

CORPORATED MANAGEMENT / HUMAN RESOURCES

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Work smart, think smarter

SUCCESSFUL brainsmart leaders recognise the importance of thinking smarter as a gateway to effective decision-making and, hence, leadership skills.

They have the ability to identify leaders among leaders and encourage them to find new ways to do things better to improve productivity. Mind mapping is a profound tool for effective leaders for these outcomes:

Better focus

Being pulled in different directions trying to meet the organisation's competing demands and priorities makes it challenging to focus without distractions. At times, I find my thoughts straying, and my thinking becomes foggy and lacks clarity.

A mind map helps to focus my mind as it requires me to drill deep into my thoughts to consider all the important factors and learn to prioritise them.

It fosters a continuous stream of associations and connections, and before I know it, my thought process begins to flow almost effortlessly. At that point, my mind no longer thinks about the things that are irrelevant.

For example, when I have to prepare for a session plan for my lecture at the Singapore Institute of Management, I first focus on the objectives, followed by the learning outcome that I want my students to achieve, then the key learning points, pace and timing. If I allow these ideas to float in my head without physically pinning them down on the branches, it will not help to solidify my focus and I will tend to procrastinate over my projects and tasks at hand.

After prioritising the various tasks, I then decide what to work on next and allocate the amount of time accordingly.

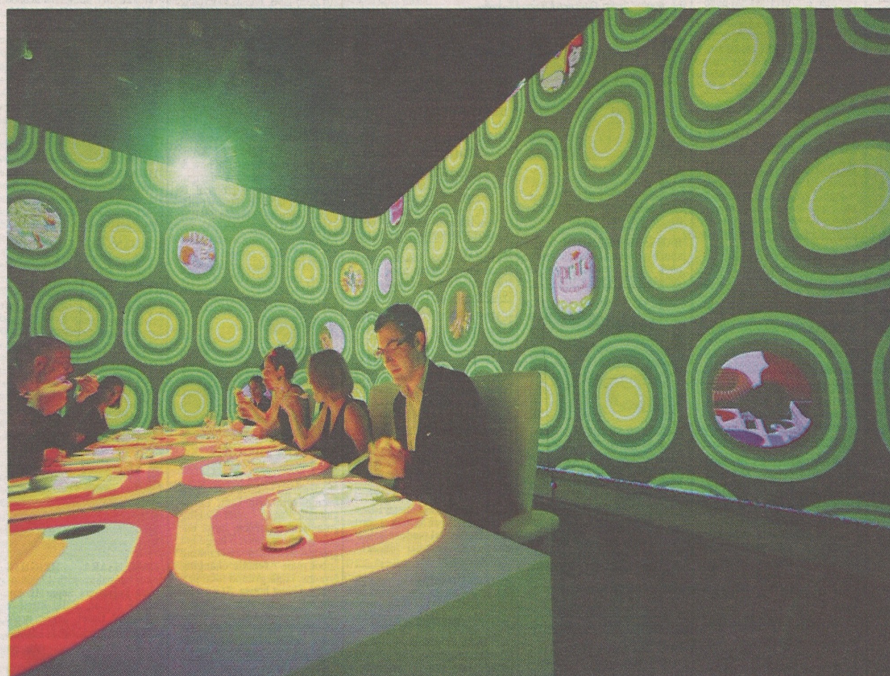
This serves as my teaching agenda and it also allows me to be flexible with the sequence when I lecture and conduct tutorials. Hence, I am able to focus and be more productive.

More organised

The true beauty is that mind maps can be applied in virtually any area of life, an instant power source anyone can easily tap into.

For example, after familiarising myself with the theory and practice of mind mapping, I use them as a system to plan a task, such as a presentation or a review, as it is easy for anyone to follow since everything falls on one page.

Mind mapping can be a powerful tool for leaders.



Our brain needs to continually learn new information and be stimulated through our senses to remain vibrant and creative. - Reuters

Leonardo da Vinci once said, "In this world, everything is connected to everything else."

This is so true. In my work and presentations, I can conveniently shift from one aspect of my topic to another with ease and my audience can visualise how all things connect and work together to arrive at the big picture.

My audience's eyes are fixated on the whiteboard as I reveal the course information through a network of colourful text, graphics and images connected by branches.

I can edit the information quickly as the audience contributes its ideas and adds new information during our interactive discussions.

This tool can also be applied in all my meetings for recording and summarising key ideas – irrelevant information just won't fit into the mind map of what's being discussed. Hence it is easy to prevent drift and waffle from the agenda at hand.

Inspiring new ideas

Brainsmart leaders realise the potential of their staff by harnessing their thinking power and tapping into their natural creative ability and intellectual capital, an asset assured of appreciating in value over time.

Our brain needs to continually learn new information and be stimulated through our senses to remain vibrant and creative. One way is to encourage employees to continue their education and training that will enable them to exercise their brains and thinking. Mind maps can be used to organise and conceptualise thinking because they are simple to acquire, yet powerful.

The long-term performance of your organisation will depend on how well leaders can manage the combined intelligence and creativity of their employees to constantly generate ideas and/or alternatives to problem-solving, decision-making

and innovation.

Author and education consultant Tony Buzan said: "When you are interested in everything, everything becomes more interesting." Therefore we can become more interesting people and make it easier to connect, relate and make associations when interacting with others and our environment.

Similarly, our brain is a truth-seeking device and acts on what it believes to be true, so it seeks knowledge and information to make connections and associations constantly. Mind mapping is a way to achieve greater clarity of thought, an important element in your journey to becoming a successful leader. - Singapore Straits Times/Asia News Network

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