



Hi Klaus,

Whether you are a business owner, project manager, strategic planner, or someone who occasionally needs to plan out tasks or activities, NovaMind is ready to assist with these tasks.

There are several common issues with planning out tasks and projects:

- Necessary tasks not planned for
- Problems communicating the requirements to project stakeholders and sponsors
- Difficulty getting buy-in from others involved in the project
- Difficulty bringing new staff in on existing projects
- Problems with defining and maintaining project scope
- and many more...

Project Planning with NovaMind

Early on in the planning process, you can use the Brainstorming techniques we have previously discussed in an earlier email. This will allow you to think through the possible directions for the project, going beyond the bounds of the originally conceived project into new areas that may well open up new possibilities, as well as uncovering issues to do with the project you are working on.

You can then decide the scope of the project, and create a Mind Map based on the major project parts, and then broken down into groups of activities and then to individual activities as you get down to the detail level branches.

Use color coding, images, adornments and boundaries to add interest, definition and visual grouping to the different related tasks.

You can use the checkboxes and assignment of resources, percentage complete, priority and dates to help define the tasks.

Once you have your plan...

If you are on a Mac, you can use Merlin to open your Mind Map and create an instant project plan for detailed planning throughout the lifecycle of your project.

The Mind Map is an excellent tool to use to present to clients - they can see that their needs are being met (or exceeded) and can understand the resourcing and detail that goes into meeting their requirements. This can be very useful when they have big goals but don't understand what it really takes in order to provide the results they are looking for, or if they have not thought through the implications or other opportunities of their overall goals.

Using your Mind Map to present ideas and possibilities to management, investors and other existing or potential stakeholders makes communication easy and clear. Everyone can see clearly what the objectives are, why the different tasks are required, and how the results are realistically going to be produced. This make it much easier to obtain funding for your projects.

When new staff who are going to be working on the project are brought on to the project, they can see both where they fit in and how they can use their particular skills and talents to contribute to the overall success of the project, as well as what else is going on and why, so they can appreciate the bigger picture and scope of the project

Business Planning using NovaMind

BUSINESS Planning using NOVA MIND

Here is an example of a Mind Map used in business planning. Joe's Motors have used a Mind Map to clarify their service, staffing, QA, goals and marketing plans.

As you can see from the example Mind Map, the company, Joe's Motors have planned their business by breaking down the business into the categories: Service, Quality, Target market, Business ethics, Marketing/sales, Placement, and Staffing. In this way, all the important aspects of the business are covered. When dealing with the specifics of the business directions, you find it easy to brainstorm the ideas, adding them at the appropriate place and rearranging as necessary.

Study Tips

When presenting this to the existing staff in the business, they will be able to see how all the parts work together, and why their particular job is important and valuable to the business. They are likely to see other areas of the business where they can contribute, so you benefit from their increased productivity, increased enthusiasm, and using talents that may otherwise be underutilized.

You can then use the Mind Map as a poster on the wall so that both staff and clients can see what the business is all about.

When presenting this information to management or investors, they can understand the logical connections between the items as well as seeing the overview of the business. They buy in to the concepts quicker, making those funding requests go so much more smoothly.

Other Forms of Planning

You can also use NovaMind to plan many activities such as:

- Holiday plans
- Plans to write books and papers
- Marketing plans
- Meeting agendas

...and so many more, using techniques similar to what we have discussed above to collect, organize and present the information.

Homework Exercise

Try out the following method of planning to see how effective it is for you:

- Choose a project that you are working on now or will be working on in the near future
- Brainstorm the existing scope and possible extensions to the scope of the project
- Reduce the scope to something that fits with your immediate goals
- Arrange the Mind Map so that the branches and sub-branches represent the goals and activities, and enhance using colors, adornments etc to clarify the meaning and relationships.
- Present the Mind Map to either a potential stakeholder or colleague and get their feedback on how easy it is to understand the goals, directions and activities

You now have a useful test case showing you what works and you can improve for next time.

What next?

Our next email (and last in the series) will show you some methods for using NovaMind enhancing your personal effectiveness.

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