

# Mind Map

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Ravinder had joined the company six months ago. One big problem he faced was understanding the ideas generated in the meetings. The reason was his was not familiar with lot of historical background, terminology, previous meetings. While other participants could relate to the subject & deliberations, he found himself wanting.

In one such meeting, when he was about to be frustrated, his manager went on the flip chart and drew the summary of the discussion in the form of an interconnected diagram. All sub topics were related to the main theme by lines drawing out of main topic.

Suddenly, Ravinder had a clear understanding of the issues at hand & could participate in the discussion & also contributed lot of ideas.

What Ravinder had experienced was the power of visual thinking.

## **Mind Map**

The technique of visually mapping ideas was originally developed in the 1960s by business creativity guru Tony Buzan. He realised that it is a faster way of capturing ideas & recording it for future thought progression.

## **What**

Mind Map is a way of generating & recording ideas individually rather than in a group.

Mind map uses word associations, encouraging you to follow your own thought patterns, wherever they may lead. It also provides a written record of the ideas generated.

## **When**

It isn't easy to come with new ideas when facing a blank page. Zero as a multiplier reduces everything to nothing, & an empty page can have a similar effect on your mind.

Mind Map can be used as an alternative to list-making & as a way of generating ideas.

## How

There are 5 simple steps involved:

1. Mind Map begins with a symbol or graphic of the problem to be brainstormed in the center of the page.
  - 1.1. Get a large sheet of paper.
  - 1.2. Write the subject/ topic/ theme in the centre of the paper.
  
2. Key words are used to represent ideas, and are connected to the central focus with lines.
  - 2.1. Allow your mind to think freely about the topic.
  - 2.2. Write your thoughts as they appear in your mind.
  - 2.3. Label all ideas.
  - 2.4. Also connect them to the centre.
  
3. Words can be placed within symbols (ovals, squares and other shapes) to highlight certain ideas and to further stimulate the mind to make other connections and associations.
  - 3.1. Each thought can be concentrated upon separately, thereby creating further branches emanating out of the idea.
  - 3.2. Keep labeling the ideas.
  - 3.3. You can go to any level of branches.
  - 3.4. Do not hinder your thoughts.
  - 3.5. It is preferable to finish branching out one idea first, before starting out another thought.
  
4. However, the key principles remain:
  - 4.1. Do not hinder your thoughts.
  - 4.2. Do not evaluate the ideas while writing.
  - 4.3. Write all thoughts/ ideas that appear in the mind.
  
5. When you are finished you can review the interconnections (between ideas).
  - 5.1. It is a good idea to use coloured pens for different ideas & for reviewing the interconnections.

**Applications**

<b>Leadership &amp; Management</b>	<b>Marketing &amp; Sales</b>	<b>Strategic Planning</b>	<b>Personal &amp; Professional Development</b>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>•Developing a corporate vision or mission statement</li><li>•Defining new organizational structures</li><li>•Problem solving</li><li>•Decision making</li><li>•Employee training (helping them visualize processes or procedures)</li><li>•Process mapping and optimization</li><li>•Brainstorming - as part of a team, or individually</li><li>•Project organization</li><li>•Meeting management</li></ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>•Identifying new market niches or customer needs</li><li>•Developing ideas for new products or services</li><li>•Positioning a new product or service (or re-positioning an existing one) vis-à-vis competitors</li></ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>•Outlining the strategic plan</li><li>•Developing future planning scenarios</li><li>•Mapping the forces or influences affecting a situation</li></ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>•Mapping your existing knowledge of a particular area</li><li>•Visualizing your network of professional contacts and their relationships</li><li>•Defining personal or team goals</li><li>•Presentations</li><li>•To-do lists</li><li>•Writing</li><li>•Note taking</li></ul>

**Example**

Thinking about Goals provides a particular challenge, because they impact every aspect of your life, & do not easily fit on a single sheet of paper. We can use the famous acronym SMART goals for this purpose.

Try using it as a checklist. It may not work out to your satisfaction because the ideas may dry out.

**Specific**

**Measurable**

**Attainable**

**Realistic**

**Time-bound**

**Thinking with a Mind Map**



The same information presented in radial form on a mind map frees your mind to take on the issues in any order.

It enables you recognize connections between the branches that might be very significant in the context, but not obvious in the linear text.

## Why

Often when you are thinking creatively about a problem, part of the thought flow gets lost & it is difficult to recreate it.

Free from the tyranny of the text format, your mind will naturally recognize what is important for you & your project at this point in time.

The Mind Map acts like flypaper to capture good ideas that otherwise might escape in the buzz of thinking. Unlike flypaper, it provides a meaningful structure to organize the thoughts as they come in.

The output formed by mind mapping provides an excellent reminder of your train of thought.

- It is difficult to think about ideas in a vacuum. Use a Mind Map.
- See the whole picture, & think globally.
- Capture & organize your ideas on paper. Set them in motion with your hands & feet.
- Mind Maps are a tool for thinking & action. The rest is up to you

The imaginations of most of us are like the wings of an ostrich. They enable us to run, though not to soar. But many of us don't even walk. *Lord MacCauley*



### *References:*

*Visual Thinking: Executive Power Tool of the 21st Century by Chuck Frey*

*Use mind mapping with templates to develop 'SMART' goals By William Reed*