

# Tricks of the Trade: Mind Maps

In the second of our Tricks of the Trade series, Clive Lewis, MD of Illumine Training, explains the practicalities and benefits of Mind Mapping®.



More than anything else trainers are communicators. But are you good at getting your message across? If you want to become a master communicator then Mind Mapping is a tool that you should be using on every course you run. It can help

you to present your subject in a way that is stimulating, memorable and easy for your audience to recall - every time.

So what are Mind Maps? In essence they provide the clearest expression of the way the human mind works; and we don't think in lists or sentences, we think in images and key themes, shapes and patterns, all connected one to another.

## Radiate

Let me start with a simple example. Consider for a moment the last course that you ran and as you think about it be aware of the associated thoughts that instantly spring to mind: what the topic was, who was there, where it was, how long it lasted, what the venue was like and so on.

These first thoughts are what are called Basic Ordering Ideas (BOIs) and each of these will, in turn, stimulate more associations. For example if you take the BOI theme of 'venue' you might then break it down into room, food, accommodation, location and staff. And each of these headings will have further associations. And this is why this approach is called 'radiant' thinking. It all radiates from one central theme.

This radiant structure provides us with our foundation for Mind Mapping. You simply start with a core idea and then you draw thick lines representing the BOIs radiating out from your central word or image. Have a look at the Mind Map below on 'the uses of Mind Maps'. It's a classic map which depicts the issue at the centre, includes the BOIs branching out and then outlines a variety of other ideas associated with these branches.

So as a trainer how can Mind Mapping help you? Here are three applications which are especially noteworthy.

**Planning:** One great way in which Mind Mapping can help you as a trainer is in the planning of new projects. Let us say you are about to develop a new course. In such a case your Mind Map might start with the following BOIs: the subject, the audience, the models, the resources, the learning approach. By developing a Mind Map you can build up a single picture, a master plan, for your subject which shows the whole territory at a glance.

**Presenting:** Another powerful way of using Mind mapping is in the area of presentations. Mind Maps can help you to structure your sessions as well as providing a clear visual reference for delegates so that they can see what ground you have covered. By using pre-prepared Mind Maps you can generate visual interest whilst ensuring your presentation stays on track. Alternatively, if you are working in the moment and trying to draw out ideas from a group, a Mind Map can help you to gather and present information in a way that helps both to clarify and stimulate people's thinking.

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**Learning:** Mind Mapping is also a proven method for helping delegates to remember what they have learned because it codes information in a way that is easy for the brain to recall. Look at the BOIs in the Mind Map here; they immediately indicate the key concepts. Then notice how the use of colour separates out the main ideas. And see also how the use of images adds further visual impact and helps to capture ideas in a different way. In all these ways Mind Maps work towards sticky learning i.e. learning that sticks.

Of course these are not the only applications for Mind Maps. Project management, appraisals, creativity, problem solving, there are a thousand applications for this technique. All you need to do to start is the essential skills.

**Illumine is Tony Buzan's preferred partner in corporate and public sector training. For more details go to [www.illumine.co.uk](http://www.illumine.co.uk) or call 01753 866633.**

**Find out more about how to make a Mind Map on [www.mind-mapping.com](http://www.mind-mapping.com). Mind Mapping is a registered trademark of the Buzan organisation.**

