VISUAL TEAMS

GRAPHIC TOOLS FOR COMMITMENT, INNOVATION, & HIGH PERFORMANCE

CREATE

I'M READY TO LOG IN, ARE YOU THERE?

SUSTAIN

David Sibbet
VISUAL TEAMS
GRAPHIC TOOLS FOR COMMITMENT, INNOVATION, & HIGH PERFORMANCE

THIS FIELD IS MOVING FAST! LET'S GO!
VISUAL TEAMS

GRAPHIC TOOLS FOR COMMITMENT, INNOVATION, & HIGH PERFORMANCE

I'M READY TO LOG IN, ARE YOU THERE?
This book is dedicated to my inspirations, Arthur M. Young and Allan Drexler, and for all the young people worldwide who are working in teams and believe that collaboration is not only an effective but also a necessary competency in our times.
Contents

Introduction

Imagining Better Results for Teams xi

I. What Is a Visual Team?

Using Graphics Across the Whole Workflow 1

1. Working Like Designers / Why Visual Teams Get Results 3

2. Why Be a Visual Team? / The Case for Collaboration 15

3. A Graphic User Interface for Teams / The Drexler/Sibbet Team Performance Model 29

II. Leading Visual Teams

Seeing the BIG Picture 55

4. So You’ve Just Been Promoted / Understanding Team Leadership 57


6. Supporting Innovation / Providing Visual Tools 83

Contents / vii
III. Visual Team Startup
Creating Trust, Focus, & Commitment

7. Visualizing Purpose / Orienting to Your Mission
8. Seeing Yourself As a Team / Developing Trust
9. Clarifying Goals / Using the Graphic Gameplan
10. Consensus or Command? / Deciding Commitments

IV. Sustaining Results
Innovating for High Performance

   You Can Literally See
12. Visualizing & Innovating / Understanding High Performance
13. Assessments, Dialogues, & Sharing Rallies / The Importance of Learning & Renewal

V. Growing a Visual Team Culture
Thinking BIG About Opportunities

15. Developing Visual Team Skills / Learning Tips & Tools 193

VI. New Technology Tools
A Revolution in Visual Collaboration 219
17. Visual Tools Come of Age / Experiencing High Performance at the Institute for the Future 221
18. Graphics for Distributed Teams / Web & Teleconferences 231
19. Team Rooms & the Net / Physical Places or Virtual Spaces? 241
20. Mobile Technology / Reshaping Tomorrow’s Teams 249

VII. Links, Tools, & Other Resources 263
21. Websites & Bibliography 265
Appendix 273
Jack R. Gibb’s Original Research 273
Summary of Arthur M. Young’s Theory of Process 274
Index 277
IS BIRGIT DIALED IN SO SHE CAN SEE THIS?
Introduction
Imagining Better Results for Teams

This book is an outgrowth of 35 years of working with organizations and their teams, helping people cooperate to achieve results. I’ve worked all over the world with large and small, private, nonprofit, and government organizations. During that time the principles and practices that guide this work have become clearer and stronger, and it is time to share these widely. In the past ten years particularly, the interest in these tools has increased dramatically, specifically the Drexler/Sibbet Team Performance Model (TPM) and a related system of tools that have been in development since 1980. Increasingly the system is a standard reference in schools of organizational development, and is the system of choice at leading companies such as Nike, Becton Dickinson, and Genentech/Roche. This book provides the often-requested introduction to the use of these tools.

My Inspiration
My work with teams is inspired by three things. First is the long-held conviction that if the communications and innovation strategies that successful design teams use were generally understood, then the whole field of team development would benefit. I’ve found that working like a designer broadens my repertoire of tools when it comes to starting, improving, or collaborating on work that requires shared commitment, innovation, and high performance. Simply put, a visual team is a team that works like designers.

My second inspiration is my work with the Theory of Process formulated by Arthur M. Young. I came across this work in the 1970s. It is the most comprehensive system I know of for integrating the findings of contemporary science with traditional wisdom about how nature works. It has provided an invaluable set of lenses for seeing the patterns of process that underlie any kind of workgroup or team.

My third inspiration is Allan Drexler. He inspired my professional work with teams in 1981
When I met him in a workshop I was leading on graphic facilitation. At the time Allan was (and still is) an organization development consultant working with companies such as General Mills and RR Donnelley. He was focusing on “matrix organizations” —the type of organization in which workers report to both functional managers in areas like manufacturing, human resources, and sales, and also to project managers of cross-cutting lines of business. The built-in conflicts these forms of organization generate are tough on teams. He was passionate about finding answers.

At the time I met Allan I was immersed in working visually with groups and facilitating meetings and organizational strategy sessions. My book *Visual Meetings: How Graphics, Sticky Notes, and Idea Mapping Can Transform Group Productivity*, is a summing up of this long experience. But I was also very interested in the larger problems of organization effectiveness. As I began working with Allan at General Mills, we began the exciting adventure of creating the Drexler/Sibbet/Forrester Team Performance System (TPS), synthesizing his rich field research in teams and my deep explorations of group process. Our goal was to create a framework for teams as useful as the Meyers-Briggs Type Indicators (MBTI) is for individuals. This intention has carried on since, resulting in engagement in a wide variety of explicit team-development efforts at companies such as Nike, Mars, Procter & Gamble, Mentor Graphics, Otis Spunkmeyer, W. L. Gore, Hewlett Packard, Becton Dickinson, Chevron, Agilent Technologies, the San Francisco Foundation, and the National Park Service.

**My Motivation**

When Richard Narramore, my editor at John Wiley & Sons, broached the idea of writing a second book after *Visual Meetings*, I immediately thought of the need to show how visual meetings integrate over time to get real results. But writing about teams would be a different challenge. There are many, many resources on teamwork (a good number of the leading ones are listed

**WHO IS THIS BOOK FOR?**

- New team leaders
- Team members wanting better results
- Managers wanting to support team environments
- Leaders wanting to support creativity and innovation
- Young people learning about groups
- People interested in collaboration
- Coaches
- Human resources managers
- Human resources development professionals
- Consultants who work with teams
- Nonprofits working with volunteers
in the back of this book). But I appreciated, being familiar with the field, that there still weren’t many books touching on the application of new design and visualization tools to teams. I also knew that Allan and my work on the TPM had developed some fresh approaches to explaining team dynamics through the power of visual language. I’m not a researcher, but I believe that senior practitioners should share their experience as a contribution to the field. I agreed to write Visual Teams.

Since that commitment another deeper motivation has surfaced. I have been president of my own company, The Grove Consultants International, since 1977 (it’s gone through a few name changes but is basically the same business). In that time I’ve been a team leader of our own and client projects many, many times. I’ve also trained a large number of people who have learned their facilitation and consulting craft at The Grove. I know that collaboration can result in amazing, creative results. But I also know that collaboration is a learned capability, and effective teamwork is increasingly challenged by 24/7 work environments, virtual work, ideological divisiveness, and lean, overworked organizations. I am also acutely aware that the scale and complexity of problems in our cities, states, country, and world are also increasing. I see young people in Eastern Europe, the Middle East, and in Asia calling for this in their own way. I see my own children and grandchildren heading into that same world. So my motivation has flowed well beyond my personal interest in teams. I feel a deep obligation to share what I’ve learned in a way that young people can benefit.

Why “Visual Teams”?

Visual work has always been a feature at The Grove and in my consulting with teams. It stems from a lifetime passion for design and visual language. The success of Visual Meetings in reaching a new audience of beginning consultants, teachers, facilitators, and human resources staff convinced me that teamwork needs the same contribution.