

What are we here for?

(A shared purpose)

 <p>Purpose</p>	<p>To give participants an opportunity to express their feelings about how they currently see their team, and how different they would like the future to be.</p>
 <p>Application</p>	<p>This session offers a light-hearted and nonthreatening way for people to be open about the joys and disappointments they experience at work.</p> <p>This can be especially useful when planning any form of culture change, when the full commitment of the team will be vital for success of the initiative.</p>
 <p>What happens?</p>	<p>After the minimum of briefing, the participants work in small teams to draw two pictures representing their team. One shows their current situation, whilst the other shows the future.</p> <p>After some explanations and inter-group repartee, tease out from the teams the underlying feelings and concerns about the team that are represented in the pictures. How different do they wish the future to be, and what will bring it about?</p> <p>The session ends with the participants giving their commitment to the changes they themselves have identified.</p>
 <p>Resources</p>	<p>Overall time required: 1 hour 30 minutes.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none">• 5 minutes for introduction and initial briefing• 40 minutes for participants to develop their ideas, and draw their two pictures• 45 minutes for participants to present their pictures to their colleagues, and agree the next steps. <p>Materials and resources</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none">• Two Flipchart Stands with Blank Pads• Marker Pens• Blue-tack• Paper, Pens or Pencils for Participants
 <p>How do I do it?</p>	<p>INTRODUCE THE TASK</p> <p>Long before being able to write, we learn to express ourselves in pictures using all sorts of shapes, images and colours. Once able to write, drawing is relegated to second place, although we all continue to respond readily to visual images.</p> <p>Asking adults to draw a picture which represents themselves, their lives or their problems produces some very interesting results! Very</p>

often it is the first time they have been asked to do it, and it may cause them to see their life from a new perspective.

Asking the team to draw pictures about their current situation and their hopes for the future can produce some wonderful material.

When planning this exercise, give careful thought to the size of the teams. The ideal number is 5 - 6; fewer members may restrict the range of ideas, whilst a larger team may not fully utilise everyone's talents.

When deciding team membership, be sensitive to the operational groupings represented. Whenever possible, allow work teams to operate together, subject to the numbers becoming counterproductive.

For example, an actual team of 7 - 8 could perform satisfactorily at this task, whereas a team of 12 - 13 would result in a few members doing most of the work, with others contributing very little.

Once the team membership issue is settled, give them a short briefing on their task. In the agreed time, ask them to draw two pictures:

Picture A - represents the team/company/product as it is now.

Picture B - represents the team/company/product as they would like to see it in the future.

Encourage them to use a common theme for both pictures, to enable the jump from present to future to be meaningful. A powerful theme can be a mode of transport.

For example, the present can be shown by a steam engine/long boat/sailing ship/biplane, etc, with the future being represented by a fast car/sleek yacht/Concorde/space ship, etc.

The current picture can depict the customers/crew/team/shareholders all looking and pulling in different directions, with some key people having perhaps just jumped ship! The vehicle may be out-dated, slow, unresponsive and not under full control.

The future picture can project a much better scenario, with everyone having a shared vision of the destination, and the route to be taken. The vehicle would be sleek, modern, hi-tech if appropriate and obviously under control. The crew/team would all be working towards the same objective, with satisfied customers and shareholders in the picture.

Remember the old adage: 'A picture is worth a thousand words!'

BACK TO PLAYSCHOOL!

Once they are clear on the task, agree timings, provide materials, and set them going. They will need flipchart sheets, lots of different coloured marker pens, and Blue-tack.

Give them a few minutes to get started, and then see how well they are coping with the task. The chances are they will be getting on quite well, but occasionally you may need to give some gentle encouragement to start them on their way.

Some people may say 'I'm no good at drawing!' Assure any doubters that you are not expecting a work of art, simply a fun picture, and that they can use any combination of shapes, colours, words, images, stick people, etc.

As they approach half-time it may be worth reminding them, especially if you can see that they have not yet started the 'future' picture. Use these visits to observe how individual members are contributing to the overall team effort.

Does there appear to be any one person taking the lead? If so, is it in an unexpected role? Who is being quiet and, again, is that expected? Using the visual medium and an unusual task may have changed the traditional roles.

PICTURE GALLERY

Now ask each team in turn to display and explain their two pictures, and allow the others to make comments or ask for clarification. The first few minutes will probably be lost in laughter, as the viewers interpret the masterpieces hanging before them!

Allow the teams time to explain the finer points of their pictures - you will probably be amazed by all the detail they manage to cram into one sheet of flipchart paper.

Ask the teams for specific examples to illustrate the issues depicted in the pictures, and help to distinguish between long-term issues and one-off incidents. Probe beneath any light-hearted comments to encourage the team to reveal other issues.

Once the hilarity dies down, ask the teams to operate as a combined team to record the key words which describe the 'present' and 'future' situations, listing them on another flip-chart sheet.

The next step in the process is to ask the team how they see themselves moving from the 'present' situation to the 'future'. What will need to happen, and who will do it?

PLAN THE WAY FORWARD

	<p>Now move the team into a positive problem solving mode. Help them to prioritise the issues they have listed, and identify, say, the top ten. Then help them to evolve some form of action plan for the issues they themselves can change or influence. Ensure that, before the session end, each team member leaves with a commitment to a specific action point.</p>
 <p>Note</p>	<p>If you haven't previously used this approach of the teams drawing pictures, this session will hopefully give you confidence to try it again.</p> <p>Another time you may wish to consider asking each person to draw their own pictures. You will be equally amazed by the results. Very occasionally you will find someone who simply hasn't the confidence to try, but even they can create something albeit with more words than images.</p> <p>This method can be used with great effect to open any number of different sessions. For example, if your session is about 'time management' then ask them to draw a picture which shows how they feel about their time management in the organisation. It can be very revealing!</p> <p>If you encounter someone who is very poorly motivated, or of such low self-esteem that they just do not want to join in, then take special care. Whatever they produce, be it a simple picture or a list of their key points; be as supportive as you can. The lack of motivation or creativity is potentially a symptom of a deeper problem.</p>
 <p>When?</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • With a team who have experienced much change and are 'going through the motions' • With a team who have formed or reformed and are experiencing confusion or small bouts of conflict