

## Mind Maps: Key to Effective Project Management

The entire company was stunned. Their dream project, the most ambitious one, had failed. It had send shock-waves across the Industry. Their rivals had smelled blood and were closing in. The tech world was rife with speculations regarding the cause of failure. The company had lost its position, its clout and was on the verge of being acquired by another tech giant.

Its CEO, as bewildered as everyone else summed it up perfectly “We did not do anything wrong, but somehow we lost”. And just like that, the company was lost into oblivion. Yes, we are talking about **Nokia**, which in the early and mid-2000’s could do no wrong, and at its peak **in 2007, owned 41% of the world market**. So what was the root cause behind their fall from grace?

Lack of innovation, lack of vision and lack of foresightedness can all be considered as the reasons for its demise, but, if you go deep down into the depths of this case study, the entire caveat stemmed from one root cause- total mismanagement of the project. Had Nokia been a little more attentive towards project management, the collapse could have been avoided.

Now that we have established the need for project management, let us now come to the technology which is at the forefront of project management, 'Mind Mapping'. Project Management has, for long, been considered a playground of the left brain centric. But cases like Nokia have made people realize that, as we move forward, only the synergy of right brain and left brain can survive in this ever changing world.

### Mind Maps Filling the Gap

Here, enters the mind maps at just about the perfect time. It has filled into this gap seamlessly by making use of visuals and easy to understand tree like

structures to make the execution of the process more entertaining and engaging. It strives to align all the team members under a single umbrella, therefore aiding them in staying true to the ultimate goal. Disorientation from the goal is blasphemous for any employee, yet is the most common reason behind the failure of projects. Mind Mapping tries to tackle the Project failure problem by using the 'CLICK' Principle.

'CL' stands for **curvelines**. It is believed that our mind is more tuned to the use of curved lines than straight lines, and that is exactly what mind map follows.

'I' refers to **images**.

'A picture is worth a thousand words' is the mantra followed here.

'C' stands for **colors**. The moment mind maps introduce color in its scheme of things, retention power of the brain increases manifold.

'K' stands for **keywords**. Important decisions necessitate full concentration and therefore, mind mapping considers it imperative that only the selected keywords of importance be highlighted and irrelevant words be ignored.

## Application in Project Development

Experts believe that **Mind maps** must be used at different stages of project developments, for it serves different purposes at different stages. At project initiation stage, it helps in identifying all the stakeholders involved, their benefits, both collective and mutual and putting them on the map for all the stakeholders to see. During project execution stage, mind maps help project managers to decide which path needs to be taken at critical junctions. Since mind map is a flow diagram, therefore all the junctions usually have more than one path that can be traversed.

## Take an Informed Decision

Mind maps allow managers to carefully weigh and calculate all the risks and then take an informed decision. Once a project is completed, its experiences, both positive and negative, must be used as a part of a learning curve for future projects. But, due to paucity of time, employees are usually unable to harvest the benefit from this experience. Mind maps help in capturing all the aspects of that particular project in a simple and easy to understand way, thus making its analysis easy.

Now, try and apply all this to the Nokia debacle. What you will realize is that, a company as big as Nokia, does not vanish overnight. Its decline has been a gradual process with wrong decisions at critical points, ignorance of its stakeholders and lack of introspection and learning playing equal parts. Mind Maps thus, came a tad too late for Nokia. Now, it is up to us to harness its full potential and raise the roof of the building.