

The Benefits

OF USING GRAPHIC RECORDING/ GRAPHIC FACILITATION

by Susan Kelly

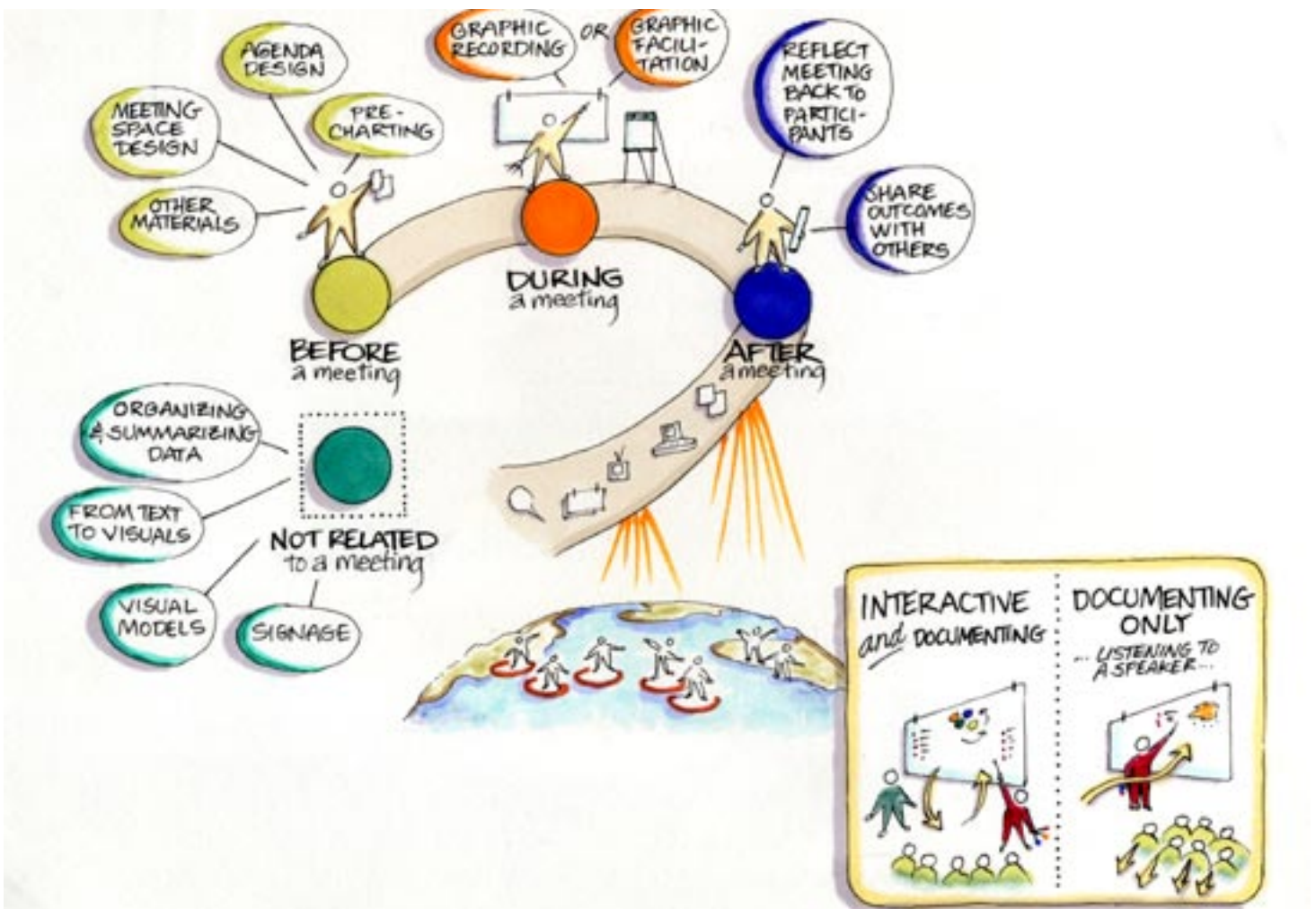


Setting the Context

The work of a Graphic Recorder/Graphic Facilitator usually, but not always, revolves around a meeting of some sort, either before, during or after.

The information on the following pages focuses on the [benefits](#) of using reflective graphics with a group of people [during](#) a meeting and assumes:

- people are willing to come together around matters that are important to them; and
- they are willing to let the graphics be a supporting partner in the process, interactively engaging with the material that is being generated.



Setting the Context

Here are examples of the kinds of groups and activities that benefit from using reflective graphics.

Examples of GROUPS



Examples of ACTIVITIES



Reflective Graphics

THE "WHAT"

During portions of a meeting, a Graphic Recorder captures ideas and information as they are being expressed on large pieces of wall-hung paper (usually 4' x 6'-8' or more) and flip charts, using markers and other media.

The large size of the chart:

- makes the invisible visible;
- reflects the whole; and
- mirrors, not only the content, but also the process the group is going through.

THE "HOW"

- The graphics person listens for and captures the **essence** of ideas and information which serves as an initial summary.
- The recorder is often **organizing** ideas and information on the spot in ways that help people see patterns and relationships.
- The recorder uses a variety of "**visuals**" to create charts that support group work. The term "visuals" is used here as a broad catchall word for:
 - Pictures
 - Words
 - Color
 - Graphics
 - Visual, analytical tools (from templates to post-it notes)

(see graphic next page)

Reflective Graphics (continued)



The Human Connection

Reflective graphics connect with, stimulate and support the way we are as humans. The large size of the chart, color, images, words, and the organization and formatting of data all contribute to this.

When the "art" and "science" of the human meet the "art" and "science" of reflective graphics, it usually results in people being highly productive and creative.



For the Individual

FROM THE PERSONAL PERSPECTIVE

Because the record is large and therefore **public**, a person's need to be heard and validated is accommodated as their expressions are captured on the chart. People can literally see their contribution to the whole which tends to increase individual participation and build trust among group members.

FROM THE PRACTICAL PERSPECTIVE

The large chart can hold many more images at one time than the brain can. Being able to **see** and **scan** the whole of what you and others are saying automatically changes the nature and quality of a meeting; the person and the group as a unit work **smarter** because of this broader, visual perspective.



For the Group

FROM THE PERSON TO PERSON PERSPECTIVE

The large display of information and color naturally weaves together the diverse ideas of individuals into a composite 'picture' that reflects the collective intelligence. This effectively helps shift perspective from "my way" to "our way".

Because of this, listening is enhanced and people are better able to build on each others' ideas. This, in turn, creates an atmosphere (or energy field) where:

- the quality of thinking and development of the group deepen and improve;
- there is a flow of creativity and insight; and
- individuals in the group usually have a more satisfying experience in terms of interaction and productivity.

FROM THE PRACTICAL PERSPECTIVE

The large format allows the group to build a shared base of information quickly, a feat that often takes people many meetings to achieve without large scale graphic support.

When ideas are captured and held as the Group Memory*, participants are set up to move the conversation forward in terms of making meaning/analyzing, making decisions or creating something new.

In addition, group members often can communicate more clearly using the chart as a common referent.

(see graphic next page)

*Phrase attributed to Geoff Ball

For the Group (continued)

