

## Get visual for better results

Written by Julie Desmond  
Thursday, 30 August 2012 15:25

---

Quick! Describe your favorite TV commercial! For many people, this is easy to do because we live in a visual culture. TV, YouTube, FaceBook, Pinterest... we take in information through the eyes the way we ingest food through our mouths. And then we walk into a meeting or presentation bearing written handouts outlining the written slides on our not-so-powerful PowerPoint.

According to David Sibbert, consultant and author of Visual Meetings, adding visuals to conversations can increase participation, engagement and memory. Visual information adds another sense, and therefore another dimension, to your verbal message, making conversations more fun (yes, fun is a professional value) and productive.

“But I can’t draw!” you say. Oh, yes, you can. Try one of these tricks to bring visuals to the conversations you have today.

**Peaks and Valleys:** Can you draw a straight line? On a notepad or a napkin, draw a line through the middle, left to right. Now you can talk visually about goals: say, the line is average sales; last year we were below average (put a dot below the line); next month, if we do xyz, we can be here (draw a dot to the right of the first one, on the line) and by year end, we should be here (another dot, further right, above the line). Now, to emphasize your point, connect the dots while restating your objective. Looks like a graph, doesn’t it? But your audience participated in its creation, making it more memorable than a polished, computer generated version.

**Flow Charts:** Can you draw a circle or a square? Then you can draw flow charts to describe relationships, time lines, and to make connections between ideas during brainstorming sessions.

When people watch you draw, you have their full attention. They have to focus to follow your visual creation while listening to you speak. If someone checks text messages during your art session, they will likely miss something; they are forced to pay attention.

**Bonus Visuals:** Can you draw a star? Draw the outline of a star, put a circle on top, and you

## Get visual for better results

Written by Julie Desmond  
Thursday, 30 August 2012 15:25

---

have a stunning rendition of a person. Star people can represent customers, employees, neighbors, committee members.

Practice turning lines, circles, squares and stars into the symbols you need to make your point. Think, light bulbs (large oval on small square, a few straight lines shooting out to show that it is bright), dollar signs, hearts for love, lightning bolts for conflict, rectangles for buildings.

To stand out and be more effective, ditch the PowerPoint, grab a white board, smart board or plain piece of paper and add real-time visuals to your conversations.

Julie Desmond is IT Recruiting Manager for George Konik Associates. Write to [Julie@lakereqionstaffing.com](mailto:Julie@lakereqionstaffing.com).