

Working Smarter with Mind Maps

What you'll learn:

1. Why use a mind map

2. How to create a mind map

3. How to use a mind map to get projects done

1. Why use a mind map

A mind map is a visual outline with the central box as the top-level idea, topics as bullets below it, sub-topics as elements of each bullet, and so on.

A mind map is a very efficient way to record ideas during a brainstorming session and to organize them into a coherent plan, afterwards.

Why use a mind map instead of an outline?

Mind maps are better than outlines because:

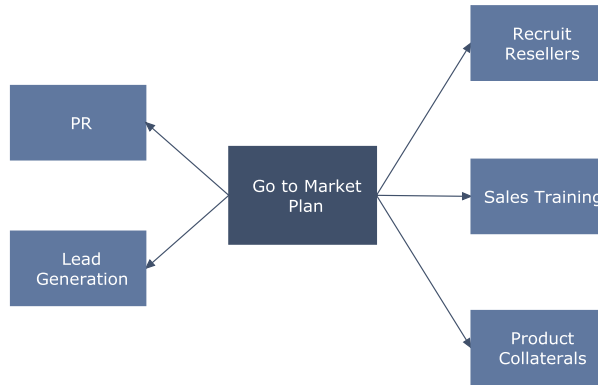
- They are easier to read than bulleted lists
- They are better for brainstorming
- They are much more interesting than bullets when presenting your ideas in a PowerPoint® presentation
- They are much more spatially efficient since you can branch out your ideas horizontally (lists grow mostly vertically)
- Mind maps let you see what you're thinking; bulleted lists don't convey ideas with the same level of clarity as a mind map

2. How to create a mind map

Let's use the launch of a new product as an example:

Step 1. Start with a Few Initial "Big Topics."

Components of the Go To Market Plan

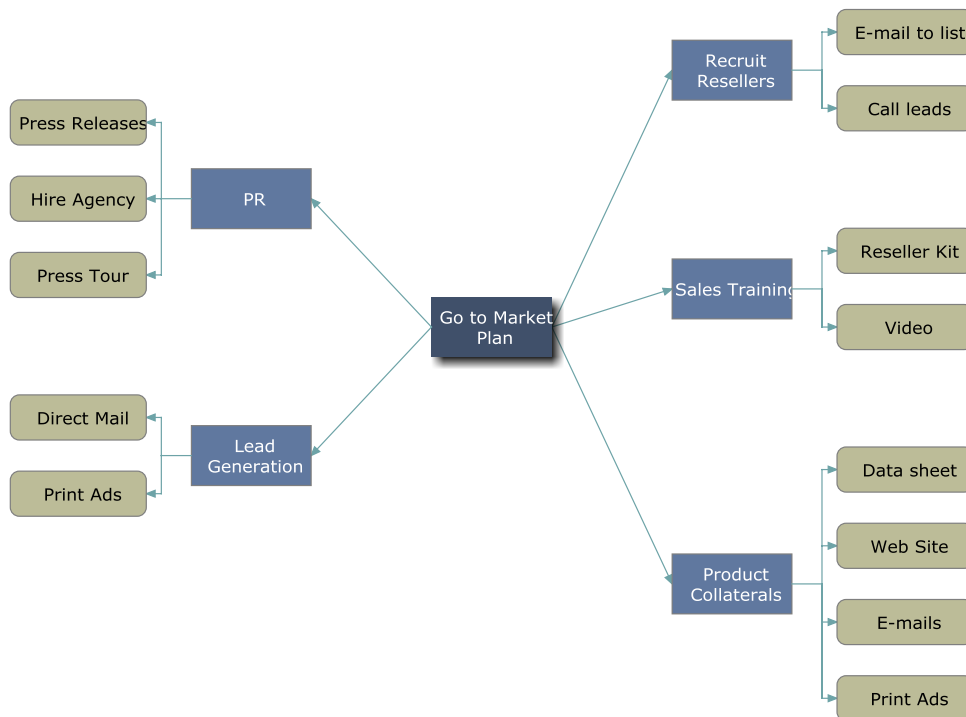


This product is going to be handled by a reseller channel. The big topics are:

- Recruiting the resellers
- Training them
- Creating sales collaterals they can use
- Generating customer leads for them
- Using PR to increase awareness about the product

Step 2. Refine each “Big Topic” with a few Specific “Areas of Interest.”

Components of the Go To Market Plan

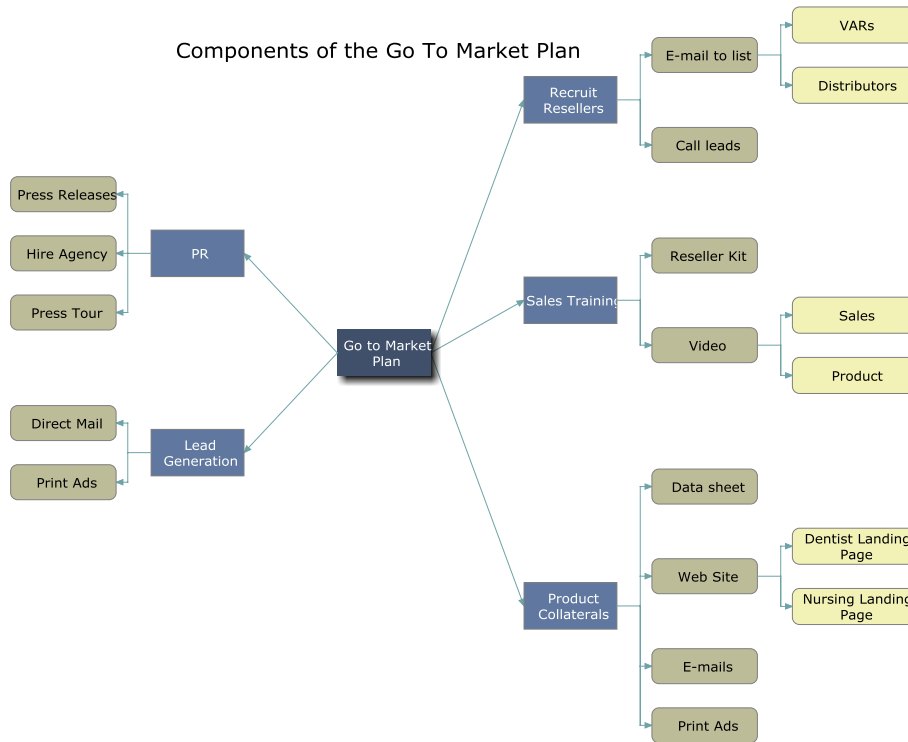


We took the original list and expanded on each node with a few increasingly specified subtopics; here's how our mind map appears in outline format:

- Go to Market Plan
 - PR
 - Press Releases
 - Hire Agency
 - Press Tour
 - Lead Generation
 - Direct Mail
 - Print Ads
 - Product Collaterals
 - Data sheet
 - Web Site
 - E-mails
 - Print Ads
 - Sales Training
 - Reseller Kit
 - Video
 - Recruit Resellers
 - E-mail to list
 - Call leads

See how we have much more space to get information across when we use a mind map? Now we're going to take it one step further.

Step 3. Refine, Add More Subtopics, then Repeat.



Mind Mapping Software: What to Look For:

Ideally it should take no more time to make a mind map than it takes to make an outline in a word processor, and re-arranging one should take even less time. Your mind mapping software should:

- Automatically format the map for you – drawing lines and adding boxes in response to simple commands
- Allow you to add new topics and subtopics without requiring you to take your hand off the keyboard
- Allow you to easily move topics and subtopics around with the mouse

Several programs, including SmartDraw, meet these criteria, but only SmartDraw automates the conversion of a mind map into a project plan.

Watch how to make this mind map using SmartDraw by [clicking here](#).

You can download a free trial copy of SmartDraw by [clicking here](#).