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**DAVID SIBBET** is a world leader in graphic facilitation and visual thinking for groups. He is the founder and president of The Grove, Inc., the largest corporate facilitation and visual thinking services firm in the world. He is the author of *The Visual Display of Quantitative Information* and the leading-edge group-process tools and services for panoramic visualizations, graphic facilitation, team leadership, and organizational transformation are used by consultants and organizations around the world.

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_What’s new in *Visual Meetings*_

The latest visual thinking techniques to help you think more creatively and effectively in meetings. *Visual Meetings* builds on the author’s visual thinking approach to help you design ideas and outcomes. The author, David Sibbet, also joins the author of *Visual Language*, Shawn Eichman, as a visual consultant to provide visual thinking and facilitation services. *Visual Meetings* is a visual guide to meetings, a visual guide to visual meetings, and a visual guide to visual thinking.

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VISUAL MEETINGS

HOW GRAPHICS, STICKY NOTES & IDEA MAPPING CAN TRANSFORM GROUP PRODUCTIVITY

John Wiley & Sons, Inc.
For my children and grandchildren, the sons and daughters of our Grove team, all the young people my poet wife Susan teaches, and all the other young people who will be taking civilization on the next part of its journey.
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POWERS OF V VISUAL MEETING
PARTICIPATION

YES! I SEE WHAT HE MEANS!

BIG PICTURE THINK
Introduction

The Power of Visual Meetings

Do you wish you had a better way to run all the meetings you have? Do you wish you could not only be very productive but also have fun in the process? Is your organization putting pressure on people to be more innovative? These are some of the challenges people who run meetings are facing in the work world. These are some of the needs that gave rise to the practice of visual meetings, and to my desire to share the result of 38 years of running really great meetings all over the world.

But it’s not the only reason I chose to write this book. I’m very concerned about people seeming to be more polarized and disconnected, with civil discourse degrading in democracies and conflict and authoritarianism rising as tempting alternatives. I’m also concerned about pressures at work and in the classroom. Responding to the complexity and scale of changes in the economy and the environment is starting to outstrip our capabilities. Running our organization lean, with slim or no travel budgets, and less and less time for real dialogue and engagement is challenging the quality of communications. I think that what I am calling visual meetings is a direct response, as you will see as we go along.

What Is Visual Language & What Are Visual Meetings?

Before going further it’s important for you to understand what I mean by visual meetings. For 35 years I’ve been participating in a creative upwelling in ways of communicating coming from Silicon Valley and the wider San Francisco Bay Area in California, now spreading worldwide. We visual practitioners have been inspired by how architects and designers work, and now with social media by how natural systems organize. Those of us supporting all these developments in organizations have been busy inventing new ways for people to work together. We know people can get a lot more accomplished when collaborating and working together than by themselves. Better tools and methods, while not sufficient without intention and motivation, do provide hopeful ways of facing rising levels of dynamism and change. I share a lot of these with you over the course of the chapters in this book. You’ll find a lot of them are very simple and powerful.
Can We Support Being Smarter as Groups?

Alan Briskin, a key leader in the Fetzer Institute's Collective Wisdom Initiative and author of a book by that title, argued that what undermines our ability to work together and be open to our differences is finding that we are no longer able to handle the complexity of what we are facing. In the face of confusion, people at work, and people in meetings, retreat into simplistic explanations and intolerant positions of non-listening.

Showing how visual language and visual listening can be a hopeful response to these kinds of problems is a key motivation for writing this book. As we will see, visualization is a powerful way to resolve confusions in groups that arise from inadequate or conflicting mental models. This is crucial when those models involve our ideas of how work gets done, how teams cooperate, how to make decisions, how to organize, and how to learn. A huge amount of time in meetings is spent working out these differences.

As you will hopefully come to appreciate, much of our understanding of systems and how things work together is represented by imagery, story, and metaphor animated by our experience. Upgrading our ways of thinking will require becoming conscious of all the ways we represent how we think about the world to ourselves and to others. Visual meetings have unusually productive properties in this regard in both providing a safe way to become conscious of our metaphors, and providing creative ways to cocreate new ones.

Power Tools for Effective Meetings

While for many people meetings are a necessary pain, and often have a deserved bad reputation, running effective meetings is possible—and not just effective meetings, but meetings that break through to extraordinary results. There are some very accessible and very powerful tools available. Sharing those having to do with visualization is a primary goal of this book.
Natural Ability to Communicate Visually The most powerful of these tools is your natural ability to draw. Believe it or not, this capability is built right into your body. The kind of drawing I’m talking about is the kind we do when we gesture—simple, expressive movements. Can you even think about talking without making gestures? This is so natural people even gesture when they are on the phone! In fact gestures and painting pictures in the air develops in children before being articulate with spoken language. In this book you’ll learn how easy it is to translate this natural way of communicating to paper, and perhaps to tablet computers. All you need to do is learn a few tricks about holding markers and throwing lines around. And now that digital media is so supple with visual material, there is literally no barrier to returning to this tested and effective way of communicating.

Sticky Notes and Other Interactive Media The second set of power tools is interactive media. This is symbolized in the title of this book by “sticky notes,” those inventions of 3M now available from many suppliers in a huge range of colors, shapes, and sizes. Sticky notes are cousins of image cards, mind mapping software, and other kinds of media you can move around like little blocks. Working with little chunks of information that can be combined and recombined is what movie and video designers do with little sketches—creating storyboards of possibility. Well, it’s possible to work this way across a wide range of meetings with lots of other purposes than design. Humans love to interact, and letting people get their hands right on information is a direct path to high engagement.

Idea Mapping I’m calling a third set of tools “idea mapping.” By that I mean using visual metaphors embedded in graphic templates and worksheets that allow groups to think visually. Inventors have always fiddled around with diagrams and drawings in their journals, and engineers and designers work on whiteboards and drawing tablets. But you don’t have to be an engineer or designer to benefit from the power of idea mapping. It’s a flexible approach that goes all the way from working on blank paper to well-structured graphic templates and software that help groups visualize what they are thinking and planning.
The Powers of Visual Meetings

My confidence in this way of working is rooted in three phenomena that I have experienced since the first time that I picked up magic markers and began facilitating groups visually.

1. **Participation:** Engagement explodes in meetings when people are listened to and acknowledged by having what they say recorded in an interactive, graphic way.

2. **Big Picture Thinking:** Groups get much smarter when they can think in big picture formats that allow for comparison, pattern finding, and idea mapping.

3. **Group Memory:** Creating memorable media greatly increases group memory and followthrough — a key to group productivity.

Since these are some of the reasons visualization has long roots in design communities, you may wonder why there is a visualization revolution going on now in business. I think there are several reasons. One is rooted in the tools themselves.

For the last few decades a lot of energy has been absorbed learning to use new computing tools that for quite a while were very clumsy with visual material. Now they aren’t! A set of breakthroughs began when desktop and personal computers made graphic production easy. Design tools—draw programs, paint programs, layout software, graphics on spreadsheets, and presentation software—became available for all kinds of workers, not just designers.

Laser printers then gave all these tools high quality output and now many of these produce color. Digital cameras made it possible to capture and share hand drawn charts and visual material electronically. Wonderfully flexible tablets and even touch screen walls now allow for hands-on interaction with imagery. I think the iPad is the speartip of the visualization revolution on the tools side.
Responding to Drivers of Change

A second reason for the acceleration of interest in visual meetings is the rising need and in many cases demands for more interesting and productive meetings. I made a list of the drivers of change I encounter with my clients. Look at the list to the right on this page and check off the ones that you are experiencing.

In writing this book I assumed that a lot of people are facing these pressures and are not professional facilitators, but need to run effective meetings nonetheless. You might be a team leader or first-line manager wanting well-run staff and project meetings. Or you might be an HR generalist or trainer responsible for people development. I imagined salespeople who are under pressure to sell solutions and create lasting relationships and have many small and larger meetings in connection with the sales process. I was thinking of functional managers who are responsible for budgets, alignment, and quality. I was also thinking about those in government and nonprofit organizations who are working to respond to social needs and community concerns. I also believe teachers would be able to use the approaches I describe.

If you think about how much time and effort gets tied up in meetings you will begin to appreciate how much value can come from running them more effectively. If you can tap everyone’s innovation and creativity at the same time I guarantee you will be perceived as a real winner in your organization.

The Power of Visual Language

Learning effective tools and applying them to visual meetings is one thread that runs through this book. The other involves visual language, and the impact it has on your own brain when you begin to think and work this way. All during the last 38 years I and a growing network of visual practitioners have been exploring the "wetware" side of visual language—meaning how it works with cognition and thinking, in the brains of participants in meetings, and in our lives as practitioners. We’ve used large paper and magic
markers for most of this exploration, waiting for the technical and research communities to catch on. Well, they finally have. Researchers on learning and cognitive intelligence now know humans process information very differently, and that visual thinking is a large part of what we do. It seems our brains are massively evolved to process visual information—some claim up to 80% of our brain cells are involved.

Bob Horn, a good friend and tracker of this phenomenon, wrote a book in the 1990s called *Visual Language*. In it he describes visual language as a “tight integration of text and graphics.” This is a relatively recent development, he observes. Historically, text handled words and illustrations handled pictures. But information graphics, maps, and the kind of murals we visual practitioners are creating are of a different order. Increasingly, this integration is showing up in multimedia work on the Internet, in games, and modern advertising and signage. Visual language is directly tackling the issues of synergy and integration of what we know across text and graphics. And this takes thinking to a whole new level.

**Visualization Addresses Important Issues**

There are certain properties of working with images and graphic metaphor that, in my experience, directly address a number of important issues involving our awareness and thinking:

- Visual recording in a meeting immediately acknowledges that someone was heard and how they were heard in ways that verbal communication alone does not.
- Working visually is deeply integrative—it combines both visual (right brain) and verbal (left brain) ways of operating with interaction and physical movement.
- Graphic displays can contain contradictory information on the same sheet of paper, softening the either/or thinking that our spoken language reinforces.
- Working with graphic metaphors allows people to talk directly about how they are making sense of things.

**Visual Meetings are for:**

- Team leaders
- HR generalists
- Line managers
- Salespeople
- Consultants
- Teachers
- Trainers
- Volunteers
- Club leaders
- Professionals
- &
- Anyone else who likes to be creative with groups
• Working with visual imagery taps people’s imaginal realms, making the stuff of hopes and dreams, intentions, and visions more accessible.

• Arranging information on journal pages or wall displays addresses not only the individual words and symbols, but also their overall interconnection and organization.

• Translating from spoken word to visual representation forces everyone to become conscious of the patterns in both.

With the rising amount of visual media that all of us consume now, and the extent to which our screen, book, magazine, and movie interactions are mediated by visuals, it is surprising one would even have to make the argument that visual meetings are more effective. But as much media as we consume, we are just at the start of understanding how to use it interactively, like we do spoken language. I hope this book raises your awareness of how much opportunity there is in this new development.

**Organization of Visual Meetings**

The spark for this book came from an editor at Wiley & Sons, Richard Narramore, who sought me out and wondered if I could do a book on visual thinking for groups. He felt that Dan Roam’s *Back of the Napkin* does a marvelous job of arguing for using simple visuals for problem solving and strategy. Nancy Duarte’s *Slideology* illustrates all the ways we can use presentation software in effective ways. But where was a book for teams and meetings? Richard knew that I and my company, The Grove Consultants International, have been pioneering graphic facilitation and visual thinking for groups since the mid-1970s. In fact, we’ve been central in creating a field of practice for this work. Many of our trainees and colleagues have created businesses conducting visual meetings.

Over the years I’ve written many books for professional practitioners on this subject. Richard wanted to know if I was willing to share this way of working with a much wider audience. I welcomed the invitation,

Visual language is emerging as any other language does by people creating it and speaking it... it is being born of people’s need, worldwide, to deal with complex ideas that are difficult to express in text alone.

*Bob Horn*

*Visual Language*
for, now more than ever, I think the world of work needs innovation and renewal to cope with the enormity of challenges we all face.

**Part I—Just Imagine!**

This book presents the core ideas and practices involved in Visual Meetings following a progression that mirrors how people actually work in the process of moving from ideas to action. It’s reflected in the little diagram on the cover of the book—the progression of IMAGINING, ENGAGING, THINKING, and ENACTING. The sections of this book match this progression, each one summing up with a section on how to pull it all together.

To get full value from this book it will help to begin with your own imagination and an overview of what you could accomplish if you began to run visual meetings. I will argue that a person’s point of view—or, in popular language, where we are coming from—colors everything one learns and perceives. Learning begins with the spark of intention. Part I—Just Imagine: Power Tools in the Visualization Revolution, will help you imagine what you might do. It begins with a story of how Apple and others have used visualization in meetings. It will also bring together my and The Grove’s experience in teaching people to access their inborn ability to draw the simple drawings used to support visual listening.

If you are convinced by my argument that everybody already knows graphic language, much of the rest of the book will be like having a basket of presents to open. Interestingly, many people confuse graphics with realistic drawing, and decide early that they can’t draw well and aren’t going to use drawing for communication. But graphics for visual meetings are a completely different kind of thing, and rely on simple images that anyone can produce with a few tips. We’ve trained thousands and know this for sure. I’ll show you some easy ways to get started with your own note taking and with small groups.
Part II—Engaging Groups Visually

Once you can imagine visual meetings being possible, you and your groups’ next step will be to immerse yourself in the subject. Engagement is all about participation. With a book this will mean doing some of the exercises suggested in the little side boxes with colored bars on top. With groups it means learning to invite participation all the way along. I don’t believe that people are open, receptive brains like some basketball hoop we can throw your well-designed communications through. People are full of their own ideas and interests, and reluctant to change. Thus the art of engaging begins with listening and establishing a connection and rapport. The way interactive visualizing does this is truly remarkable. Understanding this is the focus of Part II—Building Rapport and Engaging Groups: Why Visual Listening Is so Compelling (and Easy!). In this section we look closely at interactive note taking and media you can use right away, such as sticky notes. I also share how wonderful this way of working is in building rapport during a sales situation.

Part III—Graphics for Visual Thinking

With full engagement, you and your groups will want to get to work making sense of things and finding relevant patterns of understanding in all the information you generate. Part III is titled Graphics for Visual Thinking: Mapping Ideas and Finding Key Patterns. It describes where working visually can support real breakthroughs in insight and understanding. I make the case that to think about anything that has a lot of parts that connect with each other you have to visualize in some form to understand the larger pattern. This is called “systems thinking” in some quarters. Peter Senge argues that this is the fifth discipline of a real learning organization, and named his book on learning organizations after this skill (The Fifth Discipline). Planning, mind mapping, design, and training all benefit from groups understanding big pictures. I show you how you can get those effects without having to be a professional facilitator. There are some tools involved, but they are
readily available. You’ll also discover that the real power in this step of any process is having your
groups cocreate their own understanding of things. The act of mapping and diagramming is itself
a kind of thinking, and the quality of the visuals is not nearly as important as going through the
construction process. These practices also reflect new research showing that people are much
more apt to accept and implement ideas that come from within their group than ones imposed
from the outside—even by experts.

**Part IV—Graphics for Enacting Plans**

The move from ideas to action is critical if you are going to get results from meetings. **Part IV— Graphics for Enacting Plans: Visuals for Teams, Projects, and Getting Results** will show you how to use visual meetings to
launch teams, make decisions, track and guide progress on projects, and lead change processes. There are
many easily learnable tools that make a big difference in all the regular work that you have to do. We’ve
found that the act of creating roadmaps, Grove Storymaps®, prototypes, and other visualizations showing
who will do what, when, actually allows groups to rehearse actions. Visualizing and sharing action plans
becomes a step in the critical process of moving from thinking to action.

**Part V—Seeing It All Come Together**

The final section, called **Seeing It All Come Together: Tools for the Seriously Hooked**, directly addresses the
well-worn paths to competency for a visual practitioner. I share some of my current visions about where
all this is headed in the context of digital media and the Internet. The book concludes with a review of the
resources mentioned in the text that are available if you want to learn more. This includes an annotated
guide to some of the websites that are loaded with additional information and ideas.
My Hope and Dream

I have had so much fun and success running visual meetings over the years, that it is my hope and dream that people can reclaim some of this natural and universally appreciated way of communicating. I’ve been struck over the years how fascinated people are with hand drawn imagery, even very simple drawings. And this fascination seems to cross age differences and cultures.

Some cultures have visual thinking embedded in their core language. The characters that are used in Chinese, Japanese, Korean, and many other Asian languages began as little pictures created so that people could talk across the barriers of different spoken dialects. In some ways The Grove and its network of visual practitioners have been recreating a modern kind of kanji for organizational work. But unlike kanji, graphic language of the sort described in this book is an intentional integration of text and image. In today’s world, words and images coexist in the same visual frameworks whether they are graphics, sticky note displays, or idea maps. This is a development very much supported and amplified by the multimedia communication we are all learning to appreciate.

My dream is that you, in reading this book, will be able to look past gee-whiz technologies to the simple, powerful methods that humans with simple tools can use to work visually. For many, it is a truly eye-opening experience to realize that creativity and productivity are not polar choices, but partners in a new and playful way of working. It is also a very hopeful experience to see people learn to cooperate across differences because they have learned to listen to each other, cooperatively explore their meaningful metaphors, and come to images of success that operate at a new level of integration and complexity.

If you have ever felt a twinge of remorse at having to give up all that creative expression you experienced as a young child, you will be delighted to discover that not only is it reclaimable, but also it can help you access some of the most powerful meeting methods available.
Acknowledgments

This book would not have been possible without the amazing support I receive from my life partner and poet/teacher, Susan, and the team at The Grove Consultants International. Thanks to my assistant Megan Hinchliffe for running interference since I wrote this while working; to designers Bobby Pardini and Tiffany Forner for deeply influencing my aesthetic over the years; to my consulting colleagues Laurie Durnell and Tomi Nagai-Rothe, both seasoned visual practitioners, for championing accessibility and best practices; to our customer support team Noel Snow and Andrew Underwood for customer feedback about what works; to Eddie Palmer for his insights into technology; to Donna Lafayette for knowing what works in trainings; and to Thom Sibbet for partnering with me all these years to create a real publishing and tools business.

I wouldn’t even be in this business were it not for being mentored by Michael Doyle, cofounder of Interaction Associates, or inspired by Geoff Ball and Fred Lakin, two cocreators of Group Graphics® in the 1970s who saw the visualization revolution coming. During the early days of developing a lot of these methods two early colleagues who affirmed the transferability of these approaches were Jennifer Hammond Landau and Howell Thomas. In those early days we also had an Image Exchange group that voraciously scouted all the visualization strategies growing up on the West Coast. It included David Reardon, Lanier Graham, Carol Sanford, Geoff Ball, Sandra Florstedt, Sherrin Bennett, and Ed Beyeler. A special thanks to Geoff and Sandra for co-teaching the first public Group Graphics Workshop with me in 1980, and to Sandra for introducing me to the Organization Development Network, and to Lanier, for fueling my interest in visual journaling.

As the work of The Grove expanded in the ’80s and ’90s, so did our consulting team. Suzanne
Otter, Joan McIntosh, Diana Arsenian, Christina Merkley, Deirdre Crowley, and Kayla Kirsch all worked closely with me for years and have gone on to establish thriving professional visual practices of their own, many continuing to work with us as associates. They were an especially talented group who taught me a great deal. I’m very grateful to my strategic consulting colleagues: Ed Claassen for encouraging us to develop Graphic Guides for those who don’t draw well, Rob Eskridge for teaching me strategic planning, and David Cawood, Mary O’Hara Devereaux, and Meryem Le Sager for cross cultural applications. I’m also grateful to The Grove’s associates for providing a real community of practice at close quarters, particularly Tom Benthin, Steven Wright, Bill Bancroft, Konrad Knell, Waketa Wilborn, Cheryl Nigro, Sue Nenneman, Karen Stratvert, Eliska Meyers, Teri Kent, Emily Shepard, Scott Wheeler, and Sunni Brown. A special thanks to Kara Nichols, The Grove’s recent marketing director, for helping me more actively embrace The Grove’s thought leadership in this field.

A great deal of what I know about the results that visual meetings can achieve comes from my clients, who more often than not became cocreative colleagues. The experiences of creating Apple University in 1980s, working on the Groupware Users Project with the Institute for the Future in the late 1980s and 1990s; leading an internal consulting team at National Semiconductor in the early 1990s, teaching Mars associates worldwide how to graphically facilitate, and working with Hewlett Packard in the 1990s were all especially formative and deserve mention.

Ranny Riley, Jim Kouzes, and I were the external consultants when John Scully took over Apple and began to help its rambunctious culture learn business. We and Dorothy Largay and Sue Cook, the internal HR managers we worked with most closely, cocreated the Apple Leadership Experience and experimented with all kinds of visualization methods in the process. It was here I met my close friend and colleague Lenny Lind, founder of CoVision, who later shared office
space with us at The Grove and introduced us all to what multimedia photography, video production, and decision support software could do. Jim Ewing was another member of our team who has remained a close friend. He created many wonderful visual tools for working with leadership assessment and strategy. Later Christina Hooper and Jim Sporer at the Apple Advanced Technology Labs introduced me to multimedia thinking and geo-data mapping.

Kevin Wheeler, head of National University, sponsored the first 24-foot-long Storymaps for National’s Vision and Leading Change program. This led to four years of work with over 16 divisions—all using visual planning to manage their successful turnaround. David Kirjasoff, Kathy Ureda, and Sharadon Smith became adept at visual planning and collaborated on applications to reengineering, goal alignment, training, and process improvement. NSC sponsored the initial facilitator training manuals that eventually became Graphic Facilitation.

I thank Patricia Moore for bringing me in to teach Graphic Facilitation at HP in 1985. Later, Vivian Wright became an adept internal practitioner. Srinivas Sukumar, head of strategy for HP Labs, and Barbara Waugh, HR director for the Labs, collaborated on some of the breakthrough applications of visual meetings for high tech innovation that led to serious work with large graphic templates.

At Mars I worked closely with Joan Scarrott and Eileen Matthews in formulating their global facilitation training. They both became certified trainers and huge contributors to expanding the best practices for visual meetings. A second wave of trainers in Ingrid Uden and Katherine Woods became certified and eventually formed Meeting Magic, a London-based consulting firm devoted to visual meetings that are closely partnered with The Grove.
All during the 1990s The Grove and The Institute for the Future in Palo Alto were strategic partners in mapping out the terrain and implications of group-oriented technology on organizations. We used visual-meeting techniques throughout the project so successfully that they became a trademark of the Institute. I owe special recognition to Bob Johansen, Paul Saffo, Stephanie Schacter, Robert Mittman, Mary O’Hara Devercaux, and Andrea Saveri, my close colleagues in the early years of the project when we were creating our key ideas about groupware.

For the past 15 years a growing network called the International Forum of Visual Practitioners has been a community of practice to which I owe a great deal for inspiration regarding the enormous range of applications visualization can have for meetings. There are far too many close friends and colleagues to mention them all, but Leslie Salmon Zhu, Susan Kelly, and Lynn Kearny, founders of the network, do deserve mention. Gordon Rudow and Emily Shepard showed what was possible with this medium at Bonfire, a communications consulting group inspired by visualization work. Christine Valenza has contributed a great deal to documenting the growth of this field. Lynn Carruthers brought graphic recording to the Global Business Network’s scenario planning. There are dozens of other fine graphic facilitators who are taking the field to its next level as I write. I especially appreciate Ulric Rudebeck, Jonas Kjestrand, and Roy Bartilson, for collaborating on bringing strategic visioning to Sweden in the 1990s and Vagn Strangaard and Ole Qvist Sorenson for partnering in bringing these tools to Denmark. I thank Gabriella Melano for keeping the opportunities in Latin America in our minds and Arinya Talerngsri of APM Group for bringing us to Thailand. Tamio Nakano and his Hakuhodo Original Workshop group in Japan convinced me how powerful visual meetings can become in that culture.

In formulating the core ideas behind the Group Graphics’ Keyboard I owe an inestimable amount of gratitude to my teacher Arthur M. Young, and The Institute for the Study of Con-
ABOUT THIS BOOK

This book is a testimony to the evolution of graphic production tools. I’ve always worked with available tools to demonstrate what is possible for anyone with commitment and interest to do. Since the first Mac SE I’ve dreamed about completely fluid text-graphic authoring. It happened with this book.

I wrote Visual Meetings on my MacBook Pro linked to a Wacom Cintiq tablet, so I could both draw and write at will, integrating text and graphics. I then networked those files to my new iMac loaded with Adobe InDesign and laid out the pages to see what they would look like. I could then run back to rewrite, redraw, and tweak to my heart’s content—all in real time.

Thanks to Wiley for being flexible and letting me both design and write the book. The text is set in Garamond Premier Pro Light Display—11 on 14 points. The side boxes are in Gill Sans Light—9 on 12 points. The chapter titles and subheads are set in Markerfelt Thin. We chose a 7 x 10 inch landscape layout to allow for the panoramic spreads that occasionally illustrate the big ideas of the book. Most all the drawings are mine. The rest are included by permission.

Thanks to Sunni Brown, my former assistant and now with Brightspot Consulting, for modeling the eager learner. She was and is.

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sciousness’ study group on the Theory of Process. I participated seriously for over six years in the late 1970s with Jack Saloma, Frank Barr, Jack Engstrom, Chris Payne, Michael Buchele, and Joan Schliecher. They helped deepen my understanding of this theory and its applications.

In regard to the larger field of visual thinking my inspirations have been my good friend and colleague Bob Horn, founder of Information Mapping and tracker of simulation and visual thinking methods since the 1960s. His consultation on this book has been very helpful. Jim Channon, a designer turned communicator extraordinaire for the U.S. Army, broke me out of two-dimensional visual thinking with his 3D Advanced Visual Language. Stewart Silverstone, creator of the Graphic News Network, provided invaluable guidance in the world of information design. More recently Tom Wujec, Autodesk Fellow, and David Gray, founder of XPlane, have been very influential colleagues in demonstrating how visual thinking is revolutionizing business.

In the past years I have immersed myself in both virtual meetings and deep dialogue work—both of which have magnified the value of visual meetings in my mind. I would like to thank the New Media Consortium for orienting me to Second Life, where the Grove now has an island, and to a circle of consulting friends who have been unwavering champions of my writing this book. Thank you Pele Rouge, Firehawk Hulin, Diego Navarro, Gary Merrill, Michelle Paradis, Cheryl DeSantis, Amy Lenzo, Peter Garn, Susan Christy, Barbara Waugh, and Brian Dowd.

A final note of gratitude to my editor Richard Narramore, without whom there would be no book with John Wiley & Sons. His vision of making this work accessible to anyone who runs meetings has been my inspiration.
I: Just Imagine
What if Meetings Were Really Fun AND Productive?

IMAGINE

Visions
Values

Actions
Results
I: Just Imagine

This section provides a high-level overview of visual meetings, so that you can imagine all the different ways they can work for you, and how you can start successfully. Themes begun here reappear in later chapters that begin to explain some of the ways you can build on these fundamentals.

Chapter 1: Visualization Is Worth 80 IQ Points Stories of inventing visual strategies at Apple Computer for agenda management, histories, visions, dialogue support; why point of view is so important; overview of the learning cycle and how visuals support each step; International Forum of Visual Practitioners as a mirror of what is possible.

Chapter 2: Everybody Knows Graphic Language Graphics as an outgrowth of gestural communication; how to begin playing around with graphics; exercises to unlock your ability to draw; how to hang paper; basic shapes and pictographs; thinking about basic formats.

Chapter 3: Four Easy Ways to Get Started Visualizing for your personal note taking and thinking; working with flip charts and napkins in informal situations; using simple graphic templates; getting others to do the drawing.