

Discover the way to increased efficiency—the brainstorming tool you wouldn't think would get you there

(Please note: the term mind maps was modified in each article to take advantage of the power of key wording on promotional sites so they are not consistently spelled).

<http://hubpages.com/hub/Brainstorming>

When I first heard the words, “it works, it’s just counter-intuitive” or “it’s one of those paradoxes”, I was actually quite amazed by the implication of these ideas. How could we be led to think one thing as unfailingly, unarguably true, and now, be told its opposite is what matters most?

But life turns out to make use of more than we ever conceive it does. And so it is with brainstorming.

For example, tools that encourage you to write down every association you’ve ever had on a topic, can, at first glance, seem a bit new agey, indulgent, and like the long route for figuring something out. Surprisingly though, brainstorming and the tools that help us do it actually steer us toward becoming more focused, not less, and in turn, help us become more efficient as well.

The reason brainstorming helps is because it reflects back to us the way our minds already process ideas, which is, by association. When we put down an idea or concept like purple, our brain simply wants to supply us with its readily available next association, which, if you must know, is cow (you too, huh?) and then to the next one, intractable, and so forth.

Then, when a tool comes on the scene and actually encourages us to use that natural behavior of our brains, pulls it out of us, so to speak, wondrous things begin to occur.

As we put down the obvious associations, we startle ourselves with connections less obvious, but still relevant to our train of thought. Eventually, we make connections that we never made before, both allowing us now to both see and solve problems quickly and effortlessly.

NovaMind, a company that creates mind mapping software so that individuals and groups can create their own compact and visually compelling mind maps, encourages the use of brainstorming to solve real world problems. Its software is constructed a lot like Willy Wonka’s elevator. To create a map of our ideas, we can design the branches and nodes to go up, down, sideways, slanted, any which way we like. This is fantastic news! It means if we exercise our minds just as we exercise our bodies, we’ll come up with ‘out of the box’ connections and solutions visually represented that will reward all of us no matter what stage of a project we’re in.

What's more, mind maps are built upon a principle of creating strong connections between ideas and not just about putting down the ideas themselves. In a way, this too is natural extension of how our mind works as well as a revolutionary new practice that can powerfully pull together what before was just disparate, disconnected thoughts with no impact in the larger sense. In other words, working with NovaMind's mind maps, our visual mapping can now mirror back to us not just the discrete tasks we are thinking need to get done but also help us see where they fit in to a larger context and how they are related. The end result? We'll feel empowered as we get the larger world of which we are a part.

Along the way, we see how our mind works as well as how the minds of those we work with work! This is a huge gain in the efficiency front, since being able to see contributions at all levels, from all kinds of people, can be remarkably informative.

We can even end up doing a better job of remembering what we map since NovaMind mind mapping has the capability to create smooth curves colorful and even photographic images to further our capacities to remember.

And finally, we can leverage all of those ideas generated through the process of brainstorming. How so? Well imagine if your company actually encouraged brainstorming as something teams or individuals could submit on a regular basis? Who would it help?

Everyone, actually. Individuals would really feel involved, owning their contributions instead of feeling a bit enslaved by only incorporating those of others, and the company could generate and farm out the best ideas, cutting costs through a workforce now actively contributing.

So the next time you equate brainstorming as some silly inefficient process designed to scatter your resources and thinking rather than get your producers producing, think again. Because it's the things you don't expect to get you there—at the top of your productivity game—that often, actually will.

Example Mind Maps

This is a gallery of lots of sample Mind Maps developed to improve business productivity and communications.

How to Mind Map Information on how to go about creating Mind Maps

Wikipedia information about Mind Maps Information from Wikipedia about Mind Mapping.

Business Guide to Mind Mapping book

Everything you need to know to use Mind Mapping in a business context.

Wikipedia - Brainstorming

Wikipedia article on Brainstorming