions. However the lifespan of a problem solving map is very little as it expands only to a few hours at the max, because after one comes up with a solution, there is no need for the mind map.

Project Maps - When you are planning a product launch or planning to organise an event and other activities that are to be performed on a large scale, then this is the type of mind maps people employ to find out solutions. These maps are quite similar to the problem solving maps in the sense that their lifespan is also little but not as little as the problem solving maps; they survive until the project takes off successfully, which is usually a few weeks at the most. There are regular updates regarding the project on these mind maps and so, the right columnar map technique is usually used to portray the mind map for project issues, even though one can also use the technique of left columnar map. Below is an image as to what a project mind map looks like when drawn in the right columnar technique.



Knowledge Maps - Knowledge maps are for keeps unlike the problem solving maps and project maps. These maps usually demonstrate knowledge and information which has no fixed lifespan and is usually considered to be evergreen that is to be used and still be in demand over the course of time; often it can be found that knowledge maps replace other existing documents because they are more user friendly than the previous documents that were in use. What is usually done to the knowledge maps is that they are updated or even fine tuned from time to time, but that is not the case always. If, a knowledge map is a biography of an eminent personality, who is dead, there is no scope of updating the map as there is no possibility of adding anything extra in the coming years. Companies use knowledge maps to keep up their processes under record that also include checklists. The knowledge maps that the companies store serve the purpose of preserving the corporate history of the company which records knowledge and data and figures which otherwise would not be available to others and usually remains within the heads of the company, but with the help of the knowledge maps you will have access to all those data. Knowledge maps are especially important and relevant to the new employees of the company for whom it is important to know the history of the company which will help them to conduct their work within the company. Below is an image of a knowledge mind map that is created using the radial mind map technique.

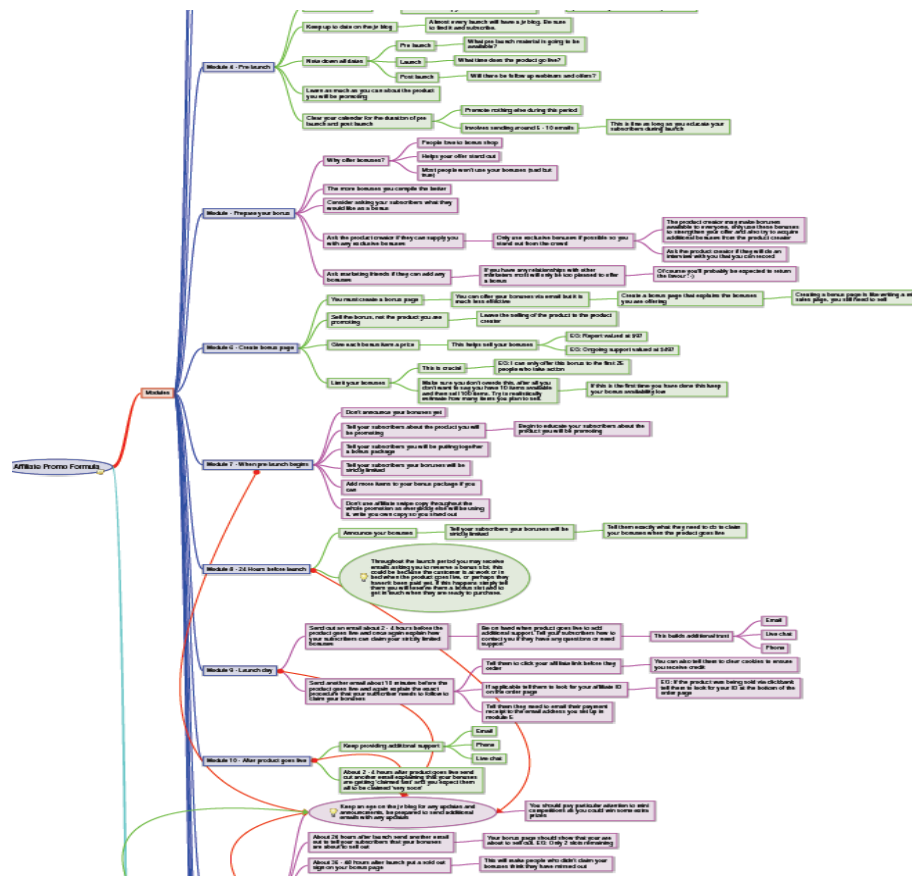


Library Map - To put it in a simple language, a library map is nothing but a collection of associating information that is suitable for the following uses –

- For the transfer of knowledge and information
- For the storage and recovery of useful and important materials
- And lastly for learning or comprehending a particular subject.

Topics for a library map is of utmost importance; they can even be sub headings or sub themes that are expanded and what is talked about in the map is its relationship with the bigger and the key idea or concept. What stands out in the case of library maps is that one piece of information can be grouped under more than one column, which makes the map more visually appealing as there would be more lines running across the diagram. There is no right or wrong I the way you group if you realise that one subject can belong to more than one sub branch; just make sure that the subject is appropriate for both the sub groups so that you can avoid making glaring mistakes. Below is an image of how a library mind map looks when it is drawn using the radial mind map technique.

Click [to enlarge in PDF format](#)



Presentation Maps - To define the presentation map it is best to state that it is an argument or a version of a tale that is fashioned for the following purposes:

- Enlighten the clients and customers in a direct and to-the-face manner.
- Present an argument or a proposition for a case
- And lastly, involve the customers and visitors to your site to action rather than sitting back and see what is going on around.

More than the topic, what is important in case of the presentation map are the audience or the clients and how you are able to sell your topic to them. You have to position your idea or concept in such a way that the clients' viewpoint grabs it at the very onset and is involved immediately. You should develop your arguments in such a way so as to instil the technique of inductive thinking within your clients and customers. Once you have taken them to that level of inductive thinking, they will automatically come up with statements of high levels and also add further details to the sub themes that have branched out from the main theme or concept. A presentation map also has a short lifespan as the importance of it ends after a presentation or demonstration of a product or an idea is complete. They mainly highlight

the phrase or statements that they have put up in the map rather than the headings and they look forward to uphold their integrity even when the maps are viewed at different levels of the details that are written down.

Tunnel Timeline Maps - As the name suggests, this kind of map gives a lot importance to the time factor and its aim lies with conveying the final output on time. These maps are drawn with the hope of almost 'visualising' victory and success. The diagram that you include in your mind map is that of victory and triumph and what they look like; and the sub branches are the actions and the steps that you have taken to reach your final stage of victory. The tunnel timeline mind maps are used for the following purpose –

- To lay outlines and plans for projects.
- To develop strategies.
- And lastly it is used for solving problems.

The tunnel timeline maps bring about the best results when it is drawn using either the right columnar mind map technique or the left columnar mind map technique in order for the tunnel effect to have a wholehearted impact. The themes or the ideas that are drawn at the centre of the map represents the success or victory story and the sub themes that branch out from the main theme implies the consequent actions that are to be taken up in order to reach the successful outcome, within a limited time frame. The reason why it is titled a 'tunnel' is because it should be viewed as a tunnel; you should move in to the centre of the map, by starting from the edges of the map. Just like in a tunnel, you see the ray of light at the end of it, similarly in the map your ray of light will be the success story that you have put in the middle of the map. The act of travelling the tunnel is symbolised by completing the different actions and making important decisions along the way, which are labelled as 'must dos' in order for you to achieve success. Along the way, what you have achieved you can write them down within the map as milestones which will motivate you towards success even more. Thus one of the main benefits of mind mapping is that it allows us to stay focused because of the diagram that looms in the background, constantly reminding us of what we have achieved and what is yet left to be achieved. Also when everything is clearly demonstrated on a map, it makes it easy for the participants to understand what has been happening so far and come up with viable solutions for the problems at hand.

Chapter 4: Creating Mind Maps for Maximum Effect

This chapter will deal with the concept of creating mind maps and enlighten you about some of the basic concepts that are involved in the creation of mind maps. Mind mapping can really do miracles for you if you stick to it long enough. The following are some of the helpful tips that you can pick up from mind mapping –

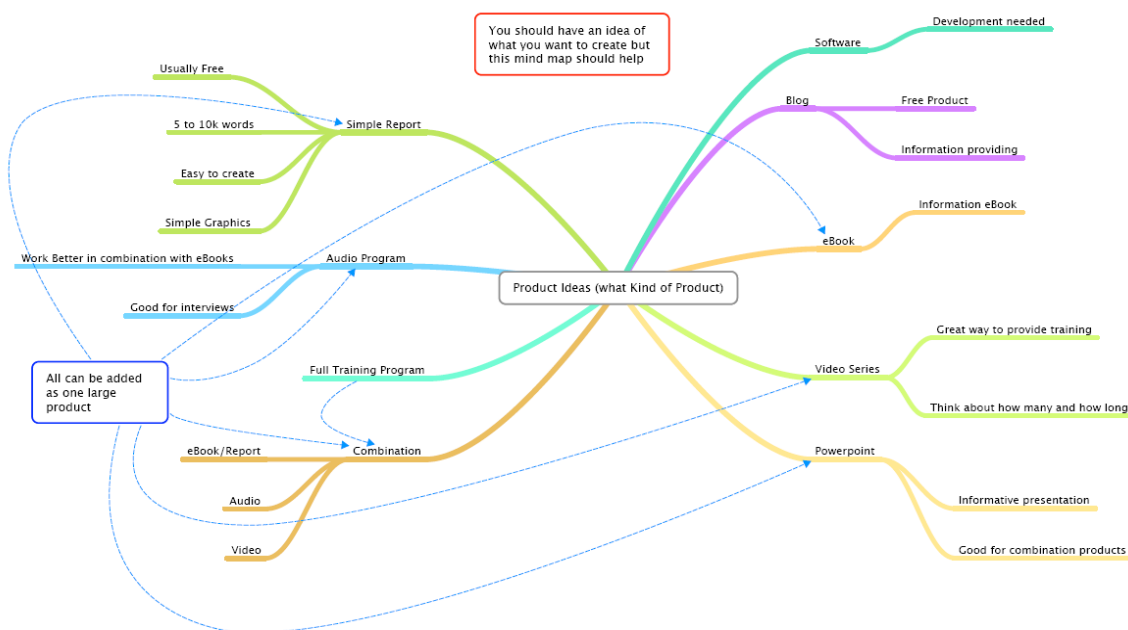
- Mind mapping will help you radically in the improvement of your knowledge and learning capacity.
- You will have an eye to spot and pick out connections between one point and several sub points if you are a regular mind mapping enthusiast.
- You will also be quick in expanding relevant brainstorming ideas that stand out.
- You will also realise that mind mapping has made your mind a competent generator of ideas that are worthy of notice.
- Mind mapping will help to achieve an insight into the project for which you are brainstorming ideas or solutions.
- The most important gift that regular mind mapping give you is the gift of memory; it helps to improve your memory and remember things better.
- Mind mapping also helps in heightening your power of creativity.
- If you are a practitioner of mind mapping you will realise that it has helped you in optimising and simplifying any project or problem you have at hand.

Bottom line, the technique of mind mapping can become a powerful tool for you as it will allow you to reach at your desired destination faster and smoothly. There are three basic principles that one is required to follow when one sets about to create a mind map. They are as follows:

- **Pictures** – Pictures and images are worth a thousand words and you are bound to remember some information that is presented to you via the help of a picture rather than present it plainly in words. This is because your brain functions that way as it has the capacity to always take in pictures from different facets of your life and store it inside; it does not end there, since the brain also has the ability to retrieve the desired image at will from the in-built photo album that is present inside our brain. This is the first step of creating a mind map – attaching an image that makes it easy for people to understand what you are trying to explain.
- **Headlines** – After the graphical representations comes the headlines. It is easier to recall a single phrase or a heading rather than a whole sentence. So if you give an appropriate heading to the concept or idea, it will be easier for you to remember what the discussion is about.
- **Connection** – Your brain is always at work which is why once it sees the image and headlines, it will try to make a connection between the two of them. So you have to make sure that the connections that you make are valid because the brain will be unable to recognise or retain a connection that makes no sense.

Brainstorming is the very first step towards forming an effective mind map. Sometimes it so happens that when you have a project at hand, you come up with lots of plans ideas as to how to go about it but when the time comes for execution, you fail miserably. The problem that you faced was that you wanted to do too many things in too short a period of time and instead of coming up with the solution, you ended up hitting the wall. The mind map as stated before is a visual representation of what is happening inside your mind, so the very first thing that you should do is free your brain from all mish-mash of information that is crowding your brain. Put everything that is going through your mind on paper. Until and unless you free your mind from the web of different approaches that are running amuck in your brain, you will get nowhere. Brainstorming is quite an easy thing to practice and it does not require any prior practice or expertise. If you are let's say you are creating a product, then mind maps are of immense help and it is the brainstorming session that will help you in creating you're next product. Below is an image of what the mind map of a developer may look like during the brainstorming session.

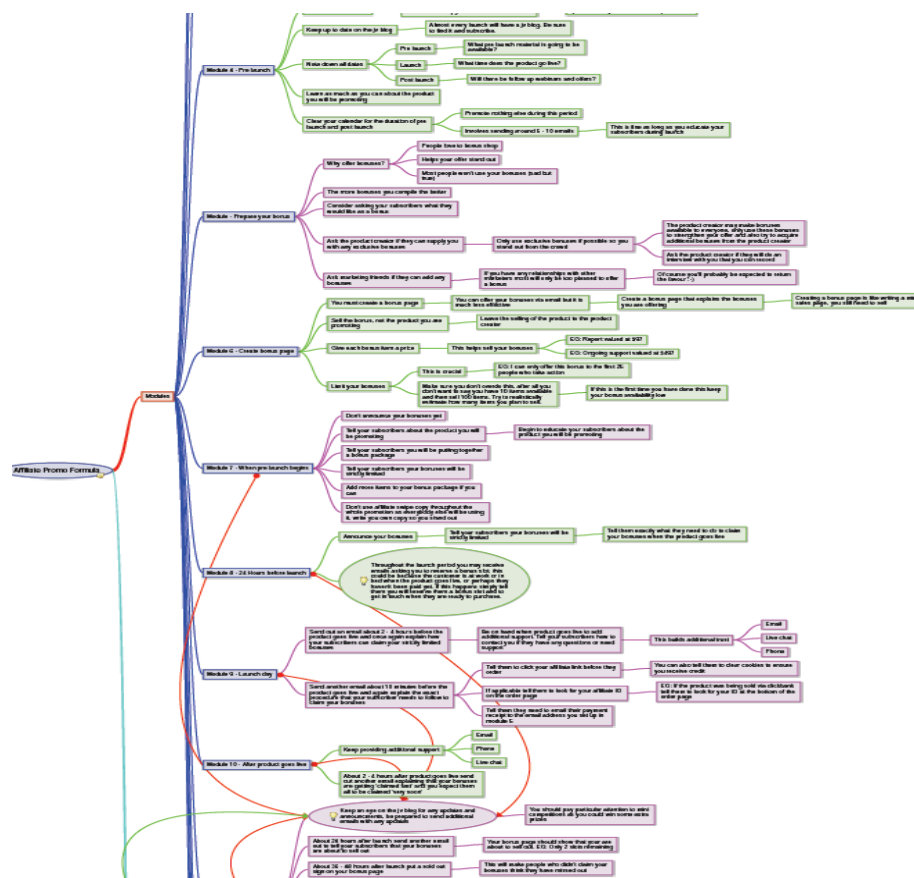
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There will no direct or straight structure of how the mind works which is what we see in the mind map. But now that you have freed your mind from all the thoughts that were hovering in your mind, making it impossible for you to think clearly, you will be able to generate new ideas that will be of help to you which you can use as input in your novel and slowly you will realise that the thoughts are flowing smoothly and making sense at the same time. At a glance, the mind map may seem chaotic, but it is not so in reality as you have developed each point and sub point from a valid line of thought. After the

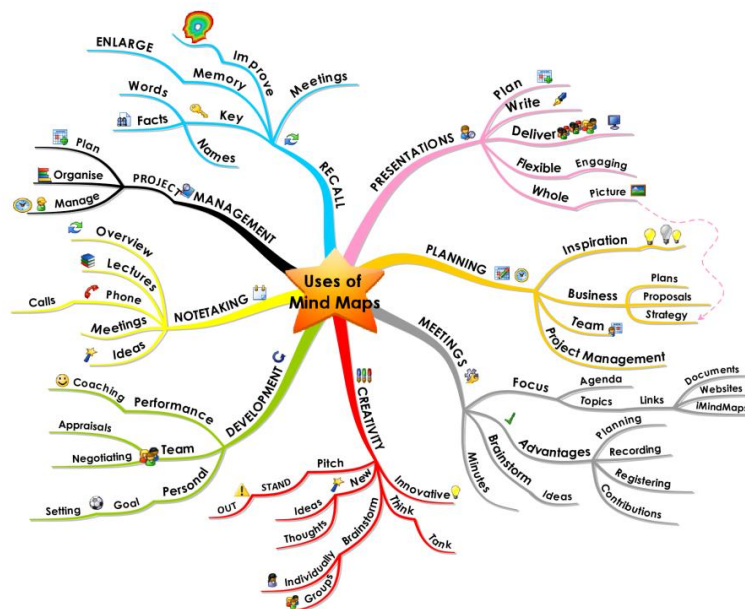
Remember one thing , you will not get effective results even after brainstorming if your mind maps includes huge paragraphs of your line of thought; mind maps have space only for one line sentences or if you have to stretch it then two at the most. You should focus on the headlines and the sub points that you have derived from the main branch.

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The main thing to remember is that while you are writing down the various actions that you have decided to take up in regard to your product launching scheme, list them in a vertical line either in a left hand column or in the right hand column. This technique is called the flow technique as you write down everything that comes to your brain in the flow of things. You should follow it up by jotting down the sub points in a horizontal fashion which would state the desired mode of action that you plan to take up. This kind of map allows you to have a complete and thorough overview of the total structure that you plan to create. You will also have the leisure to focus on performance rather than spend time on planning and thinking up steps that will lead to an effective performance. Do not try to block your mind, but instead let it flow and generate ideas, and then write them down in a chronological sequence because as I have mentioned at the very beginning of the chapter, that it is important for the mind to decipher the connection that exists between the various ideas and concepts, something that the brain will be able to understand if you write down all the ideas that comes to you in a chronological fashion. If you follow this technique, be assured that you will be able to reach your goal faster and the end result will also be satisfactory.

Other than the brainstorming technique and the flow technique, there is one more technique that will give maximum effect and that is the technique of the big picture. This technique is often considered to be the best of the lot because it involves the combined techniques of other mind mapping system to give you the best end result. Attached is a mind map image that is created using the big picture technique.



source: mindmaps.com Free Mindmap Software

In the above illustration of a big picture mind map, you will see that there are points which are highlighted; different colour pens are used, different lines are used to demonstrate the picture more clearly. You are free to use any tool at hand to make your mind map more effective so that it can bring maximum returns for your business. For the big picture technique, use everything that you have learnt so far about the mind mapping techniques and then implement them for getting the best results. Once you start combining the entire mind mapping techniques, you will realise that you have been able to create mind maps that suit your needs to the optimum level. Also it will lead to the boost up of your project development and get the most out of your learning abilities, which will also make both your creativity and inspiration flow at the same time.

Chapter 5: Creating Your Own Mind Maps

The ulterior motive to create a mind map is to simplify matter and make the learning process simple and interesting. It is best if you employ all of the techniques that you have learnt in the above chapter to get the best result. By mixing all the best techniques, you will be guaranteed an effective mind map. To make it easy for you, here is a list of the various components that you can employ while creating a mind map of your choice and taste.

- **Lines** – They are the most momentous aspect of a mind map because it is with the help of the lines that you can connect the various sub branches of information or modes of action that you plan to take up to the central idea or concept. Just imagine a mind map without any lines; it would look like a huge mix up of a concept and people would not have any idea which are the derived sub points and from where they have been derived and what are the consequent steps that you propose to take up because there are no lines connecting them or pointing them in the correct direction. Lines allow being methodical and controlled.
- **Bullets** – Bullet is a feature however that you can do without in a mind map and it is usually adopted to make the mind map stand out and attractive. What bullets look forward to do is reduce the number of lines drawn in order for the mind map to look neater when the sub points are to be displayed. But remember one thing that you should not make a huge list of bullets, that will make the list look clumsy.
- **The Layout** – A good layout is a must for a mind map, something that you will be able to achieve over time after you have created your first few mind maps. Use neat and proper headlines that will immediately catch the eye of the viewer and will make it easy for you to remember things if you have created a mind map for learning up your notes that is. It is important that you create a clear overview which your mind will be able to grasp very easily and make the connection almost at once. While you are working on the layout of the mind map keep one thing in mind that all the sub themes that you have derived from the main theme, they have to be organised properly in accordance with their level of importance.
- **Colours** – Our mind has the capacity to adapt to new environment very quickly and it is this phenomenon that we use when we have to learn something or memorise something. So when we have a mind map open in front of us, we will need a few minutes to get used to the layout of the map, its style and the way it is presented as the brain is decoding all the features that is seeing about the map. Now while trying to distinguish one part of the map from the other may be difficult at times and our mind might feel muddled up and then jumble up the important

facts that we have just introduced in our brain. So, in order to avoid this confusion what we can do is use various colours to highlight the different parts of the map and then highlight all the important and salient points of the map with bright colours and underline them so that they do not avoid our gaze. Also colour coding will ensure that our brain will have an easy time decoding the features of the map. And let's face there is an inner child in all of us and which one of us would not want to play around with colour pens and crayons?

- **Association** – Association is the most important aspect of a mind map because if you do not have the proper and correct association of the diagram with the headlines or phrases then the mind map will be useless as it will not make any sense at all. So keeping that in mind there are two points you should remember and follow while making a mind map – you are expected to write headlines only and if you figure out that you have something expansive to write, shorten it out at all costs because if you include in your heading a whole paragraph, then the objective of using a mind map will be lost. To use an example, let us assume you are about to take an important exam and you have very little time to prepare, here is the time when you should shorten out your facts and break them into suitable headlines so that just one glance at it will enable you to recall what the chapter or section was about. Use the concept of *labelling* in association which will help you with the above task. There is not much difference in labels and headlines as labels are headlines that are used to recall a huge chunk of information and facts. You should form your labels in such a fashion that as soon as you read the label, your mind will be able to form an association to the information for which you have created the label. This process of association and labelling helps you to maximise your capacity to recall what you have studied in the form of a mind map. The main objective in creating a mind map is to create a structure that will have a lasting effect in your brain, so that with the help of it you can recall certain information at will. It is easier to remember a structure rather than lines and lines of notes. So if you draw yourself a diagram and then associate it with salient points, giving it headlines and labelling it, you will have a better chance at remembering what the entire chapter was about. But let's get one thing straight, mind maps are no magic potions and it certainly does not mean that if you draw a couple of mind maps you will be able to know everything. You will still have to study and write down answers to get good grades, but what mind maps helps you to gain is a heightened ability to remember. Since mind maps enable you to present the information in a structured manner, you will have a greater chance of remembering what you have introduced to your brain. So in conclusion it can be stated that in order to remember what you have written in your mind map, create your mind map in such a way so that it contains only the filtered labels of the important facts and then break them into sub headings. Use the above mentioned techniques of lines, bullets, colouring, a good layout and you will be left with an amazing mind map that will make your life easy for you.

Chapter 6: Mind Maps for Various Purposes

The practice of mind mapping has allowed us to expand our biological thinking capability and also the power to think calmly in any given situation and come up with a solution to the problem at hand. After the advent of the internet, and its rising popularity, the concept of mind mapping has also become an accepted norm of remembering information, storing them within our mind in an organised fashion and a valid learning technique which helps to learn at a much quicker pace. Mind maps are now in use for various purposes, one of which is related to business purpose and work productivity. The corporate houses and companies often use mind maps to plan the strategy regarding sales and marketing, to organise and manage meetings and project deals, to prepare for interviews, networking and conduction of interviews, for research and development, business planning etc. In order to meet these needs, there are a variety of mind maps that serves that particular purpose best.

- **Event or Conference Mind map** – This kind of mind maps are created to cover any trade event or marketing strategy of a product, which will make it easy for the customers to understand what the product is all about. The map has two sections, one half showing what you have achieved and the other half would highlight what you are working towards to achieve. You can obviously colour code it to make it more attractive and appealing and easy for customers to understand.
- **Communication Mind Map** – This kind of mind map has been created to help you spice up a presentation that you are about to give. With a mind map at your disposal, it automatically becomes easier for you to elaborate and illustrate the topic on which you are giving a presentation, and the map also makes it easier for the people to whom you are giving the presentation to understand what you are trying to explain to them. The main point to be noted while creating a mind map for this purpose is to highlight all the crucial points; this is where you can use the technique of colour coding to its full effect. Also, if you use the technique of bullets, people will realise that the bulleted points are the ones to be noted and that they form the basis of the presentation.
- **Planning a Business Trip** – If you have to plan a business trip then the best technique to use for creating a mind map is either the right columnar technique or the left columnar technique, but definitely not the radial mind map technique. This is because there is just one ultimate goal and it will serve your purpose best if you project all the sub points either to your left or to your right by keeping the main objective either on right corner or on the left corner respectively. You can do without colour coding this kind of mind map, but what you need to do is use bullets, make proper headings and label the proposed course of actions correctly. The map should be a result of a logical thinking and should portray this evolution on paper or on the screen. The most important aspect this type of map is the layout.
- **Showcasing Creativity** – A mind map that showcases creativity is at its best when drawn using the radial mind mapping technique. The main goal or concept lies at the centre of the page and after a session of brainstorming you will be left with a mind map, with the help of which you can create what it that you wanted to in first place is. Brainstorming is the very first step towards forming an effective creative mind map. With the help of the flow technique, write down

everything that comes to your brain in the flow of things. You should follow it up by jotting down the sub points, which would state the desired mode of action that you plan to take up. This kind of map allows you to have a complete and thorough overview of the total structure that you plan to create. You will also have the time to focus on performance rather than spend time on planning and thinking up steps that will lead to an effective performance. Do not try to block your mind, but instead let it flow and generate ideas, and then write them down in a chronological sequence.

Mind maps are also used for educational purposes that work towards achieving academic success. Students often use mind maps for – learning new languages and grammar, taking preparations for an exam, or for a presentation or for writing an essay, to teach a fellow student a certain concept, for solving problems set by the teachers, to think decisively and creatively, memorising, study material, notes, revising class lectures and also for general study etc. In order to meet these needs, there are a variety of mind maps that serves that particular purpose best.

- Lecture Mind Maps – These maps are created by students when taking down class lectures while the teacher is teaching. Usually it follows the technique of a radial mind map and it so happens that these maps are not always very clearly drawn because of the time factor. Students usually do not have the time to colour code points, so they use bullets and bold headlines to make sure that the next time they are going through the mind map, the important sections will catch their attention.
- Mind maps for Art and Music – Since art and music are a big subject of study, a mind map can make it easy for you to get the grip of the basics. It will also help you in the sense that every new information you learn about the subject, you can introduce it in the mind map by using a bullet. Again to meet this purpose, it is better if you use a right columnar mind map or a left columnar mind map, because you can write down all the important points that you have learnt in the form of bullets and then connect them with the help of lines and arrows. The sub points for this kind of mind maps can include – art, music, drama, film, design, graphics, style etc.
- Mind Maps for Engineering, IT and Science – Mind maps for the science subjects have to be created very carefully because one has to be constantly aware to infer the map in a chronological way. Science always follows logic and if you create a mind map that follows otherwise, then your brain will not be able to pick up the connection that we have discussed in the previous chapters, which will make the mind map useless.
- Mind maps for Language and Humanities – If you trying to pick up a new language then your mind map should be a short summary of the various rules of the grammar of the language. You can make various sub headings and sub points where you label the rules of suffixing, prefixing, and the different tenses. It usually looks like a tree because there are a lot of rules to remember and then implement them accordingly. Colour coding helps a lot for this kind of mind maps. Now, let's say you have to write a paper on someone, you can make a rough draft of your course of progress in the form of a mind map where you write down in the form of sub points the important events in the person's life that you are going to include. Once you have the entire

map ready, it will be easy for you to sit down and proceed with writing the paper, because you already have an image in front of you.

Other than for business and educational purposes, mind maps are also used for life management and other personal purposes. People use mind maps in order to manage various aspects of one's life like – manage time and important events of one's life, set a goal to achieve, plan a holiday or have a financial plan so as not to fall into monetary difficulty, keep a track of important dates, occurrences, information, keep a diary etc.

- Planning a holiday yourself – The mind map for this will be quite similar to that of the map when you are planning a business trip. So the best technique to use for creating this mind map that will help to plan your holiday is either the right columnar technique or the left columnar technique. This is because there is just one ultimate goal and it will serve your purpose best if you project all the sub points either to your left or to your right by keeping the main objective either on right corner or on the left corner respectively. You can do without colour coding this kind of mind maps, but what you need to do is use bullets, make proper headings and label the proposed course of actions correctly. The map should be a result of a logical thinking and should portray this evolution on paper or on the screen. The most important aspect this type of map is the layout, so make sure that you do a neat job of it.
- As a Guide to Self Improvement –Mind maps can do wonders towards self improvement. And for this purpose, the radial mind map is ideal. In the middle of the page should be the goal that you are trying to achieve. And then from there, you should draw diverging lines to the corner of the page where you should put down how you plan to reach the goal. As sub points to the diverging lines, you can also state what you have been doing so far and where is it you think are going wrong. You can also include some amount of pep talk in your map by writing down facts that are in your hands, which you can change and other facts which you cannot change. You can also update your map by recording your day to day achievements and failures over the course of achieving your goal.

Mind maps can also be used for drafting book reviews. Since mind maps are effective in taking down notes, it will be of immense help in organising information, thoughts, and impressions with the help of diagrams and pictorial representations and the main keywords in tow. Mind maps are also great means through which you can condense the book and the drawn out reports into smaller points that point out just the key themes and actions. You can use the mind maps to give information about a variety of books like business books, self help books, and motivational books. Doing this will add emphasis to your project and your mind will be able to decipher the association that exists between the various concepts quickly.

Chapter 7: Mistakes to Avoid While Mind Mapping

We have all heard of the saying, practice makes a man perfect and so it is the same with a mind map. The only way you will be able to produce a flawless mind map is by practicing mind mapping very diligently. Mind map will ultimately help you to unlock your memory and recall information at will and improve your mental stamina, so you have to make sure that the maps you are creating, will stir up the imagination inside your brain which will in turn arouse the deeper associations that exist to be seen by you. If you incorporate the following rules that I am about to state, your mind map will be a strong one that will inspire your long term memory. Also, if you adopt these rules, you will reduce your chances of making mistakes in your preparation of a mind map. The rules are –

- In order to classify various types of themes, concepts, thoughts and ideas, it is best to use different symbol for each of them.
- The lines that you use to connect different ideas should be marked by the key words. You can stretch the words to a maximum of a phrase but no more than that.
- It is best to use multi headed arrows of different colour, style, shape and size to make the associations clearer.
- You can use codes and then colour them so that you will be able to attract the attention of the viewer. This is used when you want to highlight only specific parts of the mind map.
- Make sure that there is proper and enough space between one idea from the other and also from one sub point to the next. It will make your mind map look clean, which will make it easy for the viewers.
- Use images and colours that will excite the viewers and catch their eyes immediately. If you have been able to generate the first seed of interest, your work is almost half done.
- You can use images that represent words, or use metaphors which will be a hit with people who see your mind map. Pour out your creative soul into the map.
- You can also draw borders to direct the attention of the viewers to a particular portion of the map.
- You should present your mind map in an orderly and structured fashion and so you should use numbers or bullets or letters to show that you are following a linear hierarchy.
- You can also use different kinds of lines – from the thick lines you can radiate thin lines which will show that you are following the hierarchy of lines.
- You can also create word hierarchies – meaning the most important idea or concept can be written down using a phrase, and then the derived ideas and concepts which are to be written should use less and less words. It also marks the diminishing importance of the sub points.
- The fundamental image that you plan to use and the other associative diagrams that will support the fundamental image should stand out and create a memorable impression on anyone who sees the mind map.
- Use your knowledge of geometry and draw different shapes and segments that will represent the various concepts and ideas and the sub themes as well.

- You map will also stand out if you include multi dimensional words and images.
- You should use a mixture of both the word cases, for instance use the upper case for the main points and the lower case for the ideas that have been derived from the main concept. You can also use different fonts so that every point is given equal importance.

So, these are the rules that you should follow before you venture out to start working on your very own mind map. Mind mapping is definitely a production enhancing technique, but it can also muddle you up with all the diagrams and ideas and lines running across the board. You can often get confused and sometimes it so happens that the idea you are trying to highlight gets obscured in the hullabaloo. The worse thing that can come off from a badly represented mind map is incorrect associations. Once your brain makes an incorrect association, it will take you a long time to convince your brain that the association it had made is not the right one, which means you will be losing precious time. But as a newbie, you are bound to make certain mistakes, and I am going to try and highlight a few errors that you should look forward to avoid while preparing your mind map.

- It is very important that you do not include a lot of details in the mind maps. It is in fact very easy to produce jargon and so keep an eye out for it so as not to clutter your mind map since it will lead to a visual confusion which will help no one.
- Do not use the colours, font styles, line designs, and other visual aspects of your map in a haphazard and arbitrary manner. They are used to highlight certain facts, but they are also expected to carry extra meaning or context which will not be possible to understand if used in a random manner.
- You should try and avoid including too many words on the headlines and labels. Try making it a point to limit your key words and ideas to a maximum of 3 words. If you have to include other details, write them down under the main points in the form of bullets, but they again should not be too extensive.
- When using a mind mapping software, do not ignore the program's signs and icons as they are relevant in filtering out information in your map and classifying its contents.
- Do not put in too many visual images, because then the map will end of looking too ornamental and you will be too busy looking only at the diagrams and not the points that you have included along with the images.
- If the above point is true, then the opposite also hold good. If you create a map that has only headlines and labels and lines across the page neatly with sub points written on them, it will have limited impact on your brain. As I have stated previously, a picture or an image excites your brain and you will be presented with a better chance of remembering the concept that the mind map was trying to teach you.
- If necessary, create separate maps for separate ideas even if they fall under one umbrella category. If you try to include everything in one map, then the end result will be one cluttered, messed up map where nothing is clearly labelled, the images might overshadow all the main concepts and the headlines might end up being too big as you have tried to shove in as much information possible under one roof.

- Do not give your audience a 'map shock' with your mind map. A 'map shock' is when your audience is overwhelmed with either the image that you have presented or the topic of your discussion. Even if you have to discuss something controversial, tone it down so as not to shock your audience. One way of avoiding to shock your viewers is by presenting your map and the topic of discussion in a linear and chronological pattern; it will help the audience to realise beforehand what you are about to portray next.
- Do not be too preachy in your mind map because a mind map is a lot more than a teaching tool. It is a powerful tool with the help of which you can manage and store information and introduce new ones within your brain. You can also make better decisions if you are a practitioner of mind mapping.
- Your approach should be a balanced approach; if you go about it an 'all or nothing' way you would not be able to go too far with your mind map.
- Make sure that you are using the correct technique for creating your mind map. If you are using the correct system, then the map will be an effective, successful communicative device. The map should be able to portray your understanding of the concept and talk about the basics to be followed. Also, if you are using a mind mapping software, make sure that you are using the correct one with the proper tools.

Chapter 8: Mind Mapping Software

With the development in technology, everything has become computerised nowadays. Paper and pen have taken a back seat as students are now allowed to carry their computers to classes to take down notes if necessary and present papers that they have typed and taken print outs of, to present to the teacher. The same can be said about creating a mind map; software developers have created software that will create a mind map for you and you do not have to sit with a sheet of paper and colour pens to colour code your map; you do not have to constantly worry about being neat or writing the map in a chronological fashion because even if you make a mistake on your mind map, the software comes with the option of undo which will erase all the mistakes that you have made and plan to avoid. Instead of starting all over again, you can just erase the section where you went wrong and then continue from there. The following are the advantages that the mind mapping software holds over hand drawn mind maps:

- Mind maps created with the help of a software gives you the scope to store as much as information you want; it can be expansive but the reason why the map does not look clumsy is because there is the option of collapsing the entire information, which will make the map look neat and tidy. Since you would not be able to see the extensive data that you have stored in the map at the first glance it will not be able to overwhelm you, and you can create sophisticated mind maps taking full advantage of this aspect of a mind mapping software.
- The mind mapping software allows you to insert documents, links, notes and all other kinds of data into the mind map, with the help of which your mind will be automatically transformed into a powerful visual tool that will be able impart the concept or idea that you have been trying to make others understand. The various sub points that you create in your map, can either be stored in MS Word or MS Excel and you can transform them into icons or symbols which will be enlarged once you click on the icons. This aspect again helps you to present a neat and tidy mind map.
- The mind mapping software gives you the option of re-arranging your topics around the map until and unless you are satisfied with the layout. If you do not like something, you do not have to reject the entire map and start from scratch, you just delete the section that you think is inappropriate in the map and then add what you think is the correct thing.
- Mind mapping software is usually used by people to create maps that are evergreen in nature. Which is why you have the scope to update your mind map from time to time, like whenever you have something new to say about the topic on which you have created the map. Don't worry about your mind map being messy or clumsy after you have updated it with new information, you obviously have the option that I stated above to make the end product look presentable.
- The mind mapping software allows you to sell your ideas and thoughts to other kinds of software like word processing software, project management software, presentation software. These will in

turn help to give you variety, an appearance and composition to your thoughts and ideas.

- If you use mind mapping software, you will realise that it has opened up newer and more exciting opportunities for you, something that a hand drawn map will not be able to do. You have the capacity to share it with other people as you can either mail it to various people in your address book or you can even upload it on a common forum that you and your friends visit regularly. You will get valuable feedback on your mind map once you have shared it with people as others will have the chance to comment on your mind map, which will in turn help you in creating your mind map as you can look forward to avoid all the mistakes that you have made for this mind map.
- During a brainstorming session that is taking place in a group, a mind map can do wonders to help bring about the solutions for the problems since you can project the mind map on the big screen with the help of an LCD projector which will keep a tab and display every idea and solution that comes to anyone present during the brainstorming session. This process would not have been possible with a hand drawn map because it is simply out of the question to pass round the map to everyone in the room, whenever someone has an idea. It will be downright childish during an important meeting, if the people who are present go around colour coding ideas and concepts.
- A mind mapping software will enable you to create your own 'information dashboard' where you can store all your information about the topic on which you have created the map. Even though it is usually suggested not to include a lot of information in your mind map, you can do so if you are creating it on your computer, since it will not look cluttered.
- A mind map created through software allows your mind map to be flexible. You can do a variety of things with the mind map that you have created on your computer, they could be for business purposes, educational, or personal, or to keep a track of your personal goals. You off course can do the same with hand drawn maps, but they would not be able to carry the same level of detail or that much of information.

I have made a list of mind mapping software that has become popular over the years. They are considered to be the best in the business of mind mapping.

- **CAM Editor** – This software has an Open Software License (OSL) meaning it can be downloaded for free provided you guarantee to follow the rules and regulations and privacy statements of the company. The software belongs to the XML Schema genre. It also sustains the use of dictionary components belonging to the Canonical Model. The software is created in such a way that it is compatible with the NIEM approach that will enable its user to participate in information exchange integration. This software is best appropriate for middleware messaging and also for enterprise integration. It also provides solutions to problems that crop up regarding enterprise integration. Some of its features are – capacity to import data model and create and improve models; generates XML Schema with the help of drag and drop selection mode; management and production of based on the Canonical model; XML framework, extensions, management and governance are of the

superior industry standard; provision of semantic modelling; option of generation of model compliant with the use of profiles like – NIEM, OASIS, WSDL; a validation engine; presence of XML editor and an integrated development environment. The software is written in Java and it supports FreeMind Maps. It opens projects on Sourceforge.net. However it has no online editing system.

- **Compendium** – This software is looked upon as a social science tool that helps in mapping and organisation and management of ideas, concepts and arguments. What is great about the software is that it provides a very vivid visual background which will let people structure and keep a record of their work as they work to figure out a solution for their problems at hand. This software has a LGPL license and was released worldwide on 13th January in 2009. Some of the features of this software are – option of dragging and dropping documents and websites on the map; total freedom in arranging the icons and symbols within the map; provision of tagging keywords; provision of labelling the lines that are used for connecting the main keyword and the derived ideas and thoughts and also to illustrate links; dialogue maps can be created so that everyone's inputs to the map can be visible; argument maps are present so that members of the group can leave behind comments and also edit each other's writing; organisation of huge chunk of information; provision of placing resources; can also publish maps. The software uses a cross-platform and is written using Java. You have to have an activated and valid e-mail address if you want to receive a downloaded link. Like CAM Editor, Compendium does not have an online editing system either.
- **FreeMind** – This software is created with the aim to free your mind and the mind map that you will create with the help of this software will look forward to do exactly that. It belongs to the GNU General Public License and provides expansive export capabilities and opportunities. This software is compatible with Microsoft Windows, Linux, and Mac OS X by means of Java Runtime Environment. It was released on 19th February of 2011. It presents you with the choice of editing a set of ideas and concepts that has come to your mind in the form of a hierarchical and structured system. During the brainstorming session, your thoughts move about in a non-linear fashion, something that FreeMind is able to support and even assist you with. It is a Java application which is why it is transportable across multiple platforms but it manages to retain the same user interface for each platform that results in some distinction from the common interface of each of the platform. Some of its features are – branches that fold to make the map less clumsy; files that are created are saved in the mm file format and are named XML; hypertext is exported to HTML and XHTML; documents are exported to PDF and Open Document; images are exported to PNG, JPEG and SVG; provision to include icons and symbols on the nodes; can also create clouds around the branches; the links that connects the nodes can be done graphically; search is however restricted to only one branch at a time; you can hyperlink web and files from the nodes; you will get the FreeMind browser or player for the web either in Java or in Flash; has the capacity to transform maps using XSLT. Other than the above features, the creators of FreeMind have also created plug-ins for different wiki and other content management system software so that this software can be seen in some of the cases with the help of web interface. It belongs to the cross-platform and has the option of online visualisation unlike the previous two soft wares. But this too, along with Compendium and CAM Editor lacks the online

editing system.

- **SciPlore MindMapping** – This mind mapping software is also written in Java and is licensed under the GNU General Public License. It is also based on the open source software that I have discussed previously, the FreeMind. Rather than creating new mind maps, what this software aims to do is combine different mind maps with PDF and reference management. This software is mainly used by scientists and researchers because of its following distinguishing features – you can assign reference keys manually to the map with the help of which researchers can allot to any node or link of the mind map which makes it easy for them to go back to a particular information that they have to review and instead of going through the entire map in search of the node, they can do it by searching with the reference key; you can also add reference key automatically when you use a file that is linked to the map which is at the same time is also linked to the bibliographic database, then a reference key will automatically be generated; it has the capacity to import PDF bookmark which can be done by dragging and dropping a PDF file on the mind map and then all the bookmarks of the PDF file will be imported and in the form of independent nodes and each node in turn will be connected to the PDF file; you can also monitor the PDF as in whenever a new PDF document is stored or downloaded in your hard drive, they will be projected on the mind map. This software is the first ever of its kind to come up with the concept of introducing a system allotting reference keys to the various nodes that are present within the mind map and at the same time allows the import of PDF bookmarks. In order for this software to work, you have to download the 0.9 version of FreeMind. This software is compatible with Microsoft Windows, Linux, and Mac OS X. It does not have the scope for online visualisation or online editing.
- **XMIND** – This software is used for brainstorming purposes. This program aims to help people with capturing thoughts and ideas, organising them in a structured pattern, and then share them via the internet where it can be put up for people to see and comment their reactions. This software helps in creating tree diagrams, concept maps, mind maps, spreadsheets and is typically used for managing mind maps that projects knowledge, task management and time management. This software too can read FreeMind files. The XMIND is open source software and belongs to both Eclipse Public License v1.0 and GNU Lesser General Public License v3.0. With the help of XMIND, you can export mind maps to Microsoft Word, PowerPoint, PDF and Mindjet MindManager documents. The software is written in Java and also enables online sharing of files.
- **VUE** – Visual Understanding Environment (VUE) is a software application that helps in creating concept maps and is written in Java and falls under the Educational Community License. Its operating system is a cross-platform. The VUE was released on 4th February 2010. It was developed with the aim to create adaptable tools and mechanisms to manage and incorporate various digital resources that is available on the internet for the purposes of teaching, learning and researching. The software provides a visual environment that makes structuring and presenting of data and information easier. However in order to use this software you have to create an account and then download the form from the homepage.

Chapter 9: Conclusion

I hope that I have been able to generate some amount of interest within you regarding the use of mind maps as I have tried to prove to you that mind maps are indeed a wonderful tool that will help to boost your memory. Be it a hand drawn mind map, or a one that you have created using some mind mapping software, it is a fantastic application that helps you to come up solutions for difficult problems in a short period of time, thanks to the technique of brainstorming. It also helps students in learning their notes, as they can break up their topics into various points which will help them in remembering what they have learnt for a long time. Since mind maps are a visual way of representation, you will be able to quickly grasp the synopsis and the overview of the key concept on which you have created your mind map. They also help in increasing creativity within the children as during the brainstorming session it is encouraged of everyone, especially if there is a group involved to come up with ways to solve the problem which is the main component of the mind map. But you should also remember one thing that you would not be able to employ a mind map in all situations, but if the situation does present itself where you can employ a mind map, start small and then go on developing it.

The reason why mind maps have become so popular is because it includes one image or a host of images which makes it easier to tackle the problem at hand. Sometimes you will realise that your mind will give rise to an incredible solution to a problem that you have tackling for quite some time, only because you have attached an image to your thinking process; this is because from time to time you need to give your brain an extra nudge for it to come up with a solution, which is what the diagram in the mind map does. Now let us say you are about to launch a new product in the market, then mind mapping is a good place to start. You should make a rough draft of everything that you want your product to be in the form of a mind map which will help you in your preparation of the final product. The mind map should contain a researched study of what you are about to launch and the strengths and weaknesses that your company has and if there are any potential competitors or not. Once you decide on this, you can then move on to the marketing strategies that will best serve your interest. With a mind map in front that is assisted with a diagram, it will be easy for you to stay focused on your goal.

I hope that the above information has been helpful in enlightening you about the concept of mind maps and its various uses and advantages.

For more information regarding product development and mind mapping take a look at [Product Development Control.com](http://ProductDevelopmentControl.com)