

Mind Map your Strategy

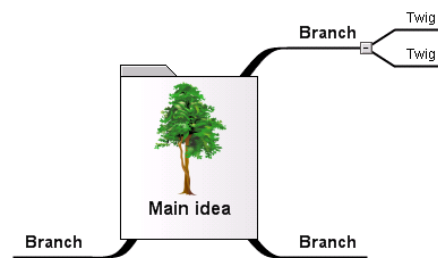
When first sitting down to create your program Initiative, your ideal vision, your resume or product/service offerings, do a brain dump.

Start with writing big ticket items that should be done down on paper.

Group them into categories. Make these the first branches from the center.

Now, take each of these and branch them out further from there. Either you or a go-to knowledge resource can provide the best recommendations for implementation later down the road. Don't get too caught up in the details! This will serve as an input to a larger multi-year project plan or a business vision, however, the goal is to get what you intuitively know needs to happen down on paper.

Give yourself permission not to get everything down on paper up front. You will open this up in a week and add new things because you are processing all of this. Mind mapping is an iterative exercise much like how our brains think.



Here's a checklist to help you get started as an intrapreneur inside an organization:

- ✓ What are the estimated costs associated with each item? Write with budgets in mind.
- ✓ What are the **results** and **benefits** as a result of executing this program? State in terms of: money, efficiency and time savings metrics which make your deliverables **measurable** and used as a benchmark for future.
- ✓ What are the blind spots you have experienced in the past?
- ✓ Share your vision with others. Get everyone's input. Talk about the problem areas and gotcha's.
- ✓ Factor in your own time, not just that of the resources and team you have access to. Even if you don't have direct reports – matrix management requires deliverables from others.

- ✓ What's your plan B? Factor in contingencies and give your senior management or your clients options.
- ✓ What does the multi-year roadmap look like? Manage expectations. Show your understanding of the bigger picture vision. Don't limit yourself to only your current job, and what you're "on the hook" for, to deliver. You can easily get sucked into the pressure of churning things out to meet current deliverables. There are also areas in the overall vision which should be considered in future years. This is your advisory role and what you can factor in to uniquely drive the conversation, not just contribute to it. What is the long-term outlook?
- ✓ What are the business needs and trends that might offer opportunities that others may not be thinking about? Factor those in as well.

Here's a checklist to help you get started as an entrepreneur:

- ✓ What are the major category areas your product or service delivers? State in terms of RESULTS.
- ✓ What are the ways you can deliver that to your clients? E.g teaching, speaking, books, counseling, worksheets?
- ✓ What is the major frustration your clients struggle with? Put that in the center of your mind map. Now branch out all the solutions you provide to bridge the gap. You can also mind map where you can find your ideal clients.
- ✓ Vet out every cornerstone that bubbles up for you. This is a creative fun exercise where you are drawing the vision of your small business.

If you were working in the tourism industry for example, in charge of a marketing initiative for Australia's Great Barrier Reef which targets nature enthusiasts, here's a program of benefits/results that you may come up with. Now take each of these and run through the above checklist! This should be a fun and go-with-the-flow strategic exercise because you are creating your ideal vision.

Consider mind mapping your thoughts using a tool like **Mindmeister.com** – sample mind map shown below.

