

# Vision Crafting



*Mind Mapping is not a panacea for problems; rather, it is a very useful tool that serves as a catalyst for creative change.*

**M**IND MAPPING IS A METHOD for generating and organizing ideas originated by British researcher Tony Buzan. It applies to everything from planning vacations to resolving conflicts, to writing statements of vision, mission, strategy, ethics, values, and principles. It also makes crafting them faster, more creative, and more fun.

Visioncraft refers to the process of writing and creating a shared sense of meaning and responsibility for visions, missions, strategies, ethics, values, and principles. A vision inspires you to arrive at work with enthusiasm. A mission guides what you do when you get there. A strategy is how you do it. A statement of ethics, values, or principles guides your actions and relationships with co-workers, clients, vendors, and others.

Visioncrafting sets the tone for the success of any venture. To set the right tone, statements must be: *juicy—inspiring, energizing, alive; original—a unique expression of you, your company or team; succinct—every word packed with meaning; inclusive—reflecting the concerns of all stakeholders; positive—active, focused, and affirming; memorable—everyone knows it by heart; aligned—with universal principles and basic goodness; and integrated—into everyday behavior.*

The structure of communication in nature is non-linear, non-hierarchical; it works through networks and systems. The ability to read, align, and work creatively with these systems is ultimately the definition of intelligence. Our thinking is a function of a vast network of synaptic patterns. A Mind Map is a graphic expression of these natural patterns.

To craft visions, missions, strategies, and value statements, we must develop our ability to understand patterns of change, and see the web of connections that underlie complex systems.

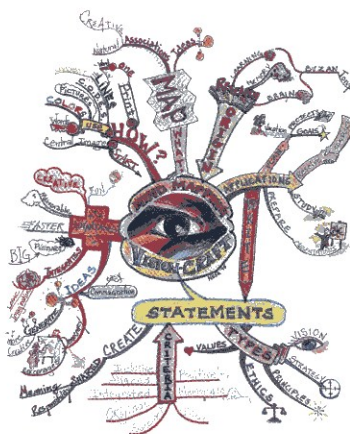
Outlining is a reflection of a hierarchical mind-set. Although valuable as a tool for

presenting ideas in a formal, orderly fashion, it is useful only after the real thinking has been done. Outlining slows you down, and stifles your freedom of thought. Moreover, outlining and note-taking systems tend to exclude your brain's capacity for color, dimension, synthesis, rhythm, and imagery. By imposing one color and one form, outlining guarantees monotony.

## Seven Basic Rules

Before considering the application of Mind Mapping to visioncraft, let's learn the seven basic rules:

1. *Begin your Mind Map with a symbol or a picture at the center of your page.* Pictures and symbols are easier to remember than



words and enhance your ability to visualize, remember, and think creatively.

2. *Use key words.* Key words are the information-rich "nuggets" of recall and creative association. Key words can be generated faster and are easier to remember than sentences or phrases. Moreover, the discipline of generating key words trains the mind to focus on the most essential elements of a subject.

3. *Connect the key words with lines radiating from your central image.* By linking words with lines, you'll show clearly how one key word relates to another. Connect the lines for maximum clarity.

4. *Print your key words.* Printing is easier to read and remember than writing.

5. *Print one key word per line.* Printing one key word per line frees you to discover the maximum number of creative associations for each key word and trains you to hone in on the most appropriate key word,

enhancing the precision of your thought and minimizing clutter.

6. *Print your key words on the lines and make the length of the word and line equal.* This maximizes clarity of association and encourages economy of space.

7. *Use colors, pictures, emphasis, and codes for vivid association and emphasis.* Highlight important points and show relationships between different branches of your map. You might, for instance, prioritize your main points through color-coding. Use pictures and images often as they stimulate visualization and creative association and greatly enhance memory. Codes, such as asterisks, exclamation points, letters, and numbers, show relationship between concepts and further organize your map.

## Six Advantages

- *Synergy.* Mind Mapping integrates the "left-brained" aspects of our mind's functioning—logical, language, mathematical reasoning, attention to detail, ordering, and analysis—with the more "right-brained" elements—dimension, rhythm, color, picture, symbols, imagination, and synthesis. Mind Mapping "rescues" these "right-brain" elements, previously relegated to the realm of doodling and daydreaming, making them a productive part of our planning and problem-solving.

- *Speed.* Mind Mapping's non-hierarchical, networked format makes it much easier to get started and to generate more ideas in less time.

- *Seeing the big picture.* Mind Mapping lets you see all your ideas on one sheet of paper, making it easier to see the "big picture." Codes, symbols, colors and arrows allow you to highlight relationships and see connections, thereby encouraging "systems thinking." Putting your ideas in images and symbols awakens the power of visualization.

- *Fun.* Mind Mapping makes the process of crafting a vision, mission, plan or values statement lively, colorful, and fun.

- *Broad participation and ease of communication.* Mind Mapping makes it easy for people without MBAs and PhDs to think strategically, while enabling MBAs and PhDs to attune to reality and think creatively.

- *Memorability.* Pictures, colors, and key words are easy to remember. A properly constructed Mind Map is almost impossible to forget. Many groups frame the Mind Maps generated in their visioncrafting sessions and hang them on their office walls to provide daily inspiration and to introduce prospective clients and other visitors to the company vision, mission and values. **EE**

*Michael J. Gelb is President of High Performing Learning, (703) 757-7007 and created the audiotape program—Mind Mapping. This article is based on his new book Thinking for a Change.*