# The Map
## To Online Marketing

A TOOL TO LEARN, PLAN AND OPTIMIZE YOUR ONLINE BUSINESS

By Paul Myers

# Please Read This Section

## (The lawyers made us do it)

We make no claims of specific results you may or may not expect from the use of this product. As it was created for people with experience and resource levels that range all over the map (if you'll pardon the pun), we can't. The value of the product to you is 100% dependent on things we don't know and can't predict.

While the software (Freemind) used to create and edit the product is open source, and believed by the author to be both secure and stable, we make no guarantees of any kind regarding its reliability or safety.

Use this product at your own risk.

Some links in The Map, and associated files, may be affiliate links or lead to our own products. In some cases, this may result in us making a few bucks if you buy the products. This doesn't make them any more expensive for you, but we figured you should know about that anyway.

Obviously, there is no legal or other regulated professional advice given within the product.

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# Getting Started

This mindmap is a tool that can be used by anyone, at any level of experience in online marketing. It will be helpful whether you're at the "I have no clue what I'm doing" stage, have an existing successful virtual business, or anywhere in between.

Before you can get started, you'll need to install Freemind, the software used to create this map. The most recent Windows version is included with this download.

You can get the version for Mac OSX at:
http://prdownloads.sourceforge.net/freemind/Mac_OS_X_Freemind-0_8_1.dmg?download

And for Linux, go to: http://linux.softpedia.com/get/Utilities/FreeMind-10094.shtml

I chose Freemind for this product for a few reasons. First, it's free, which means you don't have to go out and buy extra stuff to use the thing. It's got more than enough features for what we're going to do.

It's also available for the Mac and Linux, so we're not excluding many people from the project. (Yes, it's a project. I'll explain that later.)

The only other requirement is that you have Java installed. That should already be the case, so the overwhelming majority of you won't need to do anything but install the Freemind software and get started.

Once you've installed it, open WorkingCopy.mm and we'll be on our way..

# Layout of the sections

The map is laid out with four separate sections, all radiating from the central "node," which is labelled "Point Zero." That node represents where you are right now.

## The Left Side

The list of topics under Inventory, at the upper left side, are there so you can assess where you are right now, and what you've got to work with moving ahead. There are no categories or suggestions listed other than the main topics: Goals, Skills, Interests, and Resources.

I highly recommend reading the Goal-Getting System that comes with this product (in the special bonuses directory) to figure out how best to list out everything you've got available to you as you get started in the process. You may want to take an evening or two to go through this process. Whether you think you have a lot or only a little, you probably have much more available to you than you realize.

### Included Reports

This section, on the lower left, lists the reports in the special bonuses directory of the product. These are books and reports I give away to subscribers of TalkBiz News, my email newsletter for folks who want to run an online business or add a virtual component to their offline business.

We've already mentioned the **Goal-Getting Guide.**

**"Need to Know"** is 112 pages of the kind of information that most products leave out. It's not secret, by any means. The problem is that most people who achieve any level of success treat this stuff as assumed. That means most of their customers never hear it.

I recommend reading the entire book, but the most important part, for purposes of using The Map, is Chapter 2, titled "The 7 Things You Must Include in Everything You do Online."

The division of those things has been changed a bit in this mindmap. The original seven were Sales, Subscribers, Product, Active affiliates, Network, Traffic, and Links.

After thinking about it, I've realized that, while this was a useful division for explaining the concepts, it wasn't quite right. I've changed it to 6 things: Product, Links, Audience, Network, Traffic and Sales.

PLANTS.

Active affiliates should be considered part of your network, and are now included in that section of The Map. Putting subscribers into a separate section tends to create a limiting view of one's audience. So, they've been folded into a larger factor called, unsurprisingly, Audience.

Beyond that, the concepts and instructions in Chapter 2 of "Need to Know" are all applicable, and very practical. Just keep those minor changes in mind when applying them to your efforts. Don't skip that chapter. It's an important part of the mindset that will help you get the most from working with this tool.

The remaining three reports have been included because they address problems that commonly affect people who are new to business of any kind, but especially those new to online enterprise.

**"Million Dollar Copy"** talks about the real function and thought process of selling through any medium. It's all about how you think about sales copy, and very little to do with how you actually write it.

**"Why Johnny Can't Sell"** was originally designed for folks who are afraid of selling, or who think there's something 'dirty' or unsavory about the business of convincing people to give you money for your goods or services.

**"The Voice Report"** is something different. It's my perspective on, and process for, developing your own written voice and style. If you've ever fumbled with your writing, wondering if it was 'right,' or questioning whether you ought to be doing it at all – read that. It's short. It will deliver the goods for you, if you just give yourself the chance.

There's a lot more to each of those reports than what I've described here. Invest the time in them. It's should pay you back in big ways.

You don't need any of those three to use this product, but they might just make a difference as you execute the plan you're about to create.

## The Right Side

The upper left side of the map is about laying out the past. What you've learned and acquired throughout your life to this stage. Everything that's brought you to Point Zero - this moment in time. You could sum it up as "What have I got already?"

The right side is the future you're going to create. It can look as much or as little like right now as you'd like it to. Think of this as the "What do I want next?" section.

The group of 8 branches on the right above the PLANTS Factors are things to consider while researching and planning your business. Let's go over some of them briefly.

# Business Models

This is, like any other such list, somewhat arbitrary in terms of the labeling. The key is to keep in mind what a business model is. For purposes of this discussion, that's simple: It's whatever you get paid for.

Where does the money come from? For example, you might publish content that's designed to attract visitors through organic search engine listings and email subscribers, but make your money through paid advertising. In that case, advertising is your business model. Content is a traffic strategy.

If you always remember your business model, you'll find it much easier to concentrate on the things that make you money, rather than getting distracted with the extraneous details.

Example: You may start out with a content-based model, and get to the point at which you're out of ideas (or drive) for new content. If your existing material is evergreen, you can move to other traffic sources. Or this could happen because you needed money to get started and used content to generate the seed capital and some ongoing revenue. Once you've got the cash to invest, you might want to scale up through the use of paid traffic sources. Change happens. If it moves you closer to your goals, it's a good thing.

Now, what are the 7 business models you might consider?

**Physical goods:** Pretty obvious. You sell stuff that needs to be shipped, or you use the web to bring people into your offline storefront.

**Publishing:** You sell information, music, video, etc. This can be works you create yourself, or things you buy the rights to or have created for you. The key is that you're selling information. This can be in digital format, physical format, or both.

Publishing is the only one of the groups we'll discuss that involves the sale of physical goods you deliver yourself that doesn't fall under the first category.

**Community:** Membership sites, social networking, dating sites, and anything else that involves bringing people together to communicate online based on specific interests. Note that *a project only fits this model if the members pay for access*. You can use communities to power other models, but you need to keep that in mind if you go that route.

Don't dismiss the ability of a free community to make you money through, for example, paid advertising. Just don't forget what your business model really is.

**Leads:** You generate traffic to a site at which people fill out a form asking for information, make a phone call, or otherwise contact a company (or give you permission to give their info to comapnies) about specific topics.

You are then paid on a per lead basis.

**Traffic:** This one is a bit harder for people with little online experience to grasp, because it encompasses a wide array of approaches.

The simplest and most familiar is affiliate marketing. This involves sending potential customers to a site at which they will be offered a product. If they buy after having arrived through your link, you get paid. The payment is usually a percentage of the sale, although it can be a flat fee per subscriber or visitor.

Another example is the site that builds a large audience, and then uses ads on its pages to direct traffic to another site on a performance basis. This is different from the advertising model, in that it's based on results achieved rather than viewings of the ad. For a very targeted site (or even single page) the traffic model can often be more profitable than a paid advertising model.

Yet another is the variable link technique. In this model, you use generic links in posted content to send people to a redirect link. You then point the link to whichever related offer you're promoting at the moment.

An example might be an article about converting vinyl records to MP3s. Or laptops with particluarly long-life batteries. Or any other product for which there are many viable and effective offers on the market.

You'd develop the traffic through relevant links and search engine optimization, regular readership of a blog, or participation in a community. The target links would remain the same, but the destination site could be changed to fit the highest-paying offer currently available to you.

Contextual ad networks like Google's AdSense program are also traffic plays. Any system in which you get paid per click will fit into this category.

**Advertising space:** This one is easy to grasp. You get paid for putting someone else's ad on your site. This can be a text ad, a banner, a link to another site, or any other form of advertising.

The key here is that you get paid for the ad placement, regardless of results. It can be based on specified periods of exposure or a cost per thousand views (CPM).

**Services:** This one is also pretty clear. You get paid for doing something for someone else. Consulting, web development, programming, graphic design, customer service, data entry... whatever you might offer to do for others.

## Mix and Match

In most cases, you're going to have a fairly clear business model. It is possible, however, to blend parts of several models into a single business. For example, speakers often offer their own products as a side income stream, or to work toward getting out of the speaking game.

What's important is to understand how to make the most effective use of whatever your inventory is.

Community sites can offer free and paid options, and employ paid advertising and traffic-based sub-models. For example, I have a friend who runs a very popular community site in his niche, and offers paid memberships, space advertising, and occasional traffic plays. His success with this blend is largely due to having always put the group first, which developed a cadre of very loyal members who became the backbone that built the community.

He's been very careful to balance the various business models in a way that makes him money while not alienating the membership. In fact, the majority of the ad space is paid for by members.

The other section in the upper right are pretty straight forward. Some will require more learning than others, depending on your current experience. We'll go over those very briefly here.

**Resources:** This is where you'll list the things you need to get or develop in order to hit your personal business goals. You'll need to adjust this as your situation and short-term goals change.

**Choose a Market:** There are two primary steps here. Demand research and describing your perfect prospect. One of the most heart-breaking mistakes a lot of people make is to skip the first one. There's very little more frustrating than spending a big chunk of time, effort and energy in developing the perfect widget-whacker, only to discover that people don't want their widgets whacked.

Make sure you know where you're going to find these people, and how badly they want your product. If they won't pay for it, and it won't serve as a lead-in for something they will buy, don't waste time and energy developing it.

**Product Creation:** Lots of options to choose from, but pretty simple once you've made the choice.

**Site Development:** Same as product creation. Pick a model and go.

**Traffic Strategy:** This one is sort of deceptive. It looks like you're going for one or the other, but you always have to get those streams of first-time visitors. The real division in this model is whether those are your only focus, or if you put a lot of effort into turning them into repeat visitors.

A lot of your decisions in this area in the beginning will be made for you, by factors like experience and resources. If you're starting with little or no budget, that eliminates the paid strategies. It also makes the repeat visitor model a lot more appealing.

The answer to mixing them from the start is an affiliate program. Get an offer that brings in enough money per visitor, and you'll have no problem getting other people to drive the traffic for you.

**Conversion:** Translation: "How well does it work?"

Like traffic, this is an area you want to constantly improve. Get bigger percentages of your visitors to take whatever decision you're looking for at each step.

**Customer Engagement:** This is about your interactions after the first sale.  While you can run a large business with no back-end contact other than for refunds and customer support, that limits most models. The earlier you figure this into your structure, the sooner you'll be able to start scaling up.

# PLANTS Factors

If the first two sections are summed up as "What have I got already?" and "What do I want next?," the question for this one would be... "What do I do now?"

Each of the PLANTS factors is about creating something. This is the part of the process that generates results. If you read chapter 2 of "Need to Know," you've already got the general idea. To make things a bit clearer, let's go over each of the factors. Keep in mind that the order is a bit arbitrary, and was chosen to make the acronym easier to remember.

**Product:** This is everything you create that you could sell, or use to sell something. That includes actual commercial products, all your sales materials, and everything you use to get people into the sales process.

If you're in the teaching or consulting business, even your tracking data could be considered product. Keep this perspective in mind and you may find that you've got a lot more assets at your disposal than you knew.

**Links:** Whether on the web, in electronic books or videos, or in emails sent to interested parties, every link is an asset. They can increase name recognition, provide streams of traffic and, if they're on websites, help improve your search engine rankings.

**Audience:** This is defined simply as "The entire universe of people you can get to view your message with some degree of positive interest."

A lot of people get tripped up by that. They start to think about getting their message in front of as many people as they can, using whatever means they can. That's spammer thinking.

Focus on your perfect prospect. The person who already wants what you're offering, and who has the resources to pay what you're asking.

**Network:** These are the people who can help you get things done.

**Traffic:** This section is all about ways to get interested prospects to visit your site.

**Sales:** It's all about order buttons.

# Using The Map

The Map will serve different functions for you, depending on where you are on the learning curve. As you advance in experience, you'll find value in different sections. That's one reason we recommend that you always work with a backup copy of the map, and keep the original to make copies for new projects.

Now, how can you best use it at each stage?

**Learning**

When you're new to the game, the biggest problem is often in knowing where to start, and figuring out what you want to do. The next issue is coming up with a plan for getting from where you are to where you want to be.

The planning sections of The Map can help with that a great deal. They also mention specific areas you may want to learn about to fill out your plans and add to your business later. And the layout of the sections can point you to the right kinds of questions and searches to help you find useful answers more quickly.

If you open the entire Map, so that every node is visible, the thing can be scary. It looks like a mountain information waiting to be moved. Don't worry about that.

For one thing, no-one ever uses every possible technique, or incorporates every strategy. For another, you don't need to. It can be as simple as "Write a useful report that answers a need, write a sales letter, set up a way to get paid, and start getting traffic."

You can always add things to the process later.

If you have an existing offline business, it can be even simpler: Create a page telling people why they should buy from you, include your address and phone number, and get traffic.

Here's the first real lesson for you if you're new. There are exactly two things that are critical in this business: Traffic and conversions. How many interested prospects can you get to view your offer, and what percentage of them do what you're asking them to do?

As far as the mechanics of this business, everything else is detail.

**Planning**

This part is easy, once you get the hang of a few keyboard shortcuts and navigating the Map. You can start a new map, or just delete everything you don't want to do. Then assign priorities to the things that need to be done, and add any specifics that are missing. Move them around so they're in the right order, and go.

You can use the number icons to set the priorities, or simply type that in along with the name

of the node.

When you complete each task add an icon, using the selection from the left side of the Freemind screen, and move to the next part of the project.

To give you an idea of how easy this is, I recently decided to lay out a map for a fairly large and complex project I've been working on. Getting the whole thing done, with a sensible layout and complete set of steps to follow, took me less than 2 hours. In the process, I came up with some potentially huge improvements in the original plan.

When you start using this map, you'll see how having a visual layout can add a lot of power to the ideas you come up with.

**Organizing**

Part of this is the planning we just discussed. There's another part that gives a lot of people trouble. Whether it's in your own product creation process or just keeping track of the seemingly endless supply of files that build up on your computer, being able to find what you need when you need it is critical.

You'll notice as you browse through The Map that there are a few that link to websites. When you click on them, your browser will pop up and bring up the site the node is linked to. Using the right arrangement of categories, this is an excellent way to keep track of all those resources you find that you may want to use or refer to later. And you can use the Note function to give yourself reminders of what the site is for, or what you were thinking about when you added it to your collection.

To add a link to a web-based resource, create the node. While it's still highlighted, hold down the Control key and tap the letter K. (That's abbreviated as CTRL-K.) Then  type or paste in the URL and hit return. (The option for this is also in the Insert menu.)

Here's where it gets fun.

You can link files on your computer into The Map. Create the node for the file and label it. Then hold down the Control and Shift keys and tap the letter K. (Ctrl+Shift+K) Or use the Insert menu.

A file browser will open. Change the filetype from .MM to All files. Then just browse to the directory the file you want linked to that node is in and click on it. Click okay, and you're done.

The next time you click on that node in your mindmap, it will open the default program for that file and load it in.

You can use this to create a dashboard for all your important files, or just the ones for a given project. For example, create a node called Library, and create links to all your PDFs, videos, audio interviews, text files.

You could incorporate spreadsheets, source documents, tracking data, customer lists and more for a given project, all under one folded node. Or place them in various places on your project planner. With the right arrangement of categories, you can turn a simple mindmap like this into a complete business dashboard.

And yes, you can link to other mindmaps.

Used correctly, Freemind (or other mindmapping programs) can become a mental operating system for your entire business.

## Improving

If you have an established business, it can be easy to get stuck in routine, forgetting all the other things you can do to improve your results. Browsing The Map can help remind you of options you may have been ignoring or forgetting. And, the visual layout of the thing can help you to generate new connections and more effective ways to using the new systems that arise on the web every week.

For experienced marketers, the real power is in the review and in the PLANTS Factors section. In the review section, you'll often find yourself re-discovering resources, skills and connections you had for gotten. The PLANTS section is an excellent overview to help you find ways to get more out of what you've already got, along with new ways to do things that can give you added leverage.

There are a couple of concepts that are really useful to keep in mind when you're looking through PLANTS. The first is the basic formula for success online:

Targeted traffic times conversion equals results.

The second is Jay Abraham's "Three ways to grow your business":

> 1. Get more customers.
> 2. Get more transactions with each customer.
> 3. Get more profit from each transaction.

Mix those with the leverage concpts in the PLANTS system, and you're going to get where you want to be much more quickly.

## Brainstorming

This has already been touched on. The visual layout of The Map, along with the concepts in the PLANTS system, can be a big help in coming up with new ideas. The key when doing this is to just play around. Don't turn it into work, or it won't.

Look at different parts of your system and see how they might be able to work together in new ways, or how one might help to improve the other.

An especially effective approach is to look at one asset and then look through the concepts and techniques and see which of them can help you leverage that asset for greater returns.

If there were just one phrase to keep in mind when brainstorming with this tool, it would be "Think about the links."

**Navigating and Editing**

When you first open The Map, you'll see 11 nodes branching off the central node. The small cricles next to each means there are further branches off of them. Click on the topic you want to explore, and they'll unfold, showing you more options.

You can also use the arrow keys to move around the map, and the space bar to fold or unfold the currently highlighted node, which will be the one that's shown in grey.

To create a child node (one further toward the outside of The Map, tap the Insert key, type in the label, and hit Enter. To create a sibling node (same level, but below the currently highlighted node), hit the Enter key, type in the label, and hit enter again. To move a node up or down, hold down the control key and use the up and down arrow keys to move it.

You can cut or copy nodes and paste them into other sections of The Map. They'll be attached as child nodes next to whichever node is highlighted when you do the paste.

To edit the label on the highlighted node, press F2 and then change it to whatever you want.

To remove a node, and all its child nodes, highlight it and hit the Delete key. If you goof, or just change your mind, hit CTRL-Z or use the Undo function in the Edit menu.

Don't forget to save your changes as you go. And, as we mentioned earlier, it's always a good idea to work with a copy of the original, so you have the full map to refer back to.

A better plan is to create a new map for each project, and build it to meet your needs as you go. You can always copy parts over from the working copy of the original into your new project map.

Let's say you wanted everything from the PLANTS Factors branch copied to the new map. You'd go to the original and highlight the node labeled "PLANTS Factors." Hit CTRL-C or use the right mouse button and choose Copy. Click in the screen of the new map, highlight the node you'd like to attach that to, and hit CTRL-V or the menu option Paste.

Voila!

If you do a lot of similar projects, this can make creating the map for them a much quicker process.

# The Project

As I mentioned in the beginning, this isn't so much a product as a project. I'll be adding sections and additional mindmaps to it over time. Once you get the hang of it, they don't take long, and they can often be re-used for lots of other projects.

There is no 'final version' of The Map. Not on my system and not on yours. The version I distribute will keep growing and improving. The version on your computer will, if you're using it, be constantly changing to suit your current situation, needs, and plans.

Any additions I make to the main map will be sent to you as a separate mindmap file, so you can copy the parts you find useful over to your working model. That's the only practical way to offer updates once you've started using the thing. It lets you keep your Map focused on what you're doing at any point in time, rather than what anyone else thinks you should be doing.

If you develop a mindmap you'd like to share with others, let me know. I'll take a look and, if it looks like it would be useful, I'll include it with this product and pass it along to existing users of The Map. Make sure you include a separate node, labeled with your name as the creator, and a link to your site.

I would also appreciate any and all comments, critiques, reminders of missing parts, and suggestions for improvement that you may have. This whole thing is an experiment.

You can email me at paul@talkbiz.com

If you haven't started playing with it yet, get going. Spend a few minutes with it, and I think you'll see why I'm having so much fun with this one.


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