

APMG EVALUATION SERVICE FOR PROJECT MANAGEMENT PRODUCTS

BRONZE REPORT

Number 11

Company:

MatchWare Ltd.

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Product:

OpenMind 2 Business Edition

This report covers the Bronze Stage assessment of OpenMind 2 Business Edition, an application from MatchWare Ltd., that I conducted on Monday, 22 October 2007.

OpenMind is a mind mapping tool with some design features that make it particularly useful to project managers. In addition to the mind map view of the information entered, it's also possible to view the same information in a Gantt chart as well as in timeline, outline and other view formats.

Typically, the mind map view would be used for inspiring and recording ideas from project brainstorming meetings. Using drag and drop methods, the ideas in the map can be moved, repositioned and reorganised into a plan of action. The appearance of the map display is highly configurable. Colour and clip art images can be used to create highlights and points of visual interest. A substantial range of templates is provided.

Detailed task information, such as start and end dates, durations and resourcing information, can be entered against the lowest level branches on the map and the display of this information can be toggled on and off. Files of any type may be attached to any branch.

Once a plan map's been constructed, the view can be switched and the same information can be displayed in a Gantt chart, in which further adjustment and fine tuning can be carried out. Links between tasks can be drawn on the Gantt. At any time you can toggle between the mind map display and the Gantt display and any changes made to one are immediately visible in the other, a facility that makes re-organising the Gantt a simple task.

Microsoft Project files can be imported into OpenMind and re-exported. This feature enables MS Project files to be viewed as mind maps and edited in that format. You do, however, lose levelling, costing and budget information in the process.

OpenMind projects, complete with their attachments can be packed and sent to others and a file viewer is available to download, free of charge. Maps and charts can be printed over multiple sheets of paper to produce poster-sized reports.

MatchWare has indicated that, in their opinion, the design and use of this product falls within the field of guidance offered by the OGC Business Change Guidance documents covering Project Management. Whilst conceding that OpenMind does not support levelling, budgeting or cost calculations, MatchWare states that their product complies with the project management process in all other respects. I concur with their opinion. Although MatchWare makes no claims in this respect, I am of the opinion that OpenMind also has the potential to be a useful tool in enabling users to follow the guidance offered within the PRINCE2 methodology, both in managing the process and in the construction of the product documentation. This potential would be enhanced if MatchWare was to supply template PRINCE2 maps and documents.

In my opinion, this assessment should now proceed to the Silver Stage and I have accordingly agreed a Silver Stage assessment plan with MatchWare Ltd., which is attached to this report.

S. Cotterell

25 October 2007