MatchWare MindView® Case Studies

> "MindView Business Edition allows us to brainstorm, work out a preliminary estimate, assign resources and generate a draft schedule - all in a single meeting!"
>
> - Stephen Orr - Director, User Experience Group, AMD

Mind Mapping: An Invaluable Tool for Scheduling

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Company
AMD

Industry
Semiconductor Design

Location
One AMD Place
P.O. Box 3453
Sunnyvale, CA

Product
MindView Business

At-A-Glance
This case study illustrates how Stephen Orr uses MindView Business to accomplish a variety of daily tasks from basic note taking to brainstorming. It will also demonstrate how to take the original data and transition into a schedule for your project management needs.

Background

Stephen Orr graduated in Electrical Engineering with electives in Computer Science from the University of Waterloo. Stephen's early professional career included working on interactive multimedia on platforms including the Amiga, TurboGrafx-16, Tandy-VIS and IBM-PC. In the spring of 1993 he moved to ATI Technologies (now AMD) where he has stayed for the last 19 years. At ATI Stephen spent many years managing the Multimedia group. In this role he focused on developing applications for their successful "All-In-Wonder" product line. Recently, Stephen Orr moved to ownership of all PC User Interface development including the Catalyst Control Center (Windows & Linux), Install solutions and Hydravision. Stephen has found in MindView Business a valuable tool in many areas, including the ability to brainstorm and manage schedules.

Using Mind Mapping as a Daily Business Tool

I utilize mind maps for a variety of tasks, such as:

- Taking notes in a meeting
- Taking minutes in a brainstorming session for a particular problem
- Creating and interpreting schedules
- Scoping a new project
- Tracking, organizing and grouping "To Do" items

In this example, I will focus on 2 of the above, (1) brainstorming a problem and (2) creating and interpreting schedules. I will also try to show how MindView enables me to go from a brainstorming session all the way through to a working schedule.

(1) In a brainstorming meeting, a lot of information needs to be collected, organized and later disseminated. The organization of the information is often not entirely clear at the start of the meeting. MindView allows me to capture, organize, re-organize, and publish the information gathered in these kinds of meetings.

When working with schedules MindView's ability to import and export MS Project files is extremely powerful. A project in MS Project has analogs to a mind map in that it has a root concept (the subject of the schedule) and a bunch of sections and sub-sections, each with inter-dependencies. It is not, however, as flexible in how it presents, organizes and allows me to manipulate the information. As a result it is very useful to me to be able to move between MindView and MS Project.
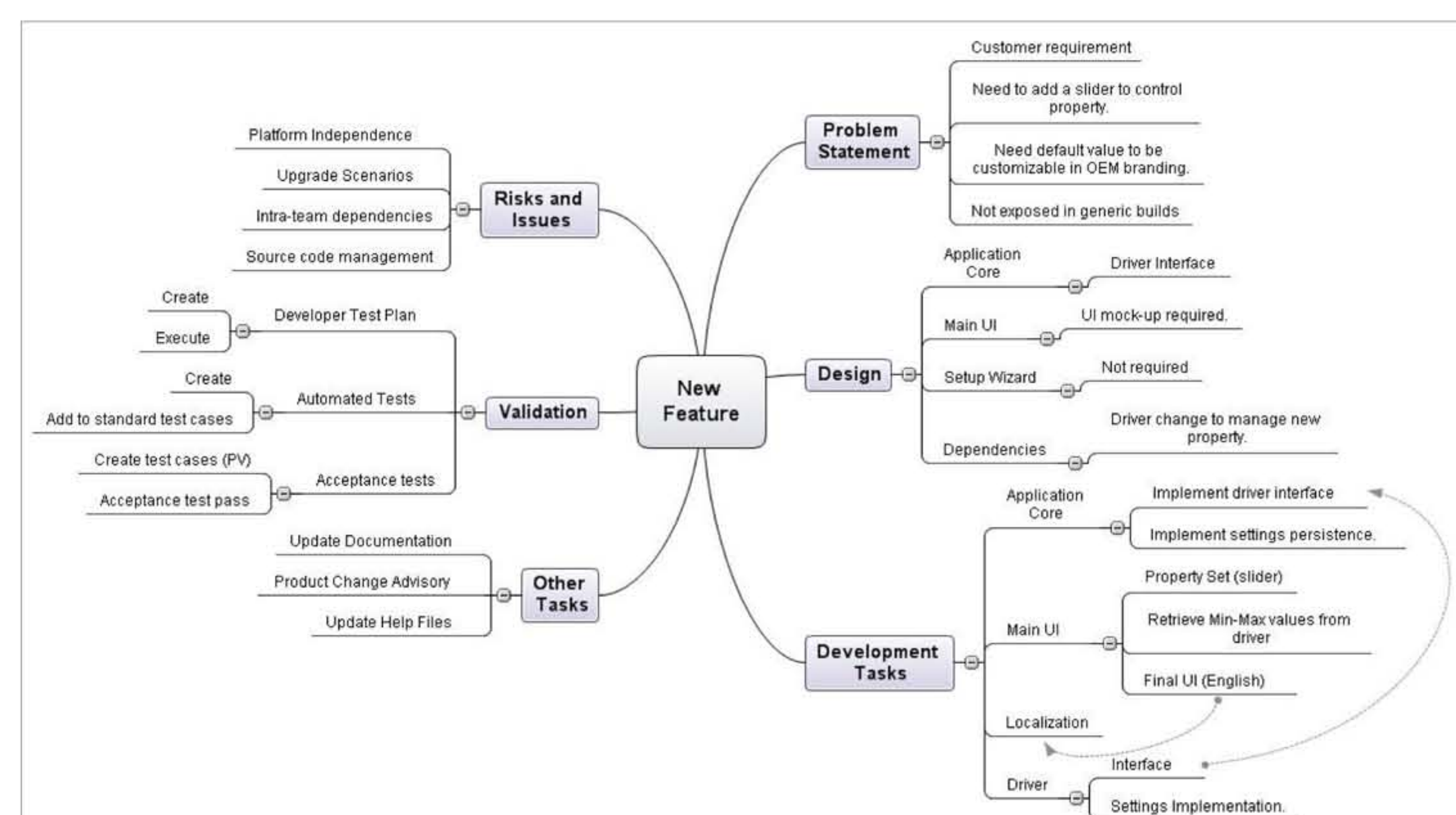
At the end of a brainstorming session for a development project, all of the key parts of managing a project (the work items, issues, risks and opportunities) have been captured in the mind map. From there it is a simple task in MindView to switch to the Gantt view and add effort estimates and order dependencies. Essentially, everything required to manage the project is in MindView.

As a last step, the ability to export to MS Project allows the new tasks to be integrated into the bigger picture, where all active and planned projects are being managed and resources leveled.

When the brainstorming session is intended to identify a solution to a problem, the end result is often a set of tasks, risks and issues. By using the Gantt chart view in MindView, resources can be added along with effort estimations to create a draft schedule.

(2) With MindView creating and interpreting schedules can be done within the Mind Map view or the Gantt chart view. In addition the ability to import and export MS Project files is extremely powerful. When a schedule already exists in MS Project, importing it into MindView and switching to the Mind Map view (or Left to Right view) makes it possible to get a fast overview of the project and drill down into details as needed.

The ability to filter in MindView as well as the ability to move between MindView Business, Microsoft Project and Microsoft PowerPoint is highly valuable.

> MindView's ability to import and export MS Project files is extremely powerful."

Brainstorming Example

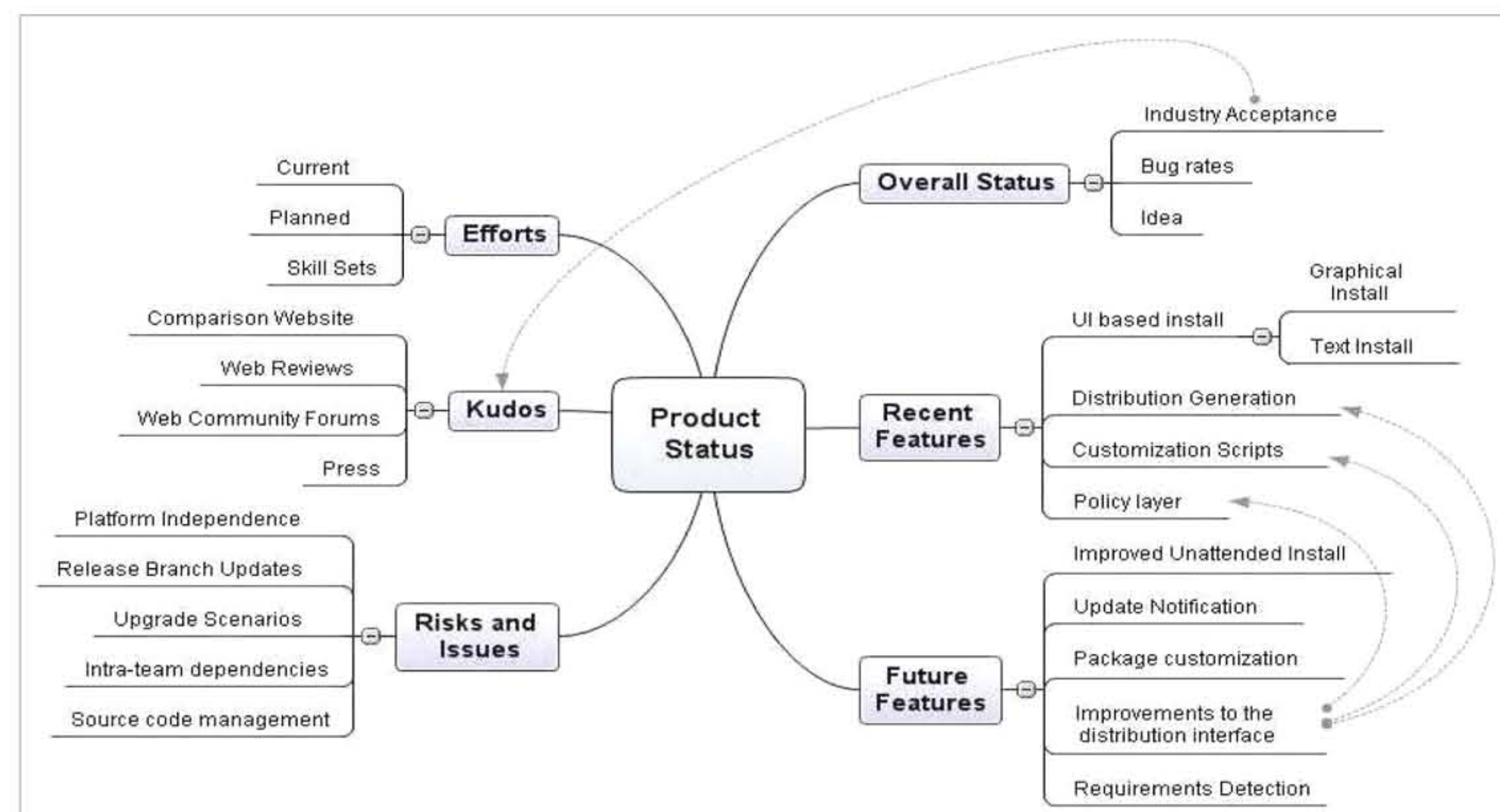## Brainstorming, Creating and Interpreting Schedules

The starting point is typically a blank mind map with the issue in the center. I may start with a couple of leading concepts that are obvious aspects of the problem being solved, or I might start by asking for a problem definition. As there are typically various stakeholders in the room, there are usually a range of viewpoints as to what the key issues might be. All of these viewpoints and issues are captured and grouped. The ability to visually drag elements of the map around allows for concepts to be organized and re-organized quickly.

In addition, there will often be people trying to propose solutions to all or parts of the problem before the entire problem definition is captured. In a more traditional regimented approach to problem solving, these concepts would not be recorded until after the entire problem statement has been agreed upon. As a result, interim solutions are often parked and in some cases forgotten as the discussion moves in other directions. With MindView, it is easy to record the suggestion, link it to the relevant portion of the problem discussion and revisit it later. This means that the suggestion is not lost even if the meeting is stopped and reconvened at a late time or with a different audience.

After the meeting, it is quite simple to spend a little time "polishing" the organization and then export the results into Microsoft Word to be sent out as minutes. In cases where the entire team is familiar with the idea of a mind map, we often send out a JPEG of the map to capture the meeting minutes.

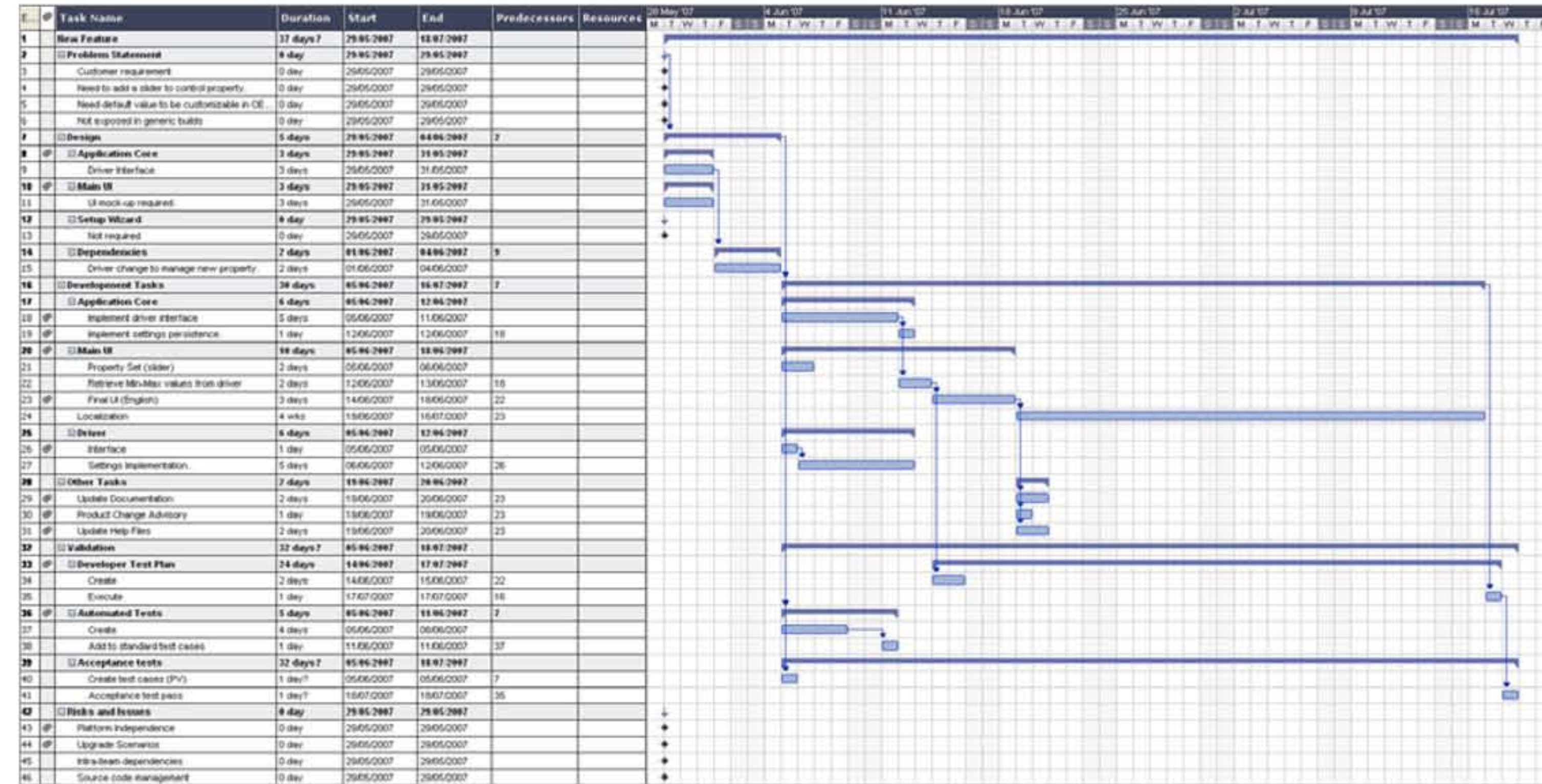My managers rely on MindView mind maps in order to run efficient and productive meetings.

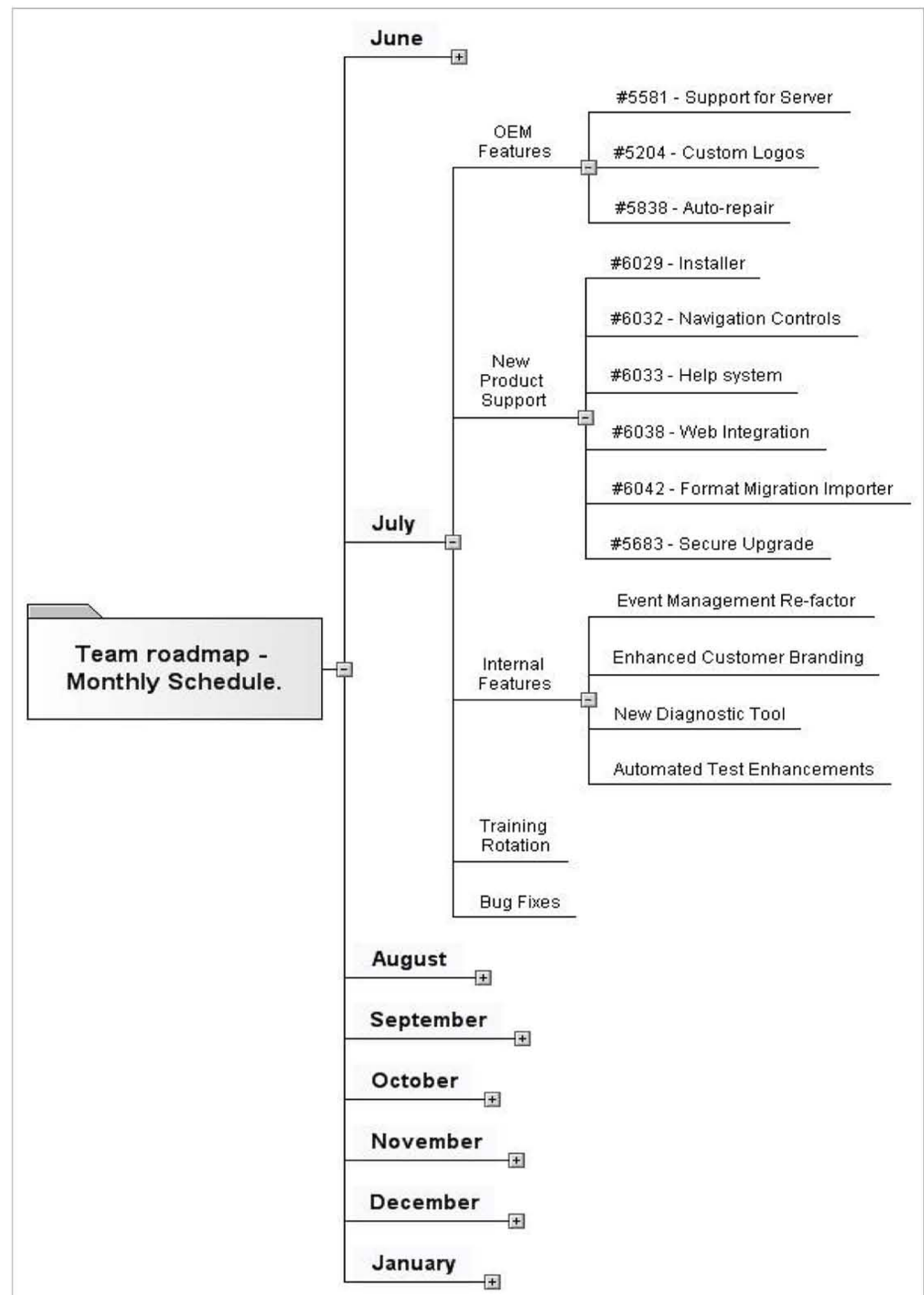Creating and Interpreting Schedules:

As mentioned earlier, we often brainstorm problems to solutions through mind mapping. At the end of a brainstorming session, in the case of a development project, we will have captured the work items, issues / risks and opportunities. These components are all key parts of managing a project, and from there it's a simple task in MindView to switch to the Gantt view and add effort estimates and order dependencies. Essentially, everything required to manage a project is in MindView.

> "My managers rely on MindView mind maps in order to run efficient and productive meetings."

Often then, the end result of the brainstorming session is a mind map that includes a plan on how to address the problem and a schedule that covers the efforts involved. When this gets merged into the master team schedule and the resource leveling occurs we get a better idea of when this particular set of tasks will be delivered relative to other planned work that is being done. This leads to the other use for MindView that I want to cover, using mind maps to interpret detailed schedules and converting them into highly effective roadmaps.

"It is very useful to me to be able to move between MindView and MS Project."

In situations where an entire team is working from a detailed schedule, which includes all planned activities over a large number of months, I can use MindView to quickly dig into what the team is doing.

Maintaining a schedule for the team is a typical task for a resource manager and we use standard tools (Microsoft Project) for schedule maintenance. Captured in those Project files is an abundance of data for work planned to be completed at a particular time (or in a particular release). With a major release every month, many of our project schedules are managed based on the features to be released in a particular month (release).

By switching between MindView's Gantt chart view (essentially resource leveling) and Mind Map view, it is possible to see what tasks and times are planned without having to see all of the details. It is much easier to swap tasks around in a mind map than in a Gantt chart. The Gantt chart view is (as it should be) better for looking at an overall timeline and resource loading. When discussing changes to a schedule and possible trade-offs that can be made, I prefer MindView's Mind Map view as a way of managing from a high level without losing access to the deep down details.

Another issue MindView solves is translating detailed schedules into plans of record roadmaps. By importing the MS Project file into MindView Business and using the filters it is possible to quickly create a view that shows a release schedule which allowsme to drill down release by release to see the planned features. By only drilling down into selective branches of the schedule I can quickly reveal (or hide) the information that I need. By deleting sections of the tree that are not relevant to the roadmap, but are relevant to a schedule (for example engineering reserves for bug fixing, vacations, etc.) I can quickly create a reduced map. This reduced map can then be exported to Microsoft PowerPoint as the starting point for a published roadmap presentation.

"The ability to visually drag elements of the map around allows for concepts to be organized and re-organized quickly."

Monthly Roadmap: June

- **OEM Features**
  - #5581 - Support for Server
  - #5204 - Custom Logos
  - #5838 - Auto-repair
- **Internal Features**
  - Event Management Re-factor
  - Enhanced Customer Branding
  - New Diagnostic Tool
  - Automated Test Enhancements

- **New Product Support**
  - #6029 - Installer
  - #6032 - Navigation Controls
  - #6033 - Help system
  - #6038 - Web Integration
  - #6042 - Format Migration Importer
  - #5683 - Secure Upgrade

Advantages of using MindView Business

When collecting information in a room full of people who are discussing a problem, they all bring a unique and valuable viewpoint on the problem as well as a different approach to solving the problem, either because they attack problems in a particular way, or because their viewpoint implies a specific kind of solution.

When I use MindView to collect information in this kind of meeting, it allows me to let people work through the issues in their own way and quickly collect similar thoughts into a single place in the mind map. Essentially I can let everyone in the meeting work through the issue in their own way and synthesize the results. Also, as the mind map grows, especially if it is being displayed on a projector (shared), concepts in the mind map will often trigger other ideas that may not have been otherwise raised.

By brainstorming in a mind map, valuable options are not missed and by the end of the meeting people have a more closely shared view of the problem and solution because they have seen how their viewpoint fits in with others.

At a very basic level, the ability to use MindView as a Rosetta stone to move between various applications and levels of detail is a big time saver. The ability to quickly summarize data in a high level view and make trade-offs and adjustments without losing the details is extremely useful. Further, I find the ability to start a project in an MindView mind map to capture the project phases, development methodology, work items, and effort estimations, and then convert that directly into a Gantt chart or MS Project file (schedule) to be incredibly powerful.

"I can use MindView to quickly dig into what the team is doing."