



EFFECTIVE BRAINSTORMING USING MINDGENIUS

Why are you here?

You've probably just downloaded your shiny new copy of MindGenius and are almost ready to get going with your first post-flipchart brainstorming. If you want to get started quickly, this is the document for you. With your software open in front of you, this will smooth the path to your first ever really effective brainstorming session.

If you are doing an in depth brainstorming for top level issues, you might need a little more help. That's where our White Papers on our website www.mindgenius.com come in. They give you a step-by-step guide to everything you'll ever need to know about brainstorming with MindGenius.

What is Brainstorming?

Brainstorming sometimes gets a negative press. Paper stuck all over the wall with illegible notes and no order or structure. Hours of work that don't seem to achieve much, if anything. It doesn't matter how good the views of your individuals are if there is no effective way to document their big ideas. Everyone knows what brainstorming is but not necessarily the best way to use it to help themselves and their businesses.

Effective brainstorming can create extremely valuable "breakthroughs" and in doing so create a feeling of inclusion for individuals who have taken part. And a feeling that their ideas are really being listened to.

Traditional Approach

Traditionally post it pads, flipcharts or whiteboards are used for note taking during a brainstorm. All of which needs to be pored over in detail afterwards to be properly understood. This is an extremely difficult task that can take weeks to conclude. As a result, many brainstorming sessions fail! Despite great ideas being discussed, there is often little follow up and few actions are completed. Ideas are forgotten as time passes and sometimes don't come to anything.

This problem is completely overcome with MindGenius.

Brainstorming with MindGenius

Brainstorming with MindGenius is simple and straightforward. No more information overload. All it requires is a meeting room with computer projection capability plus a PC with MindGenius installed. As long as you have basic keyboard skills you will be able to use MindGenius.

MindGenius helps maps the progress of the brainstorm, meaning gathered information is clear, easy to read and to understand.

The information gathered is structured automatically into a map. The **Map Diagram** is ideal for collating information.

Once you get started, everyone should be encouraged to contribute, even if their ideas seem a bit “out there.” To this end no judgmental comments on any feedback are permitted during a successful brainstorm. Even if someone goes off on a tangent MindGenius enables you to gather their information, which may be relevant later, and easily navigate backwards and forwards using the **Map Explorer** function.

Map Explorer means you can focus in on individual sections and have unlimited mini-maps. Too many sections? You can collapse the map down and just view the bare bones. If you feel information is important but not relevant to a particular brainstorming, simply create another main branch at the end of your diagram and add the ideas there to review later.

Generate, Gather and Record Ideas

Logging ideas is simple too, just a few easy steps. As simple as **Type-and-Return**.

The result is an immediate benefit in comparison to traditional brainstorming. No hunting through sheet after sheet to try and find the really good point that someone made. Somewhere. If you could only just find it...All the points are there on screen, ready for you to organize in order of relevance. No more fried brain from trying to understand illegible, scrawled points.

If you realise you've put an idea somewhere and it would be more relevant elsewhere, it can be easily moved. All you need to do is select the branch and use the **Drag-and-Drop** function to pull it to where it needs to go.

Group Ideas - Begin to Understand

This is where traditional brainstorming finishes. And usually the last time any of the ideas are ever heard of. Not so with MindGenius. Once the brainstorm has come to a natural end, the whole team can contribute to the process of understanding the feedback generated. One way this is achieved is by naming and applying coloured **Categories** to link together information that participants think are related to each other. Which means easy, at a glance viewing of information.

If you decide the information would be more relevant to you in a map with all the linked ideas grouped together, you don't need to start all over. You just need to select “**Create Category Map**” and the information will be re-ordered before your eyes. This is ideal for grouping the output from a brainstorming session, and you can easily change this to an **Affinity Diagram** where groups are laid out in a familiar order.

Understanding the Data – Refine the Data

Following on from this, each group can be analysed in isolation using the Explorer view. Simply click on the **Category** title or branch you would like to view in **Map Explorer**.

This is when you decide what is important or significant, what is relevant and what is background info without hours of effort required on your part.

Presenting the Findings - Recall Brainstorm group

Once everyone is in agreement, the Brainstorm can very quickly be broken down and understood. People can be sent the information gathered, after the brainstorming as a map. This can help them remember what was discussed and decided. This would be impossible without MindGenius unless you had a few weeks spare to get on with the photocopying.

Acting on Findings - Identify Actions and Communicate

To ensure that value comes from the Brainstorm and it's more than a talking shop, actions need to be decided upon and allocated.

MindGenius has a simple function where you can use symbols and colours to identify **Actions** that need to be followed up. The action is signified by a red tick. You can view all the actions that are required easily too with a quick roll over of the mouse on the arrow. This can be created before. With the **Outlook Sharing** option you can then send actions to outlook and email people directly from the application. Simple. When people return to their desks, their task lists will be waiting for them and everyone will be immediately clear on what they have to do.

You can also add a **“Resource”** icon and see at a glance who needs to do what. If you need to keep tabs on a team's workload following a brainstorming you just need to select **“Create Resource Map.”**

Of just as much, if not more, benefit perhaps is the **Export** function. Once the brainstorming is completed, should you wish to create further documentation from the findings, you can use this function to instantly create a new document. You have a variety of options here including Word documents, PDFs, and MS Project files. You will be amazed at how easy this is. One click of the mouse and you'll have a ready formatted Report, Project Plan or Presentation.

Summary



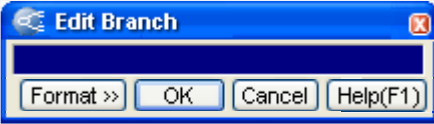








Using MindGenius, Brainstorming becomes a norm in an organization. Something that happens in one form or another every day, and not something that happens ineffectively twice a year. If you follow the built in 4-stage task management process above, you **will** tackle brainstorming more quickly, **and** more effectively.

More queries on how to use MindGenius to make your brainstorming more valuable? Check out our “How to...brainstorm” document available from www.mindgenius.com.



Go do it

Okay, so you're ready to start. Our top tip to you would be to print out this page and keep it nice and safe next to you as you start to explore MindGenius.

<u>Feature</u>	<u>What does it do?</u>	<u>Where in MindGenius?</u>
Map Diagram	Helps you collate information	
Map Explorer	Easily navigate around your information	
Type-and-Return	Enter information rapidly	
Drag-and-Drop	Move information around easily	
Categories	Link ideas together	
Create Category Map	View linked ideas quickly	
Affinity Diagram	A good way to collate information at the end of a brainstorming	
Actions	View items that need to be followed up	
File/Outlook Sharing Function	Send emails directly from MindGenius	
Resources	Allocate tasks to people	
Create Resource Map	See at a glance who needs to do what	
Export	Create a ready made document for a variety of other applications	