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# **START TO DRAW**

Visual Communication  
in the Workplace



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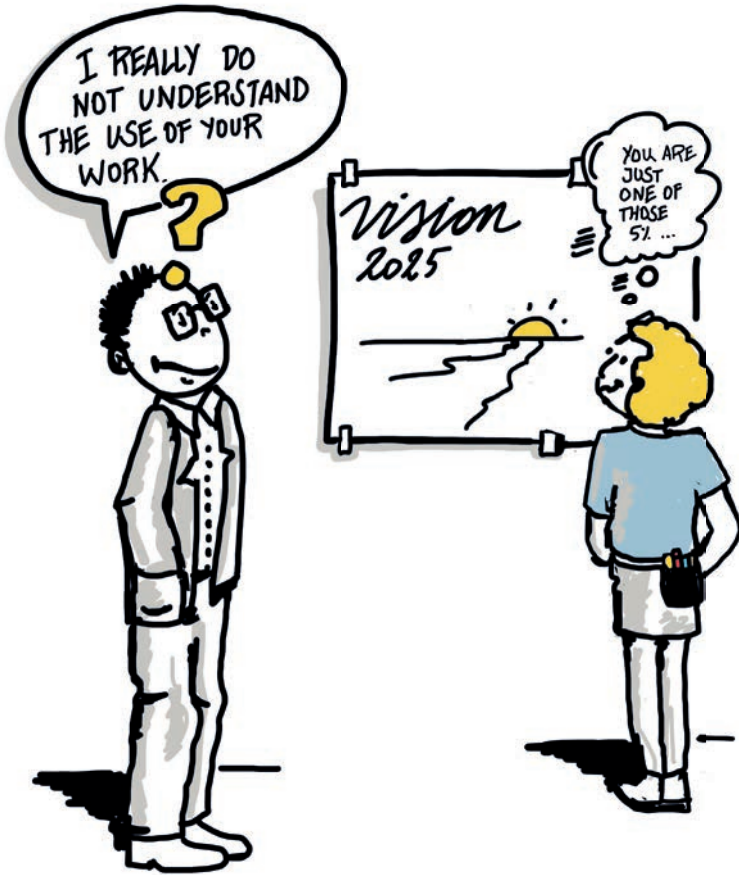


# YOU REALLY SHOULD READ THIS BOOK IF YOU...

- Manage people and want to involve them in a story
- Are a student who wants to have notes for which others are prepared to pay
- Want to give presentations that everyone will remember
- Want to take your communication to the next level
- Teach and want to inspire students
- Want to show that you really listen as a counsellor and mediator
- Are a trainer or coach and want to stand out from the all the rest by giving tangible insights
- Can reflect better when you are drawing
- Think better while drawing or scribbling
- Like to draw
- Are looking for a creative outlet

Tick who you are!

Are you one of the 5 out of 100 people who are not visual at all? If so, don't buy this book for yourself. Buy it for someone else and make them happy!





# INTRODUCTION

Once upon a time, a teenager attended a strict catholic school for girls. One warm afternoon, as her thoughts were straying off, her music teacher told her about *Peter and the Wolf*, a musical fairy tale by Sergei Prokofiev written for the Moscow Youth Theatre in 1936 – a simple and compelling story, easy to understand, and intended primarily for children. The piece became a worldwide sensation and beguiled young and old.

Her textbook was on her desk. Dozens of pages that proved that the teacher's monotonous explanation was the truth. The words and letters were dancing before her eyes.

The girl began to draw. She chose a random blank page from her book. Peter was the first to appear on the sheet, followed by the forest where Peter heads against his grandfather's advice. And finally, all the characters of the story, such as the wolf, the duck, the bird, and the instruments for which the story was written: the oboe, the clarinet, the flute... The girl was fully absorbed in the story, as if in a dream.

Then the dream was suddenly interrupted. The teacher had appeared unexpectedly in front of the girl's desk. "What on earth are you doing?" she asked. "Shouldn't you be paying attention? You draw in art class, not during music lessons!"

The girl was confused... She had never been more attentive to her lessons.

Twenty-five years later, now an experienced organisational coach, the girl became acquainted with visual facilitation and visual reporting. She discovered that drawing is just as impactful in professional business life as *Peter and the Wolf*: simple, easy to understand and compelling for young and old. From that day on, she decided that she would never, ever give up drawing.



# PETER and THE WOLF



# HOW THIS BOOK CAME TO LIFE

As soon as I got my first taste of visual work, I felt driven to share my experiences and tips. Every time I experienced the impact of drawing, I thought “everyone should know how to do this.”

So it became my mission to inspire at least 1000 people a year to start drawing... Not as a form of art, but as a way to communicate effectively. I have been in far too many presentations, workshops and meetings that lacked impact. I strongly believe that by using drawing, you can convey your message a lot more clearly and engagingly.

I started training courses and workshops so that people could see for themselves just how quickly you can develop the skill. But I felt that it was not enough. Many of my students asked for a workbook that would bring all my tips and tricks together. And so the idea for this book started to grow. It would be in an easy-to-read format, teeming with tips. I planned to explain the basic principles of drawing, and to answer the most frequently asked questions. Easier said than done, it seemed.

The turning point was the day my friend Caroline helped me to define the scope and content of the book. She had attended several of my courses and workshops and summarised the key insights and the most frequently asked questions. She kept pulling at my sleeve and helped me with the writing. Thanks to that, and her fresh view, I eventually managed to produce the book.

I hope you will enjoy reading it, but above all that you will have a lot of fun drawing.









# WHY DRAWING WORKS...

We all are visual creatures.

Did you know?

1. The retina of the eye is an outgrowth of the brain. Half of our brain is devoted to processing visual information.
2. Neurons for this function take up about 30% of the cortex, while only 8% are for touch and 3% for hearing.
3. If we catch sight of an image even for as brief a time as 13 milliseconds, our brain can still identify it.\*
4. At least 65% of us are visual learners. Dr Richard Felder's research established this in the 1980s, laying the foundation for understanding that we have different learning styles. Further studies have shown that even more of us are visual learners than Dr Felder found – maybe up to 8 out of every 10 people.
5. We have a remarkable ability to remember pictures. We can remember 2000 pictures with at least 90% accuracy.
6. Presentations with visuals are 43% more persuasive than textual ones.
7. Seeing is believing. What our eyes see can influence what we hear. Watching someone's lips move can trick the brain into hearing the wrong sound. This is called the McGurk effect, after the scientist who made the discovery.

This explains exactly why a picture is worth a thousand words.

\*(T. Romih, PhD in Nanotoxicology, Seyens.com, 2016)

**Drawing sparks communication and enhances:**

- memorisation
- ordering and simplifying complex information
- understanding
- talking and listening

**And above all...**

it is a universal language! You don't need to speak the same language to understand a picture.

Did you know?

Drawing is one of the oldest forms of human expression. Evidence of its existence precedes that of written communication, with rock paintings dating to around 30,000 years ago. These drawings, known as pictograms, depicted objects and abstract concepts.



# A SNAPSHOT OF MODERN LIFE

We live in a rapidly changing world.

Huge amounts of information and data are at our fingertips, and we expect it to be presented clearly and concisely, “here and now”.

We rarely read articles to the end.

In a matter of minutes, we watch and swap videos.

Over recent years, our attention span has decreased to only 8 seconds, which is less than that of a goldfish.

We find it more and more difficult to focus on one thing for very long.

It’s clear that getting and keeping the attention of your audience is a huge challenge. The use of pictures, in this case drawings, reinforced by storytelling, works with that 8-second attention span. And it’s not something I invented. There’s even a name for it: the picture superiority effect. You have probably noticed that if you post pictures on social media, you get more likes than if you use text.

It’s clear that we live in a visual culture. Yet most of us haven’t found – let alone mastered – an easy way to translate our thoughts into drawings.

This fascinates me. Although we all enjoyed drawing as children, we dropped it from our communication skill set when we grew up.

## How did you start out with this?

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In 2010, I took part in a congress on conflict mediation. At that congress, I saw a graphic recorder for the first time. She listened to the speakers and summarised everything live on a large piece of paper. And I said to myself, if that is a job, then you must be the happiest person in the world... and I even felt a little jealous. A few months later, I heard that she was organising a two-day training course on the subject, so I signed up. And in the wake of the training, I was fully occupied and started to draw everywhere that was suitable... or sometimes where it was perhaps less suitable.



# DRAWING AT WORK

The modern approach of using visuals to support business change processes, transformation and strategy started in the sixties and seventies in the San Francisco Bay Area. With the aim of working more effectively, pioneers like Michael Doyle, David Straus, David Sibbet, Geoff Ball and Doug Engelbart, and MG Taylor – all in diverse sectors – experimented with this approach. Across the ocean in the UK, Tony Buzan developed the concept of mind mapping – a brain-friendly way to digest and structure content.

As the focus was on improving the effectiveness of meetings and processes, many of them created templates, icons and maps to support and structure group dynamics.

In the eighties, the fields of facilitation and consulting bloomed and boomed. Visual facilitation surfed on this wave and by the nineties, visual methodologies had really taken off. Today, graphic recording and facilitation is a valued skill, with many applications across sectors. Professionally, thousands now work as visual practitioners and the number is increasing every day.

I will share a few definitions that are often used in the visual practitioner's playing field.



FLEEK

# WHAT

WHAT STORIES ARE IN YOUR BACKPACK

WHAT'S YOUR



RYFIELD

# HOW



ADD...

EMOTIONS

THAT REMINDS ME OF A STORY...

# MINDSET



IVE THAT  
MENT AGAIN



# PURPOSE OF STORIES

INFORM \* INSPIRE  
KNOWLEDGE STORYTELLING EXPERIENCE

PEOPLE WILL FORGET WHAT YOU SAID OR DID BUT THEY WILL NEVER FORGET HOW YOU MADE THEM FEEL





# GLORIFY



MAX  
FALLING ACTION  
DRAMATIC ARC

# WHAT

IONS  
PARADISE BY THE DASHBOARD LIGHT



Ails

SPEAK WITH IMPACT

ENTERTAIN \* PERSUADE  
STORYTELLING WITH HUMOR  
KNOWLEDGE & STORYTELLING



FIN



# GIVE THE CHILD A NAME

If you google the use of drawings at work, these terms might come up:

- Visual harvesting
- Graphic recording
- Visual facilitation
- Sketch noting
- Doodling
- And many more...

These names refer to the methods and roles that you can assume in the process. I have listed the five most common terms:

- **Visual harvesting** is not only the name of our company, it is also used as a broader term for the different methods and roles we play as a visual practitioner.
- **Visual/graphic facilitation:** the person who draws is also a facilitator – the leader of the process of the visual conversation. A visual facilitator is usually most helpful in small groups of people (such as a management team or a strategic team), leading them through a strategic process, and draws the most important insights and decisions throughout their journey. The visual facilitator often takes people through the process using templates or patterns, as well as post-its or flip charts.

- **Visual/graphic recorder:** we also refer to this as “the fly on the wall”.

The person who draws does not lead the process. She brings to life a visual translation of what is being said, what is happening and what is experienced, by means of words and drawings. The drawings are made on a large sheet of paper, a foam board or an iPad so that the participants can follow the visualisation. The term ‘scribing’ is often used to describe this job.

- **Sketch notes** are comparable to visual reporting but on a smaller scale (like paper, or iPad). The person and the drawings are not visible to the audience. The drawings are then processed in a report, video, or presentation, for example.
- **Doodling** comprises notes, drawings or sketches that people make for themselves, to be able to listen, remember or trigger ideas. Several studies have shown that they are indispensable for retaining information, concentrating and creating new ideas.

**My mother listens to  
difficult stories of important  
people and turns it, in real time,  
into a simple drawing.**

(my 10-year old daughter explaining to her teacher what I do for a living)

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# DOODLE LIKE A PRESIDENT

Sunni Brown, one of the evangelists of visual thinking, sees doodling as a powerful technique. She describes doodling as 'making spontaneous marks to help yourself think'. And doodling certainly has been the cradle of many intellectual and innovative breakthroughs. Research shows that many scientists, innovators – and even presidents – draw

during meetings to keep focus or as a catalyst for their thinking process.

Recently, we've seen just how valuable doodling can be. Former US president Barack Obama's quirky pencil sketches on a sheet of White House stationery were sold for USD 11,113.

Did you know?

**Before the widespread availability of paper, 12th-century monks in European monasteries used intricate drawings to prepare illustrated, illuminated manuscripts on vellum and parchment. Drawing has also been used extensively in the field of science, as a method of discovery, understanding and explanation.**