

Tool 11 – Mind Mapping

TOOL: A **Mind Map** is a powerful graphic technique which provides a key to unlock the potential of the brain. It harnesses the full range of mental skills – word, image, number, logic, color and spatial awareness – in a single, uniquely powerful manner.

WHEN: The **Mind Map** can be applied to every aspect of life where improved learning and clearer thinking will enhance human performance. Similarly to a road map, a Mind Map will:

- Give you an overview of a large subject/area.
- Enable you to plan routes/make choices and let you know where you are going and where you have been.
- Gather and hold large amounts of data for you.
- Encourage problem solving by showing you new creative pathways.
- Enable you to be extremely efficient.
- Let you see the whole picture and the details at the same time.

HOW: The following are steps in creating a **Mind Map**:

1. Turn a large white sheet of paper on its side (landscape).
2. Gather a selection of colored pens, ranging from fine tip to highlighters.
3. Select the topic, problem or subject to be Mind Mapped.
4. Gather any materials or research or additional information.
5. Start in the center with an unframed image
6. Use dimension, expression and at least three colors in the central image in order to attract attention and aid memory.
7. Make the branches closest to the center thicker.
8. Place the 'chapter heading' equivalents on the branches.
9. Branch thinner lines off the end of the appropriate major headings to hold supporting data (most important closest).
10. Use images wherever possible.
11. The image or word should always sit on a line of the same length.
12. Use colors as your own special code to show people, topics, themes or dates and to make the Mind Map more attractive.
13. Capture all ideas (your own or others), then edit, re-organize, make more attractive, elaborate or clarify as a second stage of thinking.

NOTE: **#1. Mind Mapping** was developed by **Tony Buzan** in the late 60's. He actively markets books, CDs, software and training in Mind Mapping. See his web site: <http://www.mind-map.com/EN/>. (*May be outdated*) In an effort to stay true to Buzan's vision, this abstract has been created using material from the referenced site.

#2. Buzan's site states that **Mind Maps** can be applied to most of life's situations that involve any learning or thinking.

- As an individual: planning; to do 'lists'; projects; communicating; organizing; problem analyzing/solving.
- As a learner: remembering; note taking; note making; reports; essays; presentations; exams; thinking; concentrating.
- As a worker/professional: planning; communicating; projects; organizing; overseeing; meeting; training; negotiating; interviewing; and evaluating.

These **Mind Map** applications reduce the time spent on the activity; heighten the thinking effectiveness and clarity and increase the concentration and enjoyment of the activity

#3. The Buzan site <http://www.mind-map.com/EN/> is the source of this abstract. That link didn't work for me the last time so try: <https://www.ayoa.com/previously-imindmap/>

- That web site provided these links to software products :
www.mapyourmind.com www.ygni.us www.ConceptDraw.com
www.visual-mind.com
- A Search on "Mind Map" will result in several other sites, such as http://freemind.sourceforge.net/wiki/index.php/Main_Page for free Mind-Mapping software.
- This site contains several Mind Map enhancing tools:
<http://www.innovationtools.com/resources/mindmapping.asp>
- **Mind Tools**, always an excellent resource, has a complete article on Mind Mapping. http://www.mindtools.com/pages/article/newISS_01.htm

TIPS: **#1.** I once managed a group that performed a couple of uncommon functions and I was going to have to brief my new boss who was new to the agency on just 'what we did.' Whenever I had tried to describe the unit's function to a stranger, I could hear myself rambling and see their eyes glaze over. I needed a plan. Along with my staff I created a comprehensive mind map of our unit's functions on the white board in my office. It had close to 100 entries. Once I had done this, I was able to extract from the map the key elements of the unit which allowed me to succinctly summarize our unit's function and activities.

#2. While having software as an aid is a benefit, don't be reluctant to draw your **Mind Map** free hand. A white board with color pens is a good surface to build your first Mind Map.

This "tool" is from **Tom Adams' Problem Solvers Toolbox** which he compiled over his years of working as an Information Systems Analyst. These Problem Solving Tool Abstracts are NOT copyrighted; please share them. They are based upon the concepts of other problem solvers.
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