

## Samsung Galaxy Note – excellent business tool or obese phone?

The Samsung Galaxy Note, launched in October 2011 has divided opinions due to its size. It was initially seen as an almost laughably large phone with its hand-stretching size due to its 5.3" screen, coining comparisons with the infamous comedian 'Dom Jolly's' giant phone of the 1990s ('HELLO!'). Sized between existing phones and tablets, reviewers even coined a new size category to describe it – the 'phablet'. At the time the market leader, the iPhone 4 had only a 4" screen size. The critics saw the Note as Samsung getting it all wrong and a flop was anticipated. But it didn't happen. In fact by August 2012 10 million Notes had been sold.

Figure 1 – Galaxy Note



But I am not going to detail the technical attributes of the Note, this is covered in many websites e.g.

[http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Samsung\\_Galaxy\\_Note](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Samsung_Galaxy_Note) .

Instead, after nearly four months of ownership, I wanted to share my experience and views of the Note as a business tool. Particularly as the Note 2 has just been announced (an incremental improvement on the original in my view).

Figure 2 – Galaxy Note v iPhone



### Why I bought the Note

As a business consultant, being mobile is a prerequisite and being productive when travelling is key to client responsiveness and effective time management. Having worked in consultancy for over twenty years and spent many many hours working with clients in the UK and abroad, sitting on planes, trains, taxis and cars; waiting in airports, stations, hotels and between meetings, I know all too well the total amount of time that can be

wasted when all the small amounts of dead-time are added up. Hence the importance of using this time well, so that I can be responsive to my clients and maximise my free time with my family and friends. In pursuit of this goal I have been through a veritable arsenal of mobile business technology as it developed from the early 90s with shoulder-wrenching laptops, brick-

like mobile phones and tiny screen-sized PDAs. At one stage around 2000, I could typically be carrying a (heavy) laptop, Nokia mobile phone and Psion PDA.

Most recently I had a Nokia N900 smartphone – a great phone hampered by very limited business applications and too small a screen. I purchased the first Samsung Galaxy Tab 7” tablet, which was (and is) a great tool. But though small compared to an iPad tablet, it just tended not to be with me all the time as it simply did not fit in a pocket.

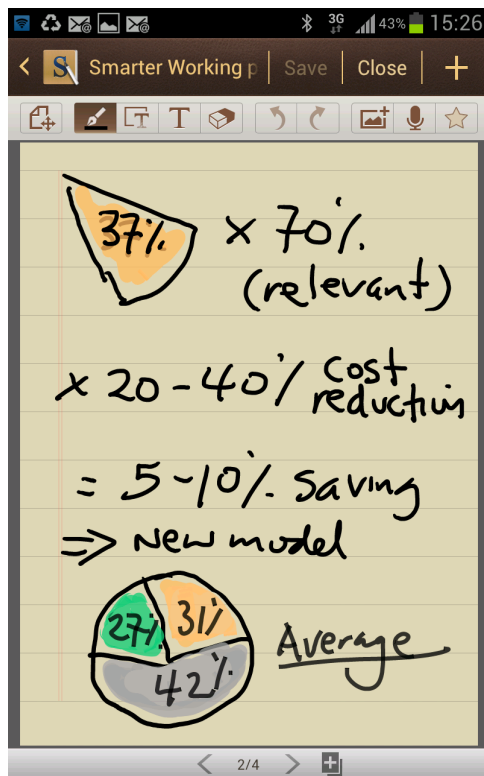


Figure 3 – Sketching with S Pen

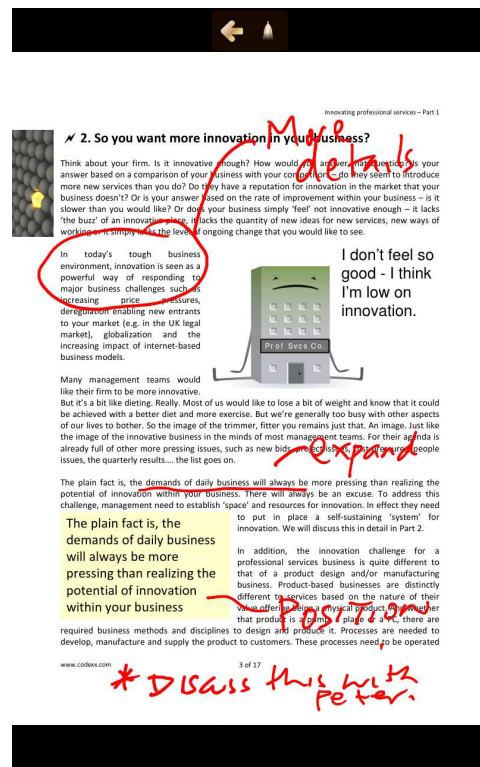


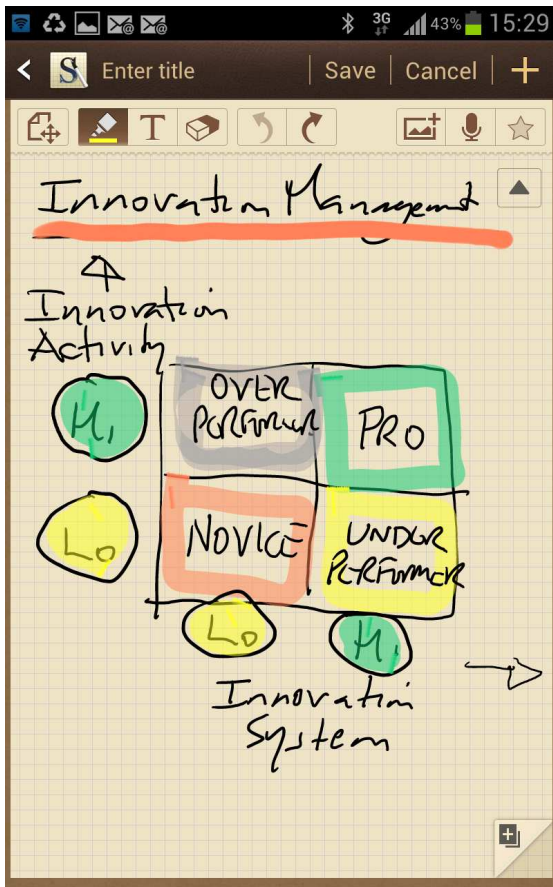
Figure 4 – Marking up documents with ezPDF

The goal for me was (and is) one device when possible. I believe that the Note nearly achieves that for me. Indeed the term ‘phablet’ actually summarises the key strengths of the Note: it is pocketable like a phone but has a much larger screen than most phones, greatly enhancing the use of the screen. There are a number of key attributes of the Note that make it very effective for mobile business:

1. Large bright high-resolution screen – renders websites and documents clearly
2. Camera/HD video recorder – no need to carry a camera
3. Pressure sensitive Stylus – for note taking and sketching
4. Micro SD memory slot – for adding up to 64 GB of additional memory
5. Large removable battery – for replacement and extra ‘juice’ if needed
6. Capability of connecting USB devices – USB drives, mice, keyboards
7. Capable of connecting to external HD monitors and TVs for presentation
8. Android operating system – a lot of Apps for business and pleasure

So great potential – but how did I find it in practice?

Figure 5 – Diagrams with S-Pen



### Using the Note – 4 months in

When you first pick up the Note it does seem BIG. You might wonder if you have done the right thing buying it – will you look like an idiot putting it to your ear in public? But after a day or two you will never want to go back to a smaller screen phone. Making calls on it is fine and if you would rather not hold it to your ear there is a set of headphones with microphone included so you can leave the Note in your pocket if you wish. The phone is light and nice to use. The large screen is vibrant and a delight to use. The Stylus is always to hand as it is housed in a slot in the handset. Battery life is better than you might expect with such a large screen, as a large 2500mAh battery is fitted. On normal usage, a working day is quite achievable and often I manage two. However if you are a heavy user of the web you might empty the battery within a day. However the removable batter means that you can carry a spare. Alternatively a good accessory is the GOLD 3500mAh battery which is

the same size as the original and significantly increases the battery life.

To illustrate the potential uses of the Note in your business, I have drawn up the table on the following page.

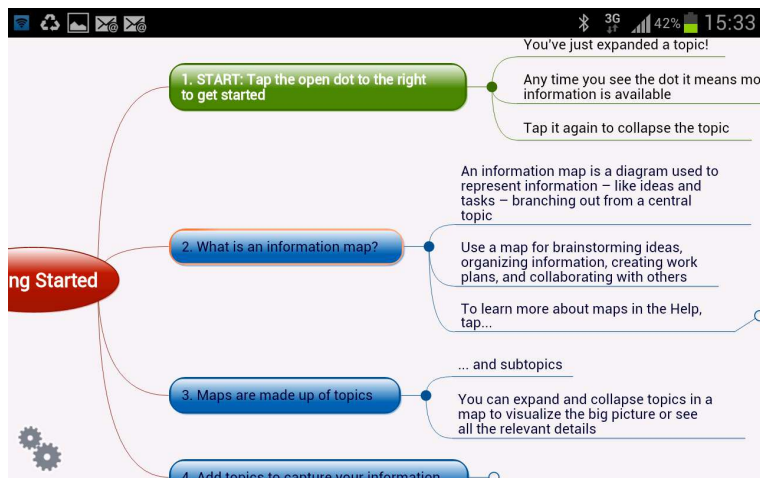


Figure 6 – Mindmapping using MindJet on the Galaxy Note

## Examples of business applications using the Note

Task	Business example	Why the Note excels
1. Reading and updating PDF and Microsoft Office Powerpoint, Word and Excel documents.	No need to carry a laptop around when away from the office. However detailed editing of Office documents is still best done on a laptop/PC.	Included Polaris suite opens all these documents – but not always 100% comparable with Office. PDF documents are completely identical. A maximum of 96GB memory can be fitted (including MicroSD) which gives plenty of space for business files, photographs and music.
2. Marking up, highlighting and signing PDF documents using the stylus.	Reviewing and updating draft contracts, reports or sketches and returning them, whilst working away from the office and without using a PC or paper.	There are a number of PDF Apps available in the Android market for marking up PDF documents, such as ezPDF. The S Pen is always to hand and easy to use. The large screen helps in reading documents.
3. Taking photos and marking them up with the stylus	Site visits or inspection, reviewing products, audits. Taking photos of paper documents, marking them up with comments and emailing or storing them.	The built-in applications for the S Pen integrate taking, marking up and sending or saving photos to make it simple and fast.
4. Taking HD videos	Interviews, site visits, event recording, documentation.	Good detail and viewable on large screen or on a TV/monitor via an optional HD cable.
5. Video conference calls using Skype	Conference calls when out of the office.	A case with an included stand helps in supporting the phone.
6. Accessing files or media held on an external USB drive.	Attaching a full keyboard for a lot of text entry. Reviewing documents held on a colleagues USB key.	As standard the Note allows USB hardware to be connected (via an optional USB to Micro USB cable), such as a flash drive, mouse, keyboard. Files on an external drive can then be accessed as if they were on the phone itself.
7. Taking notes on the go	No need to carry an additional note book. Meeting minutes can be handwritten then emailed to attendees (or a secretary for typing).	The S Pen stylus applications make note taking, note filing easy and a pleasure to do. But the screen is small compared to an A4 notebook – which does limit extensive note taking.
8. Viewing and updating social media sites such as LinkedIn	Viewing and updating social networks whilst out of the office.	LinkedIn has an Android App, though I find the full website version easier to use. Again, the widescreen and keyboard make adding information relatively easy.
9. Reading E-books	Catching up on reading whilst travelling – saves carrying books or a Kindle.	The Kindle application is available free from the Android market and of course the large screen makes book reading surprisingly easy.

## Conclusions

I am finding that I carry my laptop less, I am making more use of the Stylus for jotting notes or marking up documents than I initially thought. The media player is good and I carry my separate mp3 player less. For many iPad or other tablet users, I believe that the Note would allow them to perform most (all?) of the business tasks they purchased the iPad for – and also allow them to stop carrying a separate phone. I believe that the Note offers productivity benefits for mobile professionals such as accountants, lawyers, management consultants, insurance assessors and other mobile professionals/

So my overall conclusion is: Excellent business tool and a little forgivable 'puppy fat'...

If you are a business Note user, I'd welcome your thoughts – contact me via [www.codexx.com](http://www.codexx.com)

Alastair Ross  
Director  
Codexx Associates Ltd