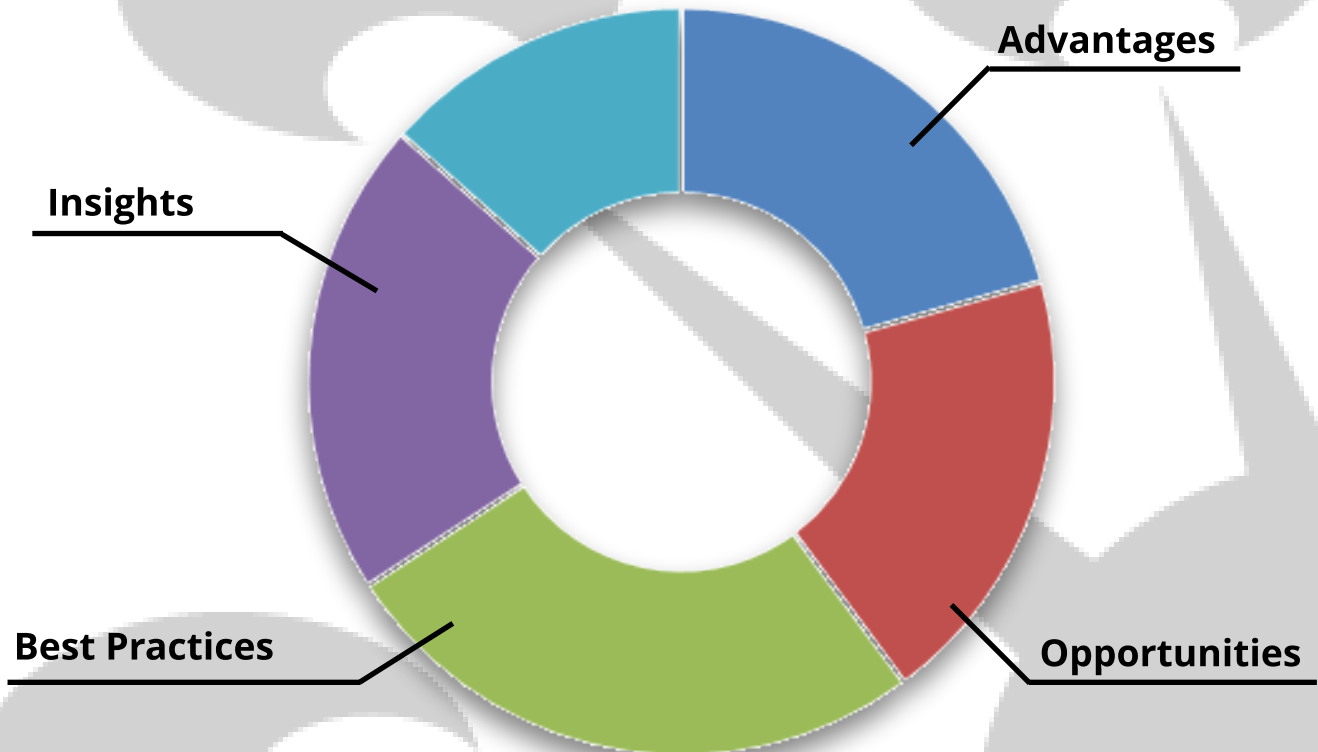


2017 Mind Mapping Software Trends Survey

Learn how your peers are using it and the benefits they're leveraging from it



by Chuck Frey

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The state of mind mapping software: 2017

Mind mapping software continues to serve as a potent Swiss Army Knife that helps business executives brainstorm, capture research, formulate and refine business plans, making decisions and succeed in today's fast-paced but uncertain business environment. That message comes through loud and clear in the data from this year's Mind Mapping Software Trend Survey.

Survey objectives

- Shed light on the ways in which business executives utilize mind mapping software to enhance their work.
- Help people who are thinking of investing in it to clearly understand what it makes possible.
- Help you understand how your peers are using it and the benefits they're experiencing as a result.

Research highlights

- ▶ **Productivity increase from mind mapping:** On average, mind mapping software helps busy executives to be 20-30% more productive in their work. That has held consistent through three surveys over a period of 8 years. It is now widely quoted by developers of mind mapping software.
- ▶ **Creativity increase from mind mapping software:** The largest percentage of respondents said it increases their creativity by 30%. A related question asked about divergent thinking; almost half of you (46.5%) said that your mind mapping software helps you "to a large" extent to think divergently.
- ▶ **Major time savings for mind mapping experts:** Expert users of mind mapping software say it saves them an average of 7 hours per week - the equivalent of almost a full day of work.
- ▶ **Presenting your ideas:** Over 78% of you said your mind mapping software helps you present your ideas with impact to a moderate, significant or essential extent.

- ▶ **Advanced and expert users get the biggest payoff:** Survey responses clearly show that expert users of mind mapping software are able to leverage the biggest benefits from it. Training to achieve mastery in the use of mind mapping software DOES pay off! For example, expert users reported 50% increases in productivity and creativity, a 37% increase in the belief that it gives them a competitive edge and 51% say it has revolutionized the way in which they work. In addition, 41% said mind mapping software helps them make innovative connections between the topics of their mind maps, and 92% said it supports their needs for thinking and planning to a huge or large extent.

Wishing you all the best in 2018,

Chuck Frey

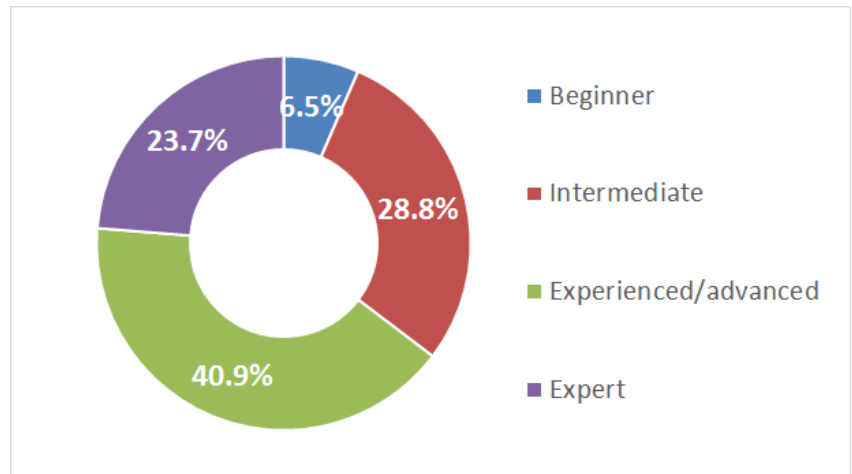
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What is your level of experience with mind mapping software?

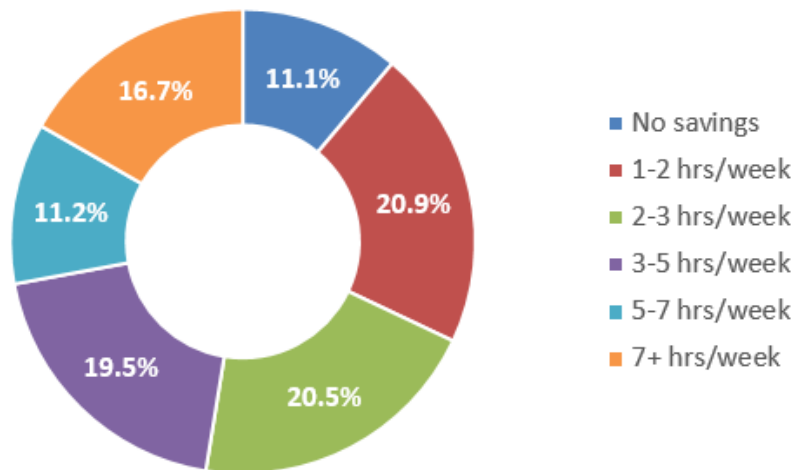
The majority of respondents (64%) reported that they were either intermediate or experienced/advanced users of mind mapping software. Only 6.5% identified themselves as beginners, while nearly 24% said they were expert users, a 6% increase from 2015.



Approximately how much time per week does your mind mapping software save you?

Overall survey results revealed that the majority of users of mind mapping software (41%) are saving an average of 1 to 3 hours a week by using it.

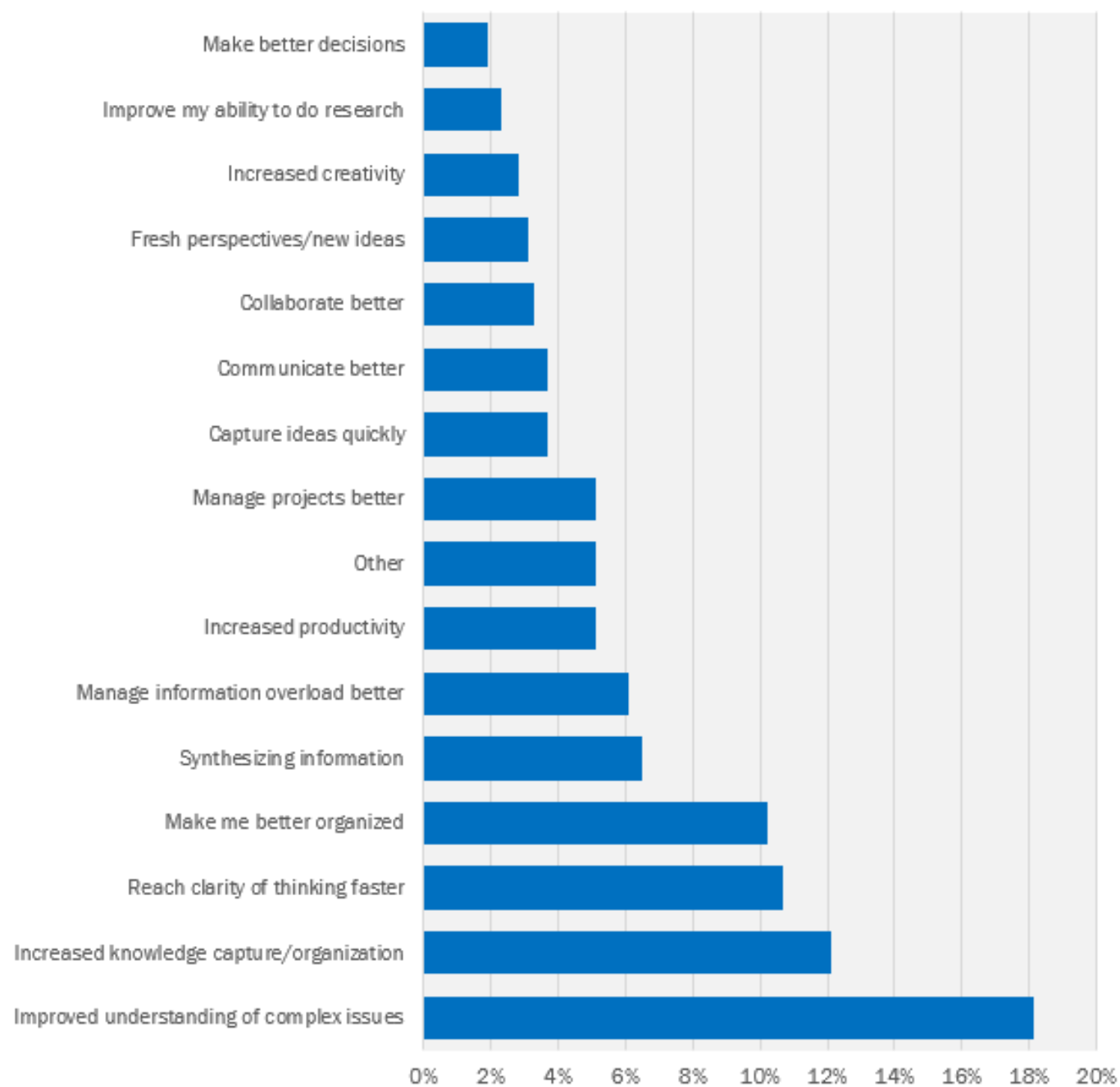
Filtering the survey by level of experience revealed some interesting insights:



- ▶ 50% of beginners still saved an average of 1 to 2 hours per week.
- ▶ Experienced/advanced users saved an average savings of 3-5 hours per week.
- ▶ 47% of expert users, not surprisingly, reported the biggest gains in time saved: over 7 hours per week - the equivalent of a full work day per week.

These results clearly show that expanding your skills with mind mapping software effectively can have a major payoff in your productivity and efficiency.

What is the single biggest benefit you’ve experienced from using mind mapping software?



This question gets to the heart of the value of mind mapping software. It explains why its users tend to be so prodigiously productive and effective. As you can see from the bar chart, mind mapping software is used today in a myriad of business applications. The top five, according to respondents, are:

1. Improved understanding of complex issues (18.1%)
2. Increased knowledge capture/organization (12.1%)
3. Reach clarity of thinking faster (10.7%)
4. Make me better organized (10.2%)
5. Synthesizing information (6.5%)

Considering the pace and complexity of work today, it's easy to see how mind mapping software has become an essential tool for business users of it. The top benefits cited by survey respondents have one thing in common:

They are focused on higher-level thinking tasks that require a tool that can help them to capture, organize, distill and communicate their thoughts efficiently.

In what business applications do you currently use mind mapping software?

The responses to this question read like a laundry list of key tasks that busy executives must manage effectively today. The top 10 responses, in declining order of importance, are:

1. Project management (53.5%)
2. Knowledge management (52.1%)
3. To-do list (50.2%)
4. Take meeting notes (46.1%)
5. Give presentations (45.1%)
6. Writing reports/outlining content (44.2%)
7. Personal development (43.7%)
8. Creative problem solving (43.3%)
9. Strategic planning (40.5%)
10. Capture ideas from a group brainstorming meeting (36.7%)

Once again, these are applications that speak to mind mapping software's value as a tool for gathering information, organizing and distilling it, and sharing it with others.

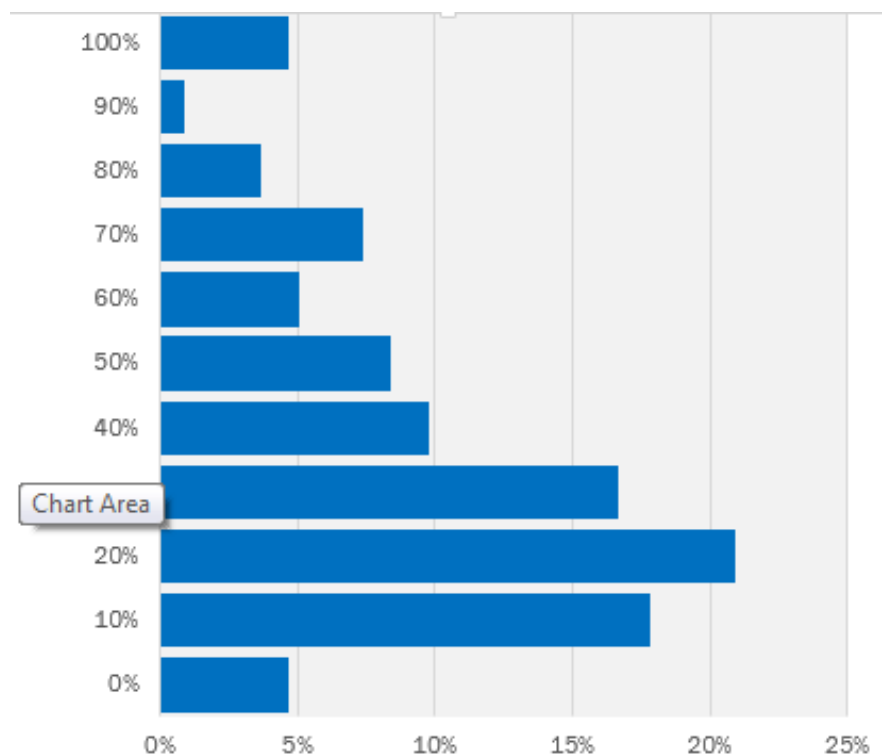
If you are considering investing in mind mapping software, this data is invaluable to make the case for it. If you are already using it, the responses to this question

should reveal additional ways in which you may be able to benefit from it.

How much of a productivity increase have you experienced from using mind mapping software?

Results from the last 3 surveys revealed that users of it average a 20-30% productivity increase. Respondents continue to estimate similar increases in this year's survey, with 20.9% of respondents saying it increases their productivity by 20% and 16.7% reporting a 30% increase. Drilling down deeper by level of experience revealed some valuable insights:

- ▶ Beginners reported an average 10% increase in productivity.
- ▶ Experienced/advanced users averaged a 30% increase.
- ▶ Expert users, not surprisingly, experienced the greatest productivity increase: 50% - a 15% increase compared to the 2015 survey.



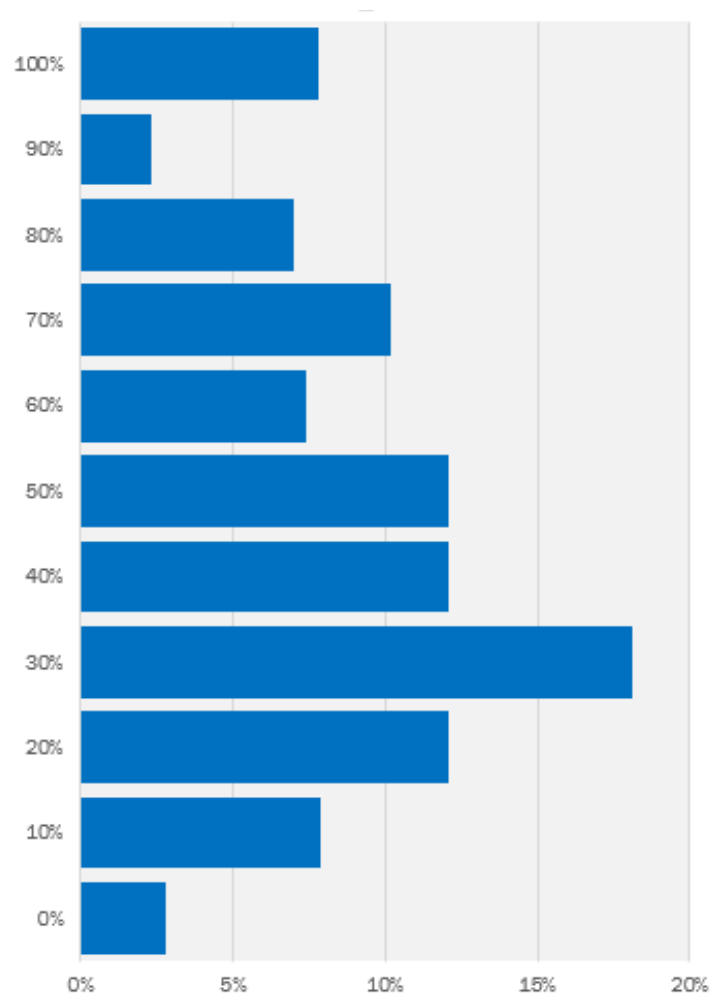
Keep in mind that a 20% increase in productivity is the equivalent of gaining another days' worth of time per week!

How much of a creativity increase have you experienced from using mind mapping software?

Because creativity is so important to knowledge workers in general and users of mind mapping software specifically, I wanted to quantify just how much better it makes them at generating and cultivating ideas.

Overall, the largest group of respondents (20%) reported a 30% increase in creativity. Surprisingly, beginners believe they get a 50% increase from it, perhaps because they are still in the honeymoon stage of utilizing their new visual thinking tool. Expert users also reported their creativity increased by 50% by using mind mapping software.

Surprisingly, intermediate and experienced/advanced users together only experienced a 30% increase. Why? My theory is that they're busy using their software for more practical applications like research, planning and project management. Perhaps at this stage in their maturity they don't see an immediate benefit from using their mind mapping software for creative tasks.



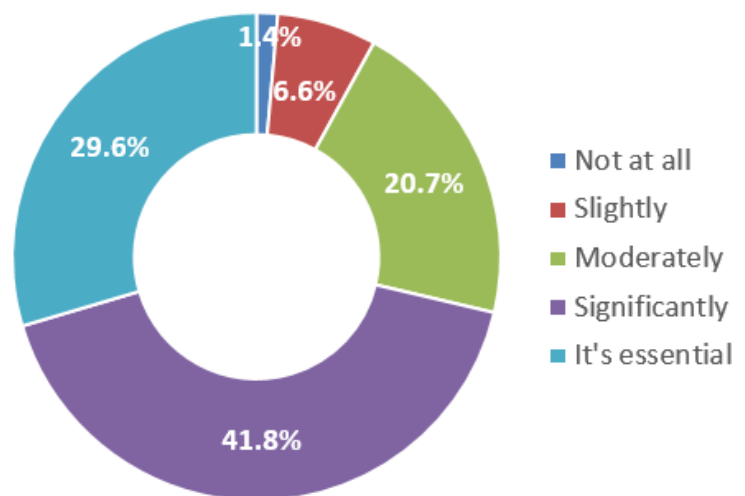
Regardless of their experience level, creativity is a big reason why businesspeople use this type of visual thinking tool in their work.

To what extent does your mind mapping software help you to...

For this year's survey, I wanted to learn more about the specific benefits of mind mapping software that you have ranked high in past surveys. Here's what you had to say:

...distill information and reach clarity faster?

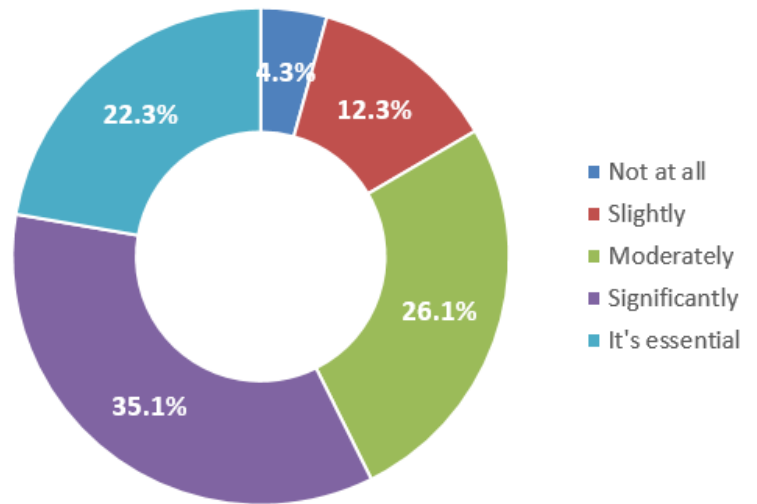
Clearly, this is a key benefit of mind mapping software. Over



71% of you said it's essential or helps you "significantly" in this area.

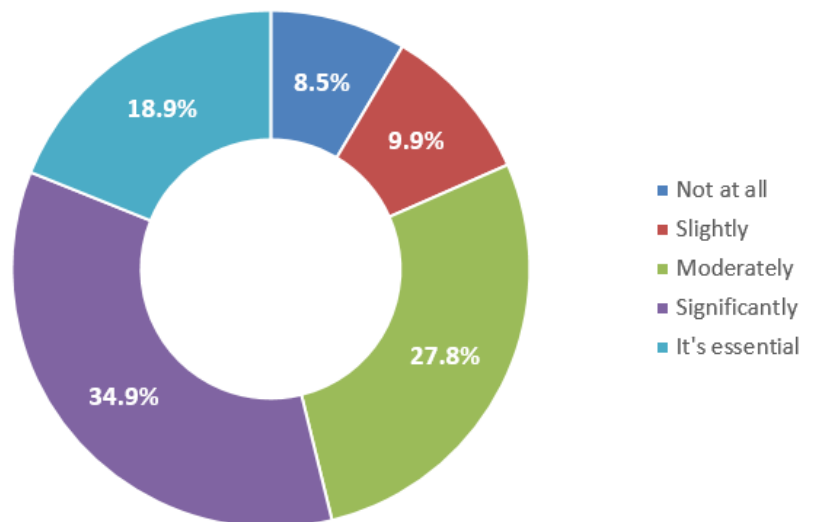
...SHARE YOUR IDEAS with greater clarity and impact?

Almost 60% of you agreed that mind mapping software is either essential or helps you significantly in this area. The mind map format IS eye-catching. That makes it a powerful tool for presenting ideas directly, or for doing screen captures of your mind map for inclusion in reports and presentations.



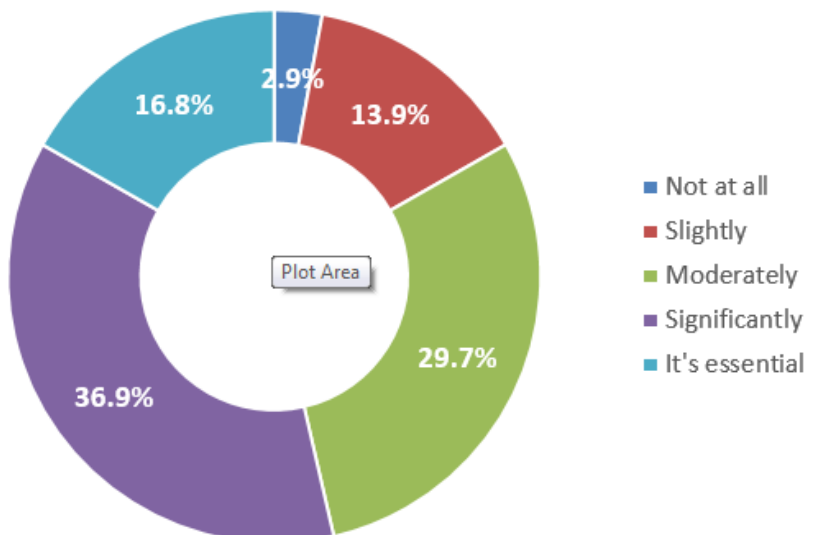
...MANAGE PROJECTS more efficiently?

Another big win for mind mapping software: Almost 63% of you said it's essential or helps you "significantly" to manage your projects. Another one-fourth of you (27.8%) see only "moderate" benefit from using it in this role, but don't seem to be strongly committed to it.



...Improve your DECISION-MAKING?

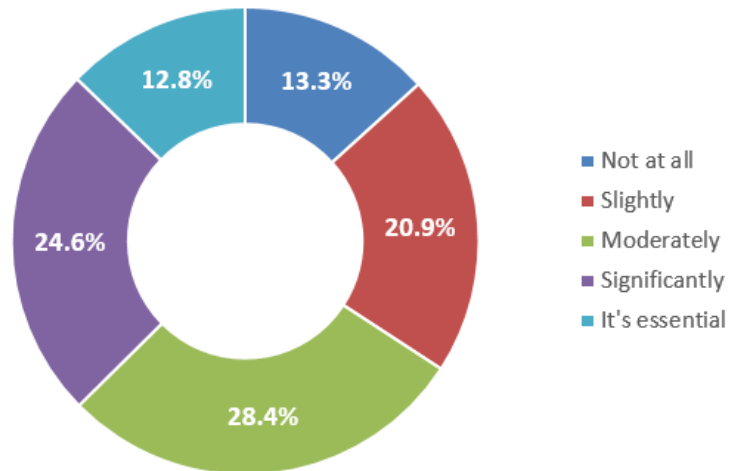
By enabling you to create a flexible visual canvas of pros, cons and other information, you can use mind mapping software to make better informed decisions. That's definitely



reflected in this data!

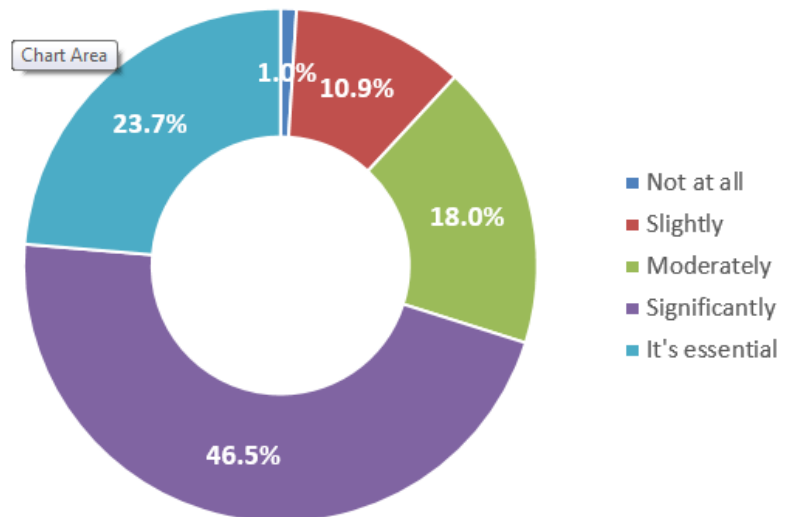
...COLLABORATE more effectively with others?

The largest segment of respondents, nearly 29%, believe mind mapping software is only moderately effective at improving collaboration. Fewer still, only 13%, believe it's an essential tool in this common application.



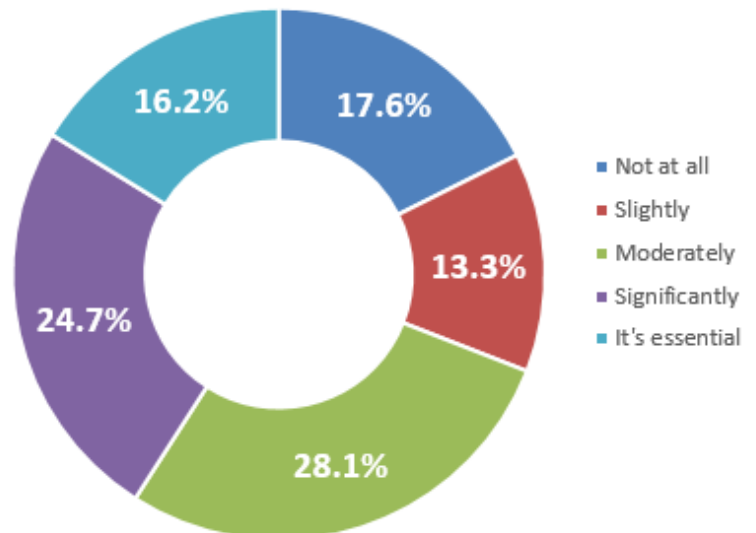
...Generate and capture IDEAS more efficiently?

A full 70% of respondents believe mind mapping software is "essential" or helps them "significantly" do an effective job of generating and capturing ideas. This is consistent with the response to an earlier question in the survey, which asked the percentage to which it helps them be more creative.



...Give you a COMPETITIVE EDGE in your career?

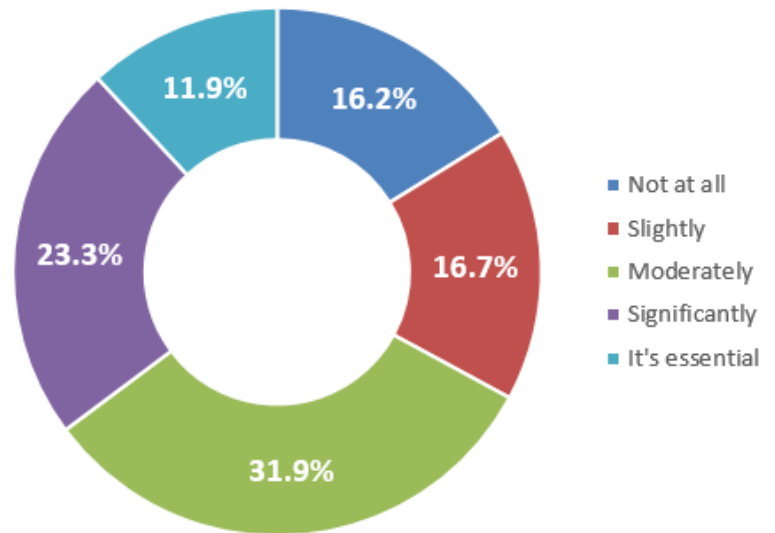
Just over 50% of respondents said that mind mapping software helps them "moderately" or "significantly" by giving them a competitive edge at work. Only 16% say it's essential. But if we filter the survey results to focus on expert users, that number more than doubles to 37.3%. If you're an expert mind mapper, then



you're strongly inclined to believe that it gives you a competitive advantage!

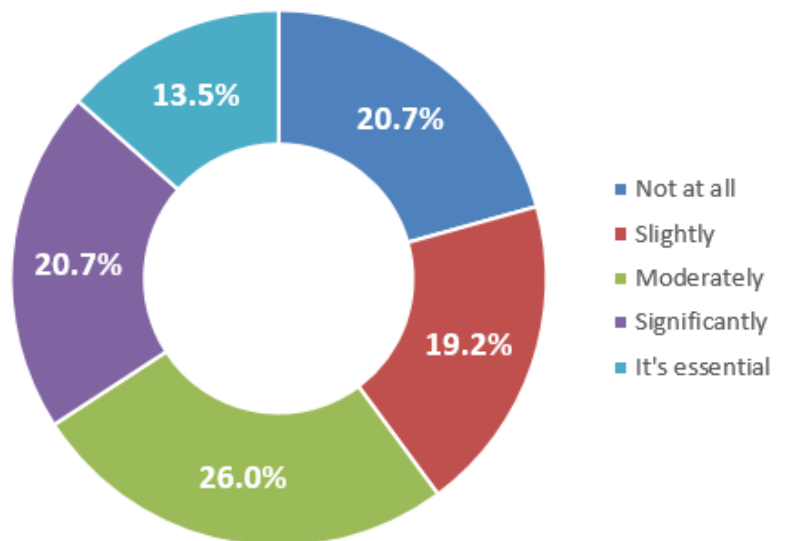
...Identify the ROOT CAUSES of business problems?

I thought the majority of mind mappers who answered this question would rate mind mapping very high for root cause analysis. But the results were lukewarm. 32% said it's moderately useful in this application; only 12% found it to be essential. This may indicate that many respondents don't do root cause analysis as part of their work - or they don't see mind mapping software as an effective tool for root cause analysis.



...DIFFERENTIATE YOU in the minds of your boss and senior-level executives?

I've always considered mind mapping software as a tool that differentiates me to my boss and senior-level executives - part of my "secret sauce" that enables me to think divergently, look at challenges from multiple perspectives and to plan effectively. But apparently you disagreed:

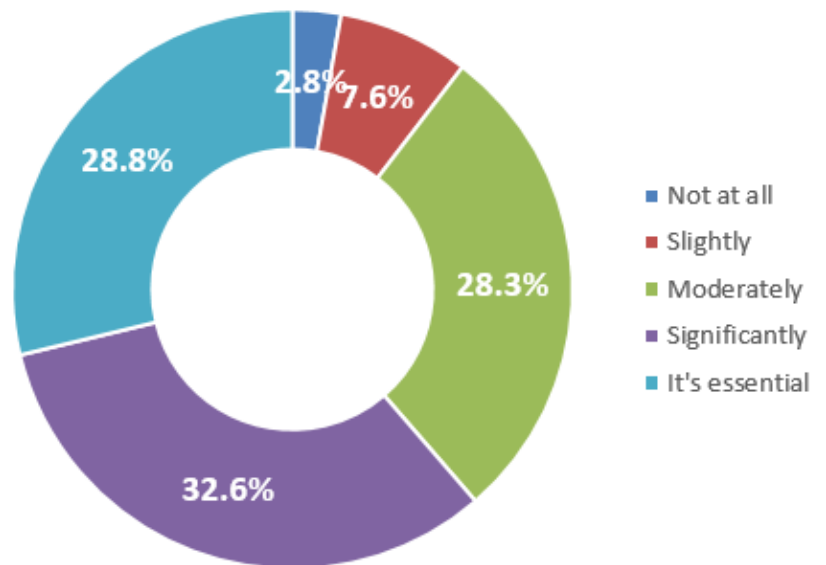


A full 21% of you said it doesn't help at all. Another one out of five (19.2%) said it only helped "slightly" and 26% said it "moderately" differentiated them. Only 13% said it's "essential." This number only increased to 26% for expert users. As you would expect, no beginners think mind mapping software is an "essential" differentiator for them, and only 7% thought it helped them "significantly."

Why? Perhaps because many bosses and senior-level execs don't "get" mind mapping software. Some of them may even consider it to be a frivolous tool. So their direct reports, the respondents to this survey, don't push its use as a business tool.

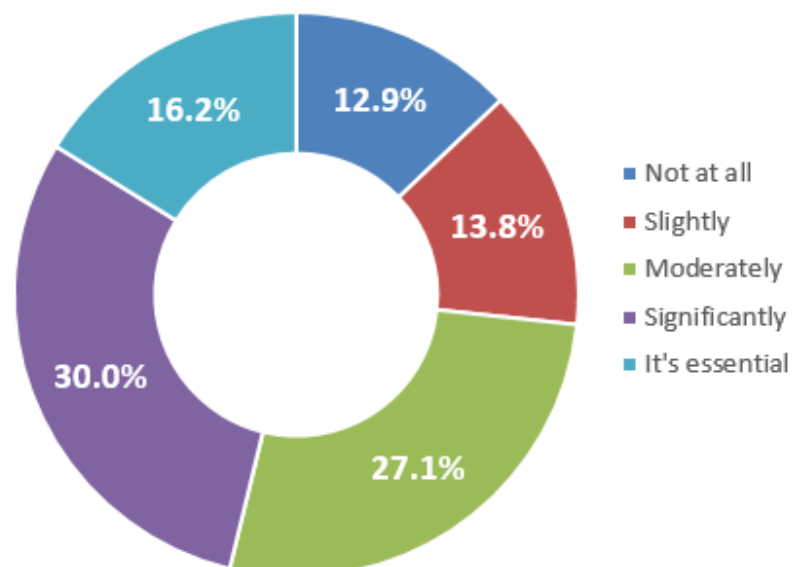
...Help you to think more CREATIVELY?

As you would expect, respondents gave their mind mapping software high marks for helping them be more creative. 29% said it's "essential," and another one-third (33%) said it's a "significant" creativity booster. Only 10% believe it has little or no value in this role.



...Help you create high-quality PLANS and REPORTS?

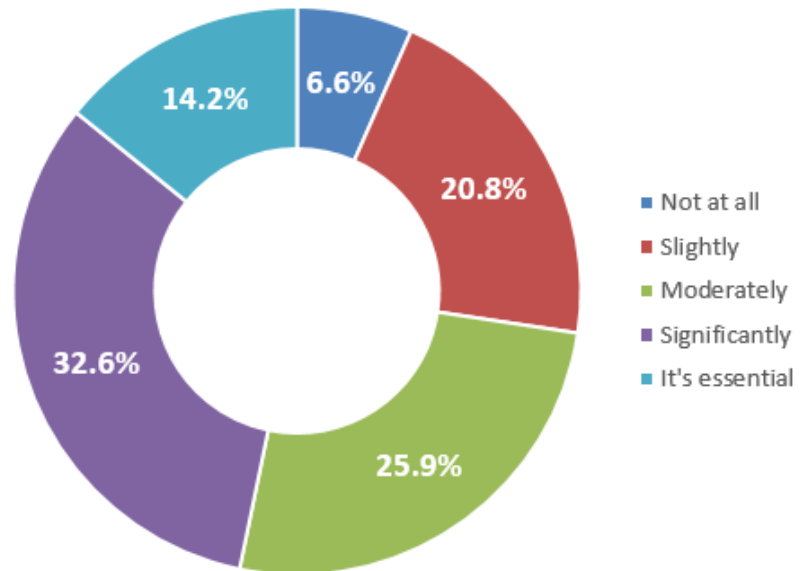
Over 57% of you said that your mind mapping software helps you "moderately" or "significantly" to create high-quality plans and reports. Surprisingly, 13% of you said it doesn't help at all! Almost one-third of expert mind mappers characterized their mind mapping software as "essential" to their plan and report writing projects.



...Help you see OPPORTUNITIES that weren't visible before?

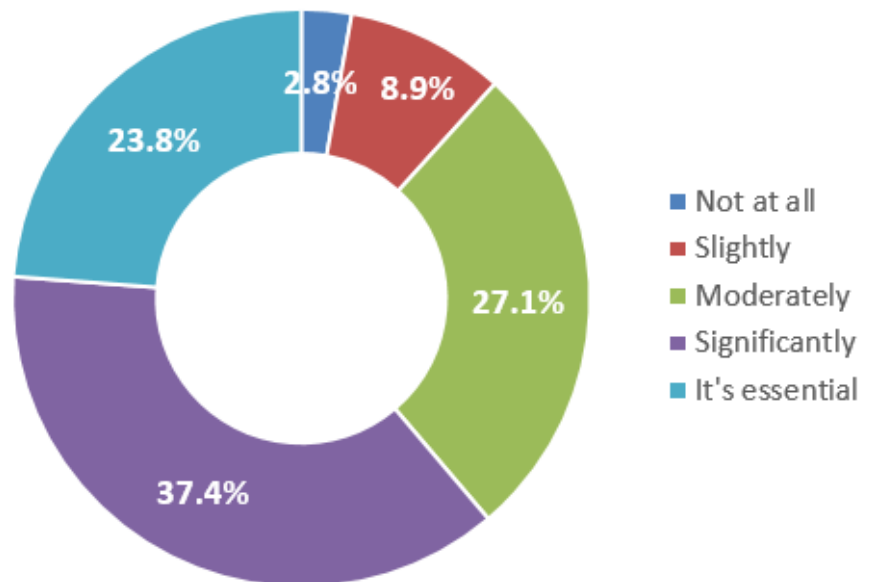
This is another biggie, in my opinion. The fact that you can arrange and rearrange map topics at will enables you to experiment with different arrangements of

information - which can help you see connections and opportunities that weren't visible to you before. Only 14% of you rated your mind mapping software as "essential" in this role. But nearly two-thirds of you (58%) found it to be "moderately" or "significantly" useful in this role.



...Make innovative CONNECTIONS between pieces of information?

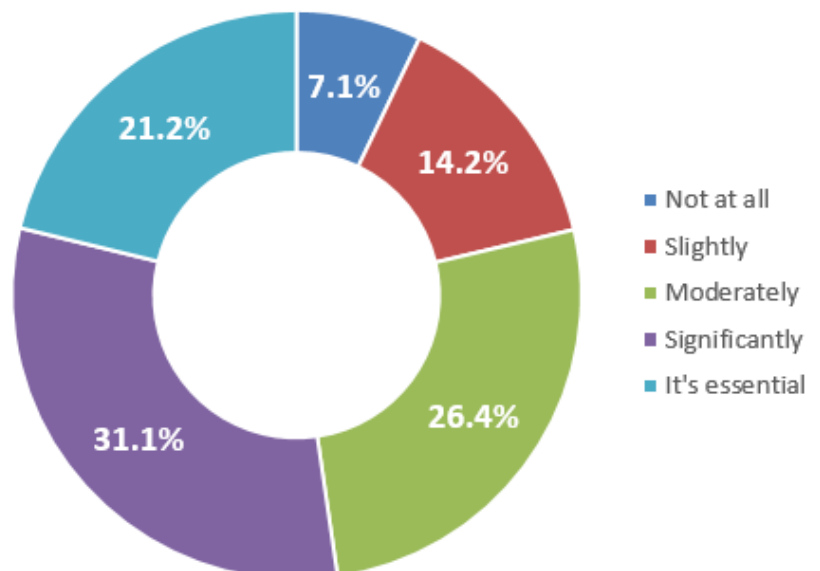
65% of you said your mind mapping software helps you "moderately" or "significantly" to make connections between pieces of information. Only 11% said it only helped you "slightly" or "not at all."



What do our expert mind mapping software users have to say? Compared to all respondents, of whom only 14% said it's essential in helping them make these connections, that number leaps to 41% for expert users.

...Help you PRESENT your ideas with impact?

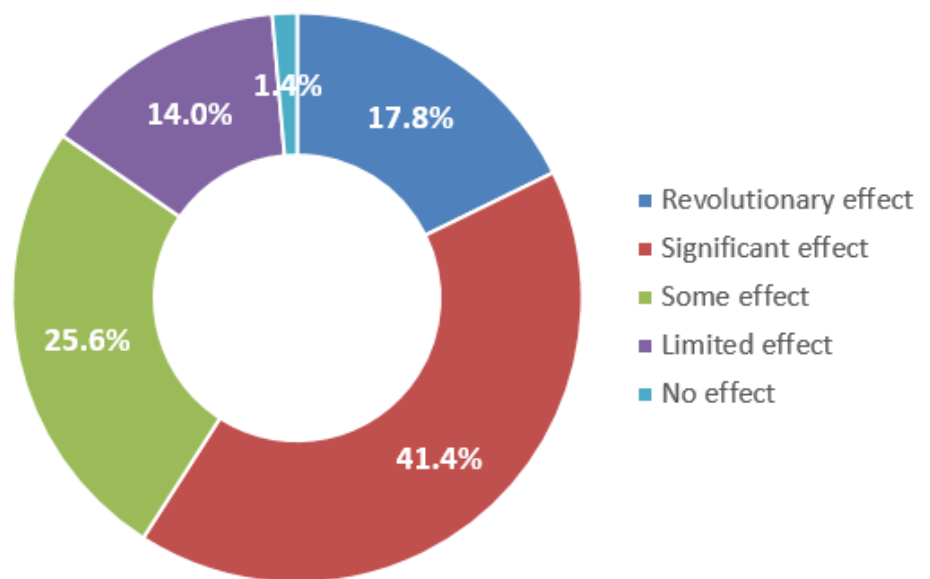
The answers to this question are truly impressive: Over 77%



of you said your mind mapping software helps you present your ideas with impact to a moderate, significant and essential extent. Of this section of the survey, this is by far the strongest set of opinions. Of the expert users, 40% call it essential, and another 34% call it a "significant" help. Remember, this includes not only using the presentation mode of mind mapping software to present your ideas, but also incorporating mind maps into your reports and PowerPoint or Keynote slides.

To what extent has mind mapping software changed the overall way in which you work?

This is intended as a bigger picture question. You're using it as a tool to get work done more efficiently, productivity and creatively. But how much is the tool impacting the way in which you work? To a BIG extent, according to the respondents of this year's survey:



18% of you said it's had a "revolutionary effect," while another 41% characterized its impact as "significant." As you would expect, over half of the expert users who responded (51%) said its effect on their work has been "revolutionary."

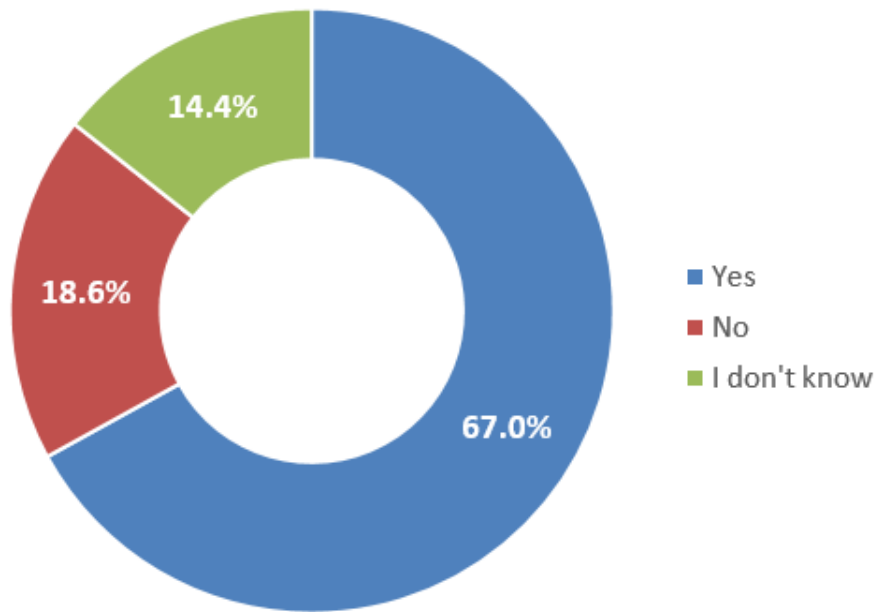
The lesson is clear: The more you know about using the advanced capabilities of your mind mapping software, the bigger the impact it's likely to have on your work.

Does your mind mapping software enable you to tackle more complex tasks and projects that you would have previously avoided?

I started to ask this question in the 2011 survey, because I was convinced that a really excellent tool changes the way you look at projects. If it's capable, flexible and

powerful, I theorized, you would be more likely to dive into complex or ambiguous projects. Without that tool, you would step back from such a challenge.

The last two surveys have shown your experience to agree with my theory. In fact, the results have been remarkably consistent from the 2011, 2015 and 2017 surveys:

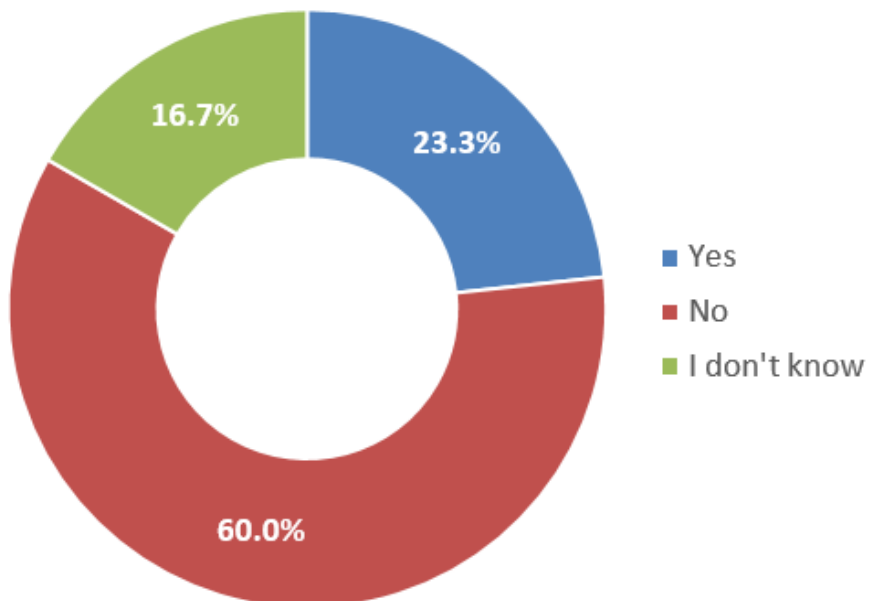


In 2011, 69% of you answered "yes," that it does make you more likely to forge ahead with a tough project. In 2015, that percentage dropped to 66%, and in 2017, it has rebounded to 67%.

Work today is more challenging than ever. The easy problems have been solved. The ones that are left are "big hairy problems" that require greater thought, insight and analysis. It's easy to see that you believe very strongly that mind mapping software is up to the task!

If you didn't have mind mapping software, would you be able to produce the same quality of work?

In a sense, this question is the polar opposite of the previous one. Where the last question asked "what if" about facing down and tackling an especially



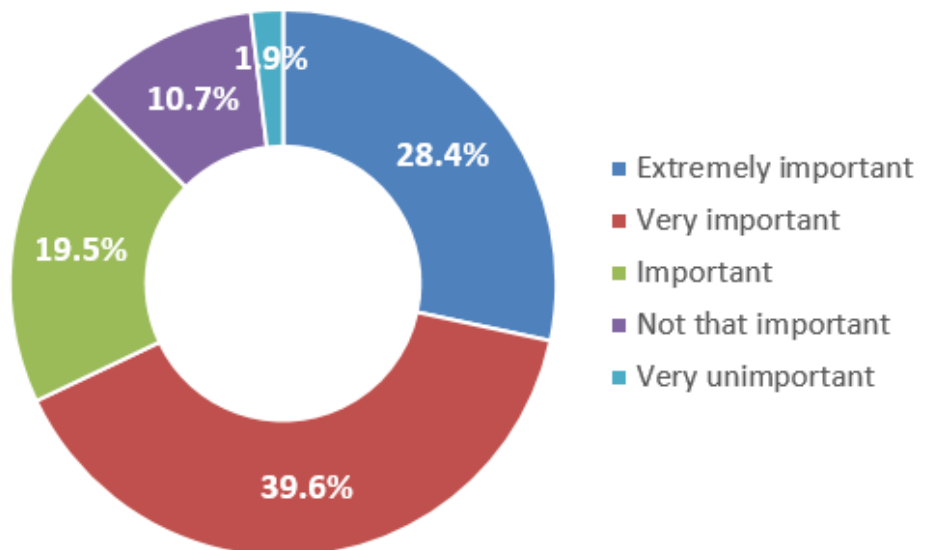
challenging project, this one takes a much different tack - what if one day, you DIDN'T have a tool like mind mapping software? How would that affect your ability to bring your A-game and do your best work?

Almost two-thirds of you (60%) said you could NOT produce the same quality of work as you can with mind mapping software. It's an integral part of your work! Expert users felt even more strongly, with 73% saying they couldn't produce the same level of work.

Like the last question, this one reinforces the idea that an excellent tool, used well, becomes intertwined with its user. The two of you become, in a sense, inseparable - at least in the sense that it extends your ability to think and create.

How important is DIVERGENT THINKING to your work?

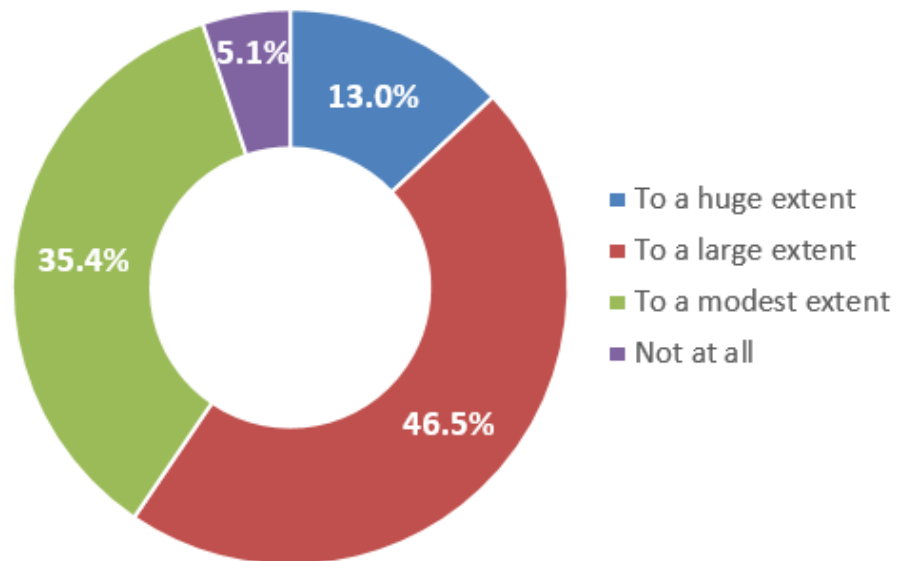
As I've told you throughout this report, one of my goals was to dig deeper, beyond generalities to specifics. In the area of creativity, that drill-down takes the form of divergent thinking - the ability to brainstorm a wide variety of creative ideas that are outside of the norm.



In past surveys, you've indicated that creativity is very important in your work. This survey confirmed that divergent thinking, a step beyond being generally creative, is also important - 68% of you said it's extremely or very important to you. Now let's see how mind mapping software enables you to be a divergent thinker, shall we?

To what extent does mind mapping software help you think DIVERGENTLY?

Almost half of you (46.5%) said that your mind mapping software helps you "to a large" extent to think divergently. Another third (35.4%) said it only helped to a modest extent. This suggests that although the need for divergent thinking is quite large, a significant percentage of users of mind mapping software believe it doesn't support this type of thinking as strongly as it should.

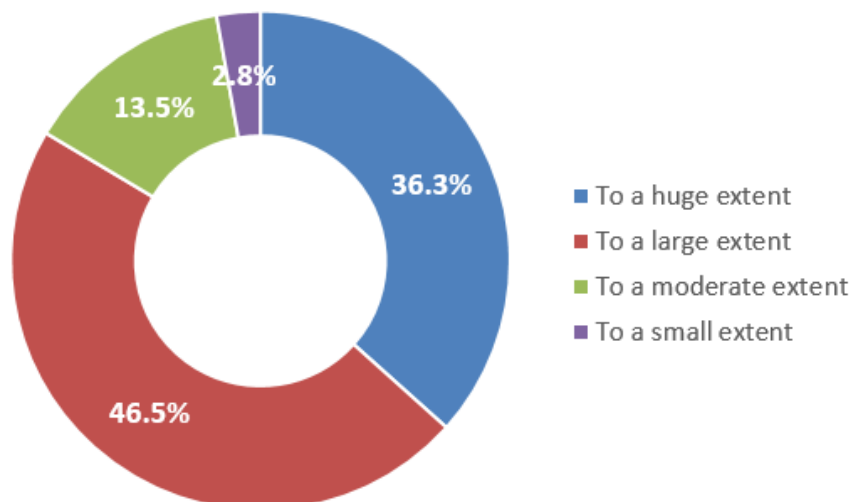


Almost one-third of expert users (29.4%) say their software helps them to a "huge" extent. Why the dichotomy? It would appear that the ability to think divergently is linked to a deeper knowledge and comfort level with the software's more advanced features. Or perhaps expert users are just more tuned in and turned on to the idea of being über-creative with their mind mapping software.

To what extent does your job involve THINKING and PLANNING?

Again, the goal is to go deep into this common use of mind mapping software. First, is there a need? And secondly, how well does mind mapping software fill it?

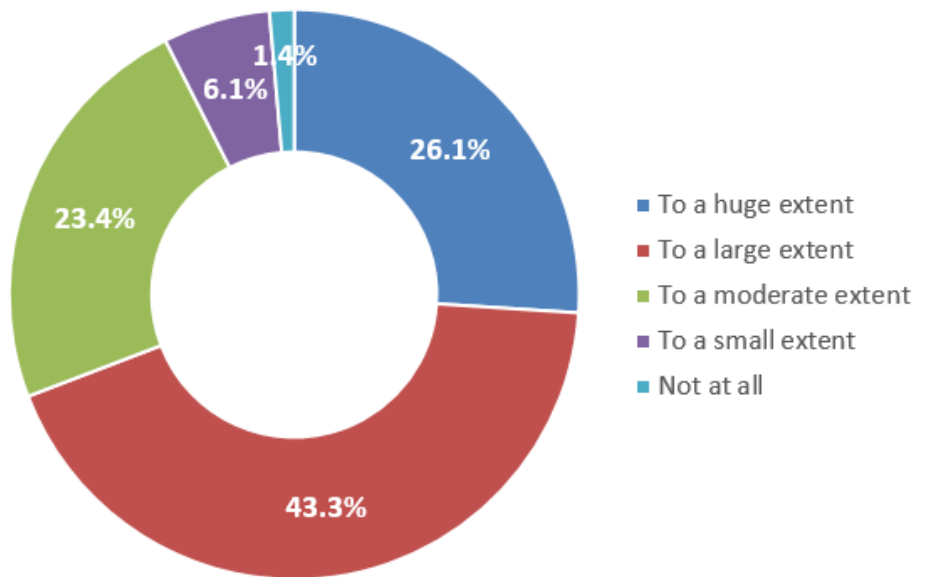
As you can see, thinking and planning is REALLY important to the users of mind mapping



software: 83% of respondents said their job does involve these important functions to a huge or large extent. Less than 1% said it's not important at all.

To what extent does mind mapping software help you do a more thorough job of THINKING and PLANNING?

69% of survey respondents agreed that mind mapping software enabled them to do effective thinking and planning to a huge or large extent. That's a 13% drop between the need and the tool. Thinking and planning is definitely within the sweet spot of mind mapping software's capabilities, in my opinion.



How did our expert mind mapping software users rate their favorite visual thinking software? 92% said it supports their needs for thinking and planning to a huge or large extent. Their answers were more clustered toward the high end of the rating scale: Only 6% of mind mapping experts said their software helped them to a moderate extent, and only 2% to a small extent.

Conversely, beginner mind mappers saw much less utility for thinking and planning. 70% said it was helpful to a large or moderate extent. No beginners rated its utility in the "huge extent" category.

Thanks so much for helping to make this 2017 Mind Mapping Software Trends Report another eye-opening experience!

I wish you much success in 2018 with mind mapping software!

Best Regards,

Chuck Frey
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Questions?

If you have any questions about this report, please contact Chuck at chuck@chuckfrey.com.

About the author

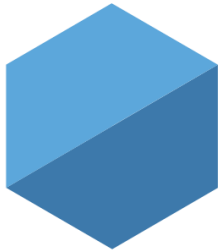
Chuck Frey is the author of The Mind Mapping Software Blog. He has written numerous articles and reviews about mind mapping software, and is widely regarded as one of the world's leading authorities on mind mapping and visual thinking. Chuck has also authored two popular e-books focused on mind mapping software:

- ▶ Power Tips & Strategies for Mind Mapping Software is a collection of tips and best practices for current users of mind mapping software
- ▶ The Mind Mapping Manifesto was written to help executives who have not invested in mind mapping software to understand its applications and benefits, and the amazing productivity increases that it offers.

For more great information, trends, reviews and thought-provoking insights into all aspects of visual thinking, [please sign up for my free e-newsletter today!](#)



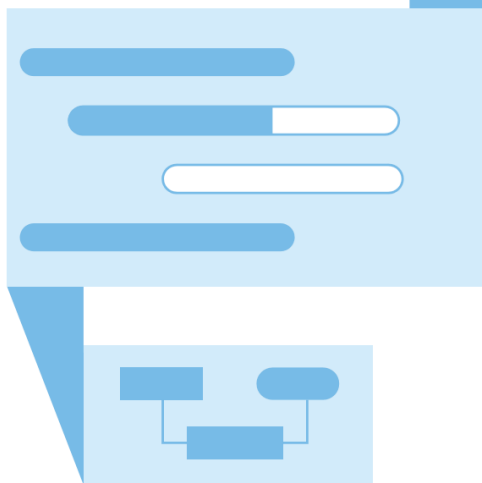
ConceptDraw.com



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PROJECT 8

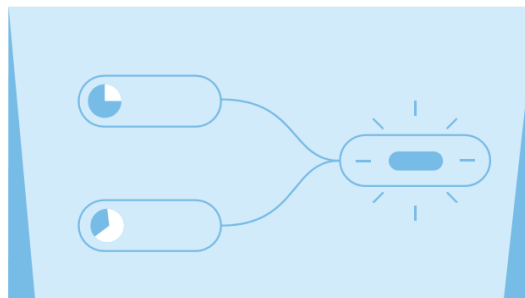
- is a desktop application that gives project managers the tools they need to manage projects of any scope
- is designed to provide power and flexibility that make resources balance across multiple ongoing projects easily. The unique multi-project capability in ConceptDraw PROJECT makes it a great tool for any project manager
- is compatible with Microsoft Project documents



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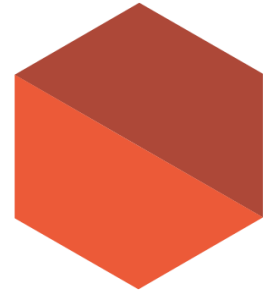
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MINDMAP 9

- assists project managers at project formation and during a project's execution
- takes input from work sessions, lists, and project processes to quickly launch projects
- assists collaboration, gathering of requirements, and gaining group consensus, content from your mind map moves over to ConceptDraw PROJECT instantly



ConceptDraw Office is comprised of the ConceptDraw desktop products providing savings over purchasing the ConceptDraw products individually.



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PRO 11

- is a business diagramming and graphics tool that is compatible with Microsoft Visio
- can be used to automatically generate project dashboards, build diagrams, and create visual content that is so important to communicate effectively with individuals and teams

