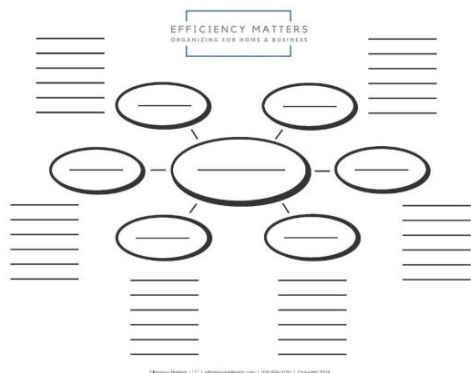




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# Mind Maps: A Powerful Organizing Tool for Planning

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What I have discovered with many of my clients is that they are often overwhelmed with managing the multiple tasks needed to organize projects, manage to-do lists, plan a trip . you name it. The brain can only hold so many thoughts at the same time, so how do you sort it all out?

I have successfully been using a tool called mind mapping for years. A mind map is a powerful visual planning tool that allows you to capture all your ideas at once, sort them out, and eliminate the overwhelming confusion. A mind map gets information out of your brain and can be a creative and logical means of note taking that literally "maps out your ideas." This powerful tool uses both the left and right brain thinking tools, which helps with clarity, structure, and organization of your thoughts.

There are so many ways to use a mind map, such as planning a vacation, planning your week, your

remodel, your garage organization project, brainstorming ideas and projects both short and long term ... the possibilities are limitless.

The best way to explain how to use a mind map is to show you. You can find many types of mind maps on the internet. Here is the mind map that I use and give to all of my clients (I've included a link to a printable copy at the end of the article):

This kind of mind map is often called a spider map.

The center of a mind map looks a little bit like a spider with many legs; the body is the main topic with the multiple legs leading to the related subtopics.

The circles that are around the main circle are the subtopics. I like to prioritize the subtopics by using the top right circle first then working clockwise. The lines below each subtopic list the related tasks that need to be completed.

Here is an example of how a mind map might be used to plan a family vacation.

In the main subject circle, I have written "summer vacation".? Starting with the top right, I have listed my subtopics (prioritizing them clockwise).

Here are the subtopics and tasks I created for this example:

WHERE-WHEN? Fill the lines with questions to discuss with the family such as:

Destination choices, relaxing or active vacation, how long do we want to stay, what is our budget, coordinate all family members schedule to decide on a date that works for everyone (good luck with that).

LODGING-AIR-CAR RENTAL This is where you will start researching flights, hotels/airbnb, and car rentals.

ACTIVITIES/RESTAURANTS Make a list of possible activities that are available at the destination. You may want to put detailed notes here such as websites, street address, costs involved.

RESERVATIONS Now that everyone has decided on the activities and restaurants you want, you will make the actual reservations. This can be added to the itinerary (if you are the type of person who puts together an itinerary).

PACKING Make notes of the items you want to make sure you don't forget. These items are special to this trip and wouldn't necessarily be on a typical packing list. You might want to make a separate mind map for this subtopic to help with packing.

PET/HOUSE SITTING You will want to make plans for your pets, house (plants) and mail. Having this on your mind map will help you remember all these important details.

The benefit of the mind map is that you transfer all of the many thoughts from your brain when you write it down in an organized way. Otherwise, all these details are swimming around your brain all the time and inevitably important things get missed.

Another way to use the mind map is to fill one out at the beginning of the week. It might look something like this:

MAIN CIRCLE: ?WEEK OF JANUARY 29, 2024

CIRCLE TOPIC #1 - ERRANDS - grocery shopping, dry cleaning, post office, return packages.

CIRCLE TOPIC #2 - KIDS - Susie needs new basketball shoes, Joey needs supplies for school project.

CIRCLE TOPIC #3 - WORK - Finish presentation, follow up client leads, create 9 closet designs.

CIRCLE TOPIC #4 - FAMILY ACTIVITIES - Start vacation conversations, plan date night, sign up for family pickleball, make sure everyone's schedules are coordinated.

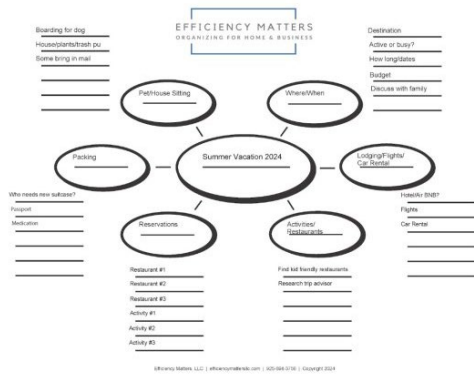
CIRCLE TOPIC #5 - HOUSE PROJECTS - Call electrician to fix outlet, put away holiday decor, cover outdoor furniture.

CIRCLE TOPIC #6 - LONG TERM PROJECTS - Call about summer camps, start researching a new car, start planning a garage organization project.

Here is a link to the version of a mind map that I use and I give to all of my clients;

www.efficiencymattersllc.com/mindmap .

Send me an email at jennifer@efficiencymattersllc.com if you have any questions. I'm always here to help!



Images Efficiency Matters



Professional Organizer, Jennifer Raftis, CPO♦ founded Efficiency Matters, LLC to help you with all of your organizing needs for your home and business. She is a Certified Professional Organizer and an active board member with NAPO, National Association of Productivity and Organizing Professionals. She is also an independent representative for The Container Store and has expertise in designing closets, garages, pantries, playrooms and more. In addition, she is a Corporate Organizing and Productivity Consultant and has worked with Fortune 500 companies across the U.S. Another large part of her business is move management especially working with seniors who are downsizing. She and her husband have lived in Moraga for 30 years, raising 3 kids and working countless volunteer hours with many local non-profit organizations and schools. Jennifer@efficiencymattersllc.com, 925-698-3756 www.efficiencymattersllc.com

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