

Tool 20: Visual Reminders

Aim of the tool

To visualize information and ideas in an organized and creative way.

When to use it?

It can be used at any stage as part of group work or individual reflection.

What is a Visual Reminder?

A visual reminder is a generic name for a framework, diagram, or illustration that can help to capture and communicate complex issues. We use them often to clarify our own thinking, or help a group of people to grasp easily what is being discussed and agreed upon.

Here are some examples:

Mind map

A well-known and easy visualization tool is creating a mind map. It helps to visualise information and ideas in a structural way.



Source: Image courtesy of Learning Fundamentals

Brain sketching

Brain sketching is a tool to use for problem solving. To use the tool, follow these steps:

- 1: A group of 4-8 people sit around a table, or in a circle of chairs. They need to be far enough apart to have some privacy. The problem statement is agreed, and discussed until understood.
- 2: Each participant privately draws one or more sketches (each on separate sheets of paper) of how the problem might be solved, passing each sketch on to the person on their right when it is finished. The facilitator suggests that sketches should not take more than 5 minutes or so to

draw.

3: Participants take the sketches passed on to them and either develop or annotate them, or use them to stimulate new sketches of their own, passing the amended original and/or any new sketches on to their neighbour when ready.

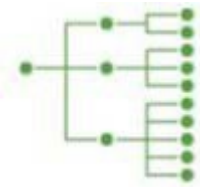
4: After the process has been running for a suitable period and/or energy is running lower, the sketches are collected in.

5: After the sketches are collected, they can be display and discussed for clarification and comments.

(Instructions based on <http://www.mycoted.com/BrainSketching>)

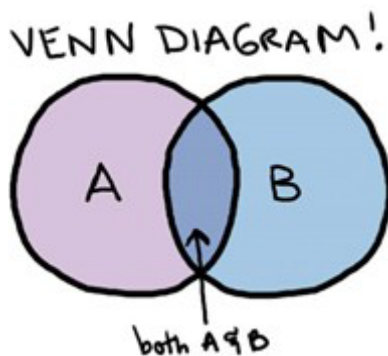
Tree diagram

A tree diagram can be used to break down a problem, issue or topic. Tree diagrams can take many forms: to visualize hierarchy, to identify possible decisions and their consequences; a tree diagram can be horizontal, vertical, multi-directional, radial, hyperbolic and can be used as a metaphor. A metaphorical tree diagram can for example visualize inputs by the roots of the trees and the results of a process as the leaves of tree.



Venn diagram

A Venn diagram uses intersecting circles to illustrate similarities, differences and relationships between groups. The overlapping parts of the circles represent similarities between groups. The non-overlapping parts represent differences between groups.



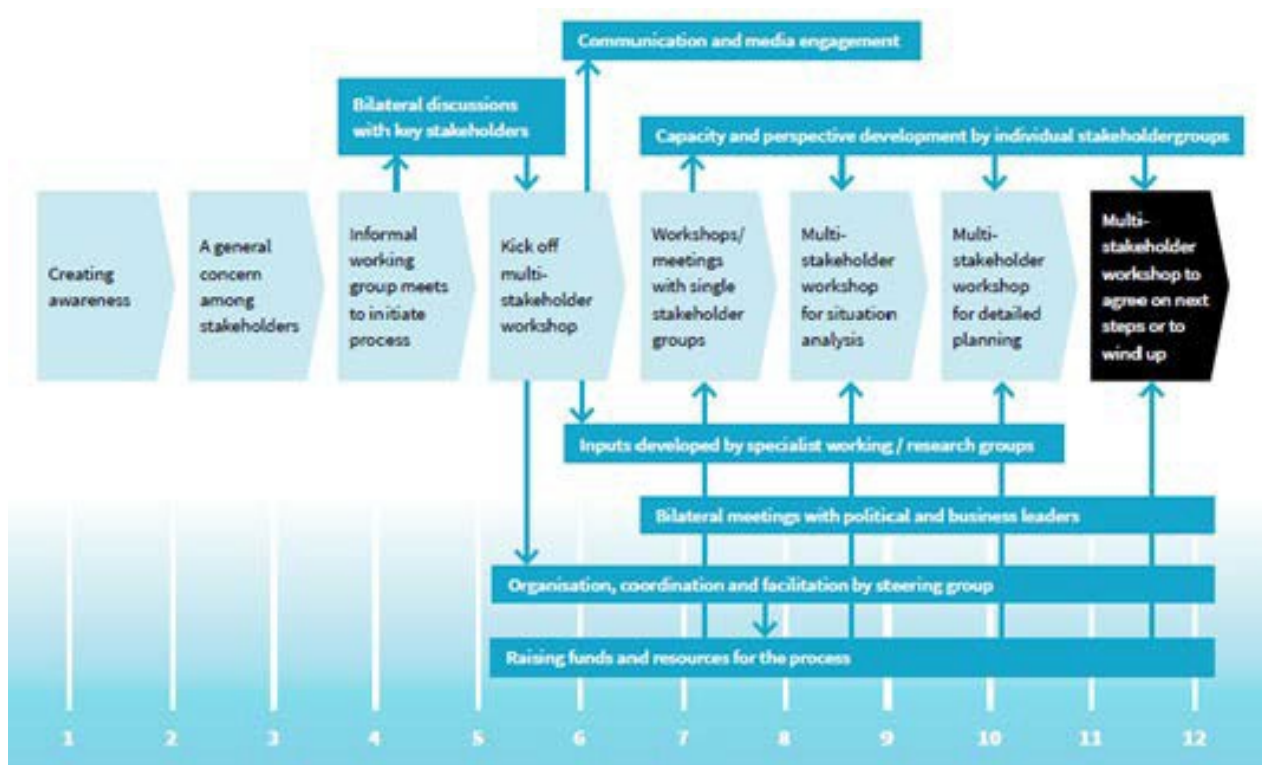
Source: *Artisanmn.com*

Flowchart

Flowcharts are diagrams used to visualize processes or complex tasks using symbols. To use a flowchart follow these steps:

- Identify the process or task to be analyzed.
- Determine the starting and ending points.

- Fill in the necessary steps between the starting and ending points. Use a different symbol for each step.
- Draw arrows to connect each step with the next until the process is completely diagrammed.
- Analyze the process flowchart and revise it if necessary.



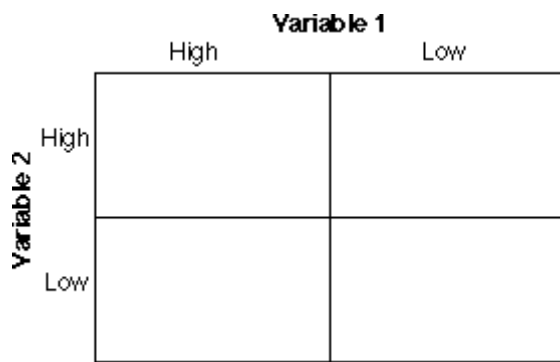
Flowchart example. Illustration from MSP Guide (p 41): Timeline of a hypothetical MSP over the course of a year. Time frame in months.

2-by-2 matrix

A 2-by-2 matrix is a decision support tool that can be used to analyze qualitative data. You take an issue, and map it against two critical variables that are important to the issue. The axes should be chosen so that, e.g., the data with the most desirable characteristics will fall into the upper left quadrant and the least desirable in the lower right quadrant.

Generally, the two by two matrix is a useful tool for categorising things that can be reduced to two simple variables, particularly when quantitative information is unavailable and qualitative judgements must be made.

It enables a rapid clustering (or separating) of information into four categories, which can be defined to suit the purpose of the exercise. It is particularly useful with groups as a way of visibly plotting out a common understanding or agreement of a subject.



Learn more

Periodic Table of Visualization Methods

If you want to explore more, this website is a good way to start. It collects various visualization methods categorized in six categories: data visualization tools, information visualization tools, concept visualization tools, strategy visualization tools, metaphor visualization tools and compound visualization tools. Click [here](#) to go to the Periodic Table of Visualization Methods.

Venn Diagrams: <https://support.office.com/en-sg/article/Create-a-Venn-diagram-d746a2ce-ed61-47a7-93fe-7c101940839d>

Tree diagrams:

M. Lima (2014) 'The book of trees: Visualizing branches of knowledge'. Princeton Architectural Press, New York www.bookoftrees.info/bt/

A Toolbook for Quality Improvement and Problem Solving- Tree diagram
www.syque.com/quality_tools/toolbook/Tree/example.htm

Various visualization tools: http://www.mycoted.com/Main_Page