

TOOL DESCRIPTION

Drawing the Future



Drawing the future is a tool that helps to develop a powerful shared vision for an organization by using creative and reflective elements in a group setting.

The goal is to have a common understanding of where the organization wants to be in the future based on the perspective of top leadership. The process starts from individual visions associated with emotions and ends with a shared vision which is emotionally committed. This is highly valuable, since visions can only be powerful if they are communicated again and again in an organization so everyone is able to accept this vision of the future. Leaders who are committed can do this translation work much more effectively.






A basic assumption behind this tool is that powerful visions are rooted in the ambitions of important key people. When people are part of the future, they feel as though they will experience the future together.

In this dialogue process, the needs for change and tension are made visible, and feelings are expressed in words. This creates an atmosphere where people have a desire to create a common vision for the future.

After this process has been completed, participants can turn their full attention toward starting the change and turning the newly expressed vision into reality.

Duration 3–6 h	Participants ideally 3–6 people (if done in larger group break out groups are needed)	Facilitation paper for notes, flipchart paper for vision work, pens, clay if using
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Drawing the Future | Process

Drafting a personal vision  30 min	Evaluation  10–15 min	Dialogue about the future  45–60 min	The common ground  45–60 min	Storytelling  1–4 h
<p>Every participant draws, paints or molds from clay a personal model of the future vision of the organization. It is important to encourage silence while working creatively.</p> <p>Key question guiding the work: "What should your organization look like in the year 20xx in order to be attractive for customers, crucial stakeholders and most of all for yourself? Draw, sketch or shape your concept of the future."</p>	<p>The developed personal vision is evaluated in a journaling exercise. Everyone imagines themselves in the year their vision becomes reality and writes down answers to 6 questions. These are posed by the facilitator at 1-min intervals:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • What is especially attractive? • What are the challenges or conflicts in your picture of the future? • What is completely new? • What does not exist anymore? • Whom do you need to make the vision happen? • What is the motto or headline of your vision? 	<p>A common "dialogue in the future" in a Fish Bowl circle by 3–6 volunteers from the group. These people imagine themselves to be in the year 20xx and having a conversation. The question guiding this conversation is: How is life at this moment in the organization?</p> <p>By asking questions, the facilitator directs the focus toward important points and hot topics. They write down essential statements for all to see on post-it notes. The others are seated around this "inner circle" and listen. They may join the circle for a brief contribution by the means of an open chair.</p>	<p>Facilitator categorize the statements during a break to give a common picture for discussion. The dialogue about the categorized results begins by clarifying the "common ground" of the visions. "What are the main aspects of our common vision?" Essential differences are also documented and made transparent as options or open points. At the end, a brief individual reflection period is held.</p> <p>Workshop may end here.</p>	<p>Formulate the common vision as a full-fledged story either in the workshop or after workshop. It is helpful to include all group members who created the vision in this process of formulating or assessing the story.</p> <p>It pays off to bring in a communication expert for this purpose.</p>