Graphic Facilitation

MEETING ENGAGEMENT TOOL

Description

Graphic facilitation combines the skills of facilitation and the use of simple images to help a group visualize the meeting content. The use of images with text helps keep people engaged, focuses the brain, improves problem solving, and helps participants remember information longer. Graphic recording is the process of just recording a group discussion visually, but without the overarching facilitative process.

Participants

Any number (within viewing and hearing distance)

Process

1. **Determine the objectives of the meeting and how thinking visually could help** reach meeting outcomes.

2. **Develop a visual vocabulary** for the event that may include metaphors, frameworks, or other devices to organize the information and help move toward decisions. Practice drawing that vocabulary before the event.

3. **Develop templates or frameworks** that can be filled in during the event that use the visual vocabulary you have chosen. They can help guide the conversation.

4. During the meeting, **use the visual vocabulary while recording information**.

5. After the meeting, **include the visual materials in meeting results and summaries**.

Benefits of Using Visuals

*   Helps participants grasp complex concepts faster and pay closer attention to the conversation.

*   Prompts discussions and dialogue by allowing participants to develop shared meaning and to deal with higher levels of complexity.

*   Gets everyone on the same page by increasing understanding of concepts and agreements.

*   Elegantly handles a wide range of views by capturing the information and creating a neutral entity.

- Involves all the major learning styles, including visual, auditory, and kinesthetic learners.
- Builds group memory and makes it easier for participants to recall outcomes of the meeting.
- Creates excellent meeting documentation and provides good material for sharing the work with others.

Considerations

- Works best in venues where it is desirable to have very public and visual discussions, such as strategic planning, visioning, scenario, and conversation forums.

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- Takes more prep time to create a visual vocabulary and templates.
- Requires facilitator to have excellent listening and synthesizing skills so they can quickly understand and follow information, and can sort through it to determine importance, priority, and relevance.
- Depends upon the facilitator being comfortable doing simple sketches in front of a group.
- Available wall space in the meeting room is important, since you will need to be able to display material so all participants can see.
- Might take some convincing of meeting leaders to use this approach since they might not think it is serious enough.
- Can be performed by one person or by a team, where one person provides the facilitation role and one or more people provide the graphics.
- Can also be done virtually during a webcast or other live online event.

Materials Needed

- Large roll of paper, markers, tape, space to hang paper.
- Visual library of images, frameworks.
- A room with lots of smooth, undivided wall space within seeing and hearing distance of the participants.

Resources

- The Grove Institute at *grove.com/site/index.html*. Visual thinking and graphic facilitation techniques and services, and resources such as books, markers, and templates.
- The *Doodle Revolution: Unlock the Power to Think Differently* by Sunni Brown.
- *Game Storming: A Playbook for Innovators, Rulebreakers, and Changemakers* by David Gray, Sunni Brown, and James Macanufo.
- International Forum of Visual Practitioners at *ifvp.org*.

- Center for Graphic Facilitation at *graphicfacilitation.blogs.com/pages*.

- "The Benefits of Graphic Facilitation" by Christina Merkley at *shift-it-coach.com/makemark.com/articles*.

- A graphical way to approach systems thinking and group alignment at *drawtoast.com*.
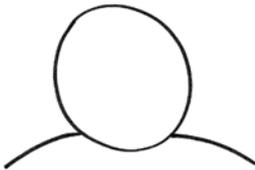
Sample Graphics for Common Terms
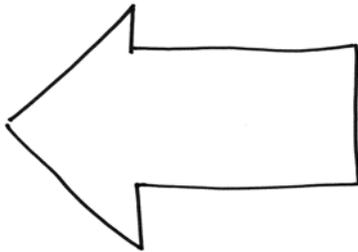
Direction, flow, leads to, points to action,connection, movement, change, objective, orientation
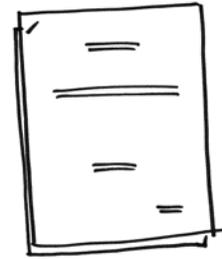
Report, study, document, findings, conclusion, paper, research

Person, individual, in a group – team, crowd, group, meeting, gathering

Idea, creativity, create, generate, explore, inspire, innovate, thought, invent

Thinking, thought, keep secret, dream, vision, imagine, idea, fantasy, designing

Computer, internet, web, program, work, design, access, work station, office, IT