Biggerplate

Biggerplate Uses MindMeister and G Suite to Effectively Manage Their Remote Team

Liam Hughes, Founder

At a Glance...

★ Mind maps are updated regularly and used for decision making in real-time.

★ Team members can update common maps and docs without worrying about versions being overwritten.

★ Setting up new team members is simple, fast and inexpensive.

Biggerplate.com, '*The Home of Mind Mapping*', aims to be the best resource for mind mappers all over the world. Primarily based around a library of digital mind maps, Biggerplate offers its community of over **100,000 members** not only a way to discover and share content, but provides learning opportunities and connects people with both mind map experts and software vendors. The business, which was launched in 2008, is located in the UK with offices in Oxfordshire and London.

The Challenge: Managing a Remote Team and its Activities on a Weekly Basis

Biggerplate is run by a team of seven people who are hardly ever in the same place at the same time. One of the biggest challenges they faced as a remote team was to keep members updated and aware of upcoming key issues. "We originally used a combination of XMind, MindManager, Dropbox, Skype and Microsoft Office," remembers Biggerplate founder Liam Hughes. "There were **multiple problems** with this setup. Neither our maps nor our documents could be used to collaborate in real-time. Even worse, we often ended up with conflicting versions of documents we had uploaded to our shared Dropbox space. We also spent a lot of time in long winded Skype meetings every week, and almost as much time trying to schedule those meetings in the first place, as my frequent travels abroad often put us in different time zones."

The Biggerplate team eventually started looking for a better set-up. "We wanted something simple, something that would easily scale with our growing needs and that would make communication and collaboration for our remote team more efficient."

The Solution: Real-Time Awareness Through Web-Based Applications

After seeing more and more companies in their professional network using **G Suite** successfully, Biggerplate finally made the switch in 2014, adding **MindMeister** as their new default mind mapping application. "We specifically opted for this combination because MindMeister integrates with Google Drive, which means we can store mind maps there and easily give the whole team access to them," explains Liam. "With our entire tool suite being web-based we were now finally able to collaboratively edit documents and maps at the same time."

Using MindMeister and G Suite, the Biggerplate team created a completely new meeting culture that **made meetings more efficient and structured**. "For our whole-team meetings, such as our weekly operations meeting and our sales review, we jump on a quick **Google Hangouts** call and look at a mind map while we talk. The map is shared

Website

www.biggerplate.com

Region: UK

Size: <10 employees

Industry: Internet

with all team members in advance so that everybody can record what they're working on and what's coming up in the next two weeks. This way, **meetings are quick run-throughs that briefly cover all key issues we need to be aware of**."

The team regularly combines their meeting mind maps with **Google Sheets and Docs**, linking directly from individual topics in the map to the related files. "This has turned out to be a very effective combination for us," says Liam. "We use a **split screen** to view the map and sheet at the same time; while the map provides an overview of everything important, the sheet offers an in-depth look at the facts and numbers we need to discuss."

Additionally, each team member has their own '**dashboard map**', which is shared with Liam and kept up-to-date by the team member at all times. "We use these one-on-one maps for personal review meetings where I can give team members feedback, discuss priorities and flag issues. If I don't want to wait until our scheduled meeting, I can always just open the map at random to check what my people are working on."

The Results

> *"The most tangible benefit of both MindMeister and G Suite is the real-time awareness that the tools provide for our remote team, regardless of where everybody is."*

"As a small company we can't afford to go down the wrong road for too long," explains Liam. "Being able to respond quickly and adapt very fast is crucial. Instead of creating endless email threads like we often used to, we just look at our shared **Google Calendar** to see who is where and which events are coming up; for a more detailed insight into what everybody's doing, we have our **mind maps**."

> *"Thanks to MindMeister, our meeting times have reduced drastically. Meetings are short and sharp, because we have all important information prepped before we go in."*