

Mind mapping for insight and problem solving based on the work of Tony Buzan

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Purpose

This exercise aims to remove barriers to lateral thinking and support the production of creative solutions and encourages holistic insight into the impact of change in one area and the knock-on effects. It also provides a structure for creative thinking and releases energy and insights.

Description

The mind map is a visual way of perceiving the world.

Process

First, outline the process of mind mapping. That it is a natural expression of radiant thinking – a natural function of the mind, it is a universal key to unlocking the brain's potential. It puts a subject/issue in the centre, with main themes radiating out from the central image as branches – all connected. Related topics of lesser importance are also represented as branches attached to higher-level branches. Encourage the client to leave the mind as free as possible to make associations and connections. This will help the client to remove internal barriers to thinking and creativity. The branches form a connected nodal structure.

The advantages of mind mapping are that it:

- keeps the whole picture in view at all times;
- provides a balanced and comprehensive understanding of the entire subject;
- increases the brain's 'hunger' for knowledge and problem solving;
- enhances understanding and appreciation of systemic linkages.

The role of the coach is to assist initially in producing a clearer picture of the situation/problem that requires resolution. So tell me about the issue? What exactly is the nature of the issue? What is it that makes it important/challenging? Who else is involved? Once the issue is clearly defined it can be plotted at the centre of the page and the mind mapping process begins by drawing out the various components of the problem. So tell me about the issues involved in this? The linkages and joined-up nature of issues really stand out on the page when presented in this manner.

Pitfalls

Some clients are not comfortable with this form of radiant thinking and prefer to view issues in a more linear manner. It can often be worth persevering with the mind map and encouraging the client to give it a go, but if the client will not engage then review the issue in a more linear format of the client's choice.

Bibliography

Buzan, T. (2002) *How to Mind Map*, London: Thorsons.