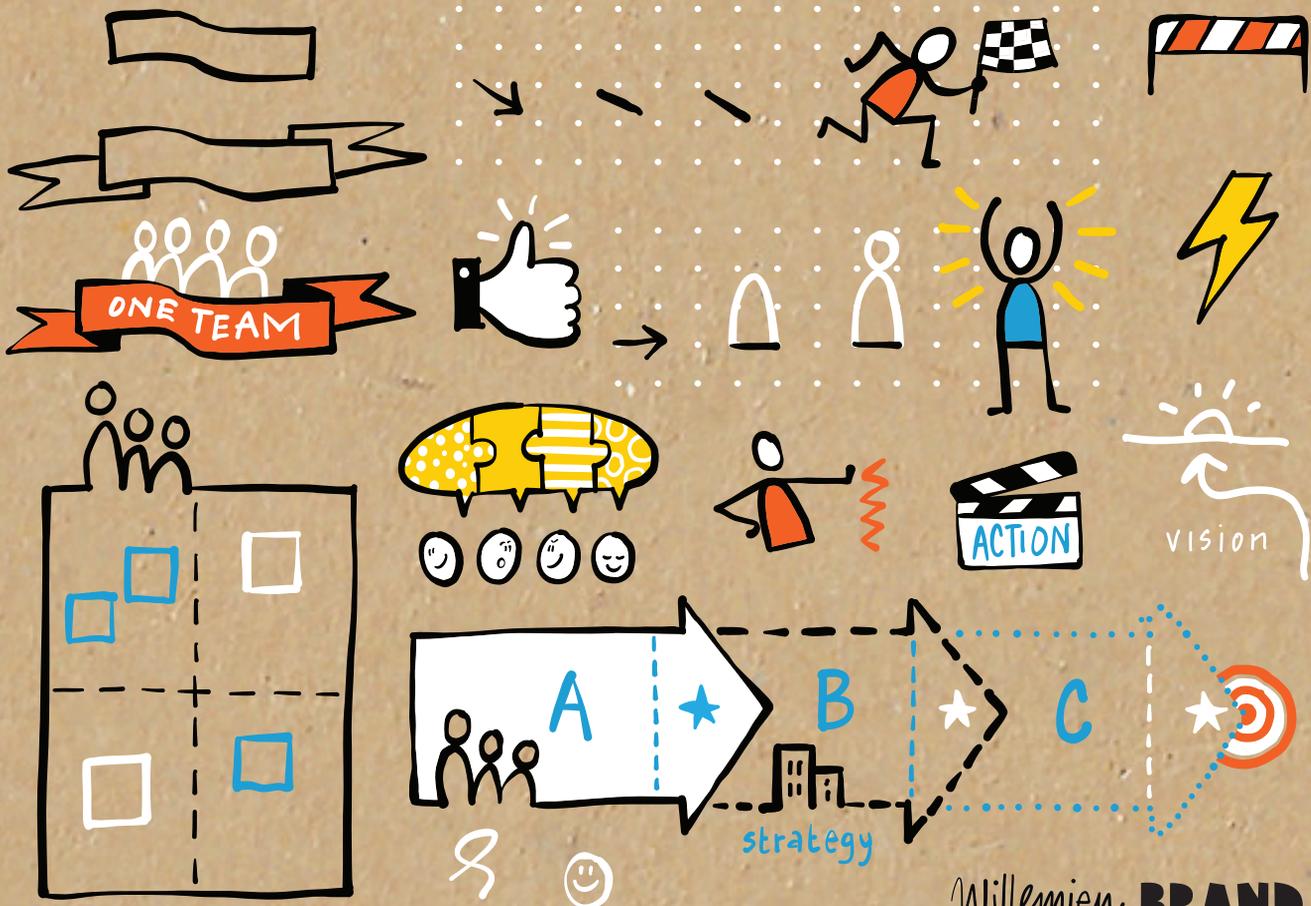


Build your
business drawing
skills for effective
communication
at work

VISUAL WORKING



Willemien **BRAND**

VISUAL WORKING

Build your
business drawing
skills for effective
communication
at work





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UNLOCK YOUR
CREATIVITY



1. INTRODUCTION

If you have this book in your hands (and obviously you do), that means you want to start (or continue) drawing and see how Visual Working can enhance your work.

When I founded Buro BRAND, Visual Thinking was almost unheard of. But we've come a long way since then. In this book, we will not only focus on setting out and practicing the basics of Visual Thinking, we will also bridge the gap between being able to draw and being able to put those skills to work in business settings.

Our previous books, Visual Thinking and Visual Doing, focus more on the implementation of Visual Thinking. They give you tips, tools and inspiration to use it personally, in teams, or for organizations. This book can be seen as a prequel, where we take a step back and help you with the actual drawing skills you need to conquer the world visually.

What do you need to start this book?

A positive frame of mind, a nice place to work and your favorite drawing materials. Anything will do! We still use our favorite tools of the trade; chisel points, black and gray markers and beautiful pencils with bright colors. (See chapter 2.1 for more about materials.)

We also challenge you to share your work with your colleagues/clients/co-workers. Ask if it resonates or if they get completely different ideas from it. That's when it really gets interesting! Do try it!

We believe there is a Visual Thinker in everyone! We would love to see your work, so feel free to share it with us on Instagram or LinkedIn!

Have fun & enjoy your skills!

Willemien Brand

WHAT YOU WILL LEARN

- 1.1 The power of Visual Thinking**
- 1.2 The Visual Thinking fundamentals**
- 1.3 How to use this book**

1.1 THE POWER OF VISUAL THINKING

Drawing is used for a number of reasons: to present a technical product design, artistic purposes, to convey an idea. Or you can use drawings to communicate more effectively.

In this book we focus on exactly that: **how do you use drawing to effectively communicate in a business environment?**

What makes drawing such an important skill to have?

So why is drawing such an important skill? We distinguish three major reasons:

1 The first reason is our visual brain.

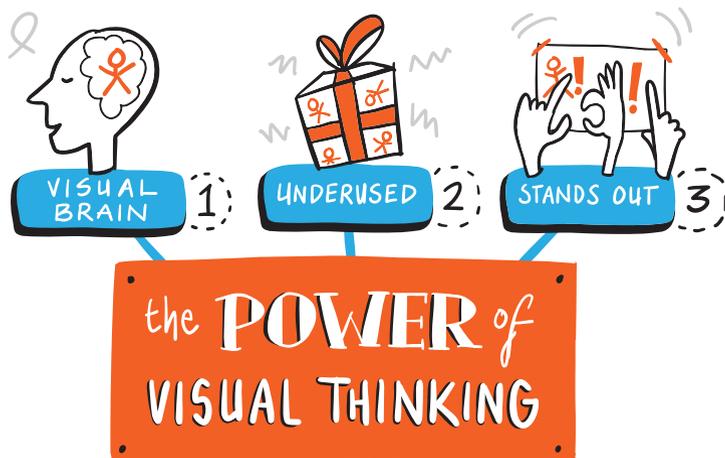
Our brains are wired visually. Visual information has been essential for our survival as a species and the parts of the brain that process it have been evolving longer than we have been using spoken or written language. That's why drawing is still an essential tool in communicating ideas and driving change.

2 Second: it's underused.

Though we are all by nature 'Visual Thinkers', it is a skill that rarely gets the attention it deserves. Our education system focuses mainly on developing spoken and written language skills. These are obviously very important, but schools generally neglect a large and incredibly rich area of communication: Visual Communication.

3 Third and last, it stands out.

Closely related to the previous point is that we live in an "information-heavy age" where attention spans are extremely short. Nowadays, you have to do ever more to stand out from the crowd. You have to surprise people and stimulate their imagination. And using visuals in your communication is a great way of doing exactly that. It is time to unleash our visual power. Not only in a passive, but in an active way, together with speaking and writing. So you can reach your goals, communicate better and work more effectively.



2.

BASIC RULES AND SHAPES

Without knowing some of the underlying principles of drawing and visual communication you can only progress so far. We think that what we tell, show and practice in this chapter are the most important rules and principles.

The cornerstone is the notion that we visualize to communicate. There is always another party involved (even if it's just 'future you'). To seduce this other party into looking at what you made, you may want it to look good but, more importantly, you want to be clear in the 'reading' direction of the information. To help them understand and interpret the information, you want to present it as clearly and legibly as possible. To not unnecessarily add to their cognitive load.

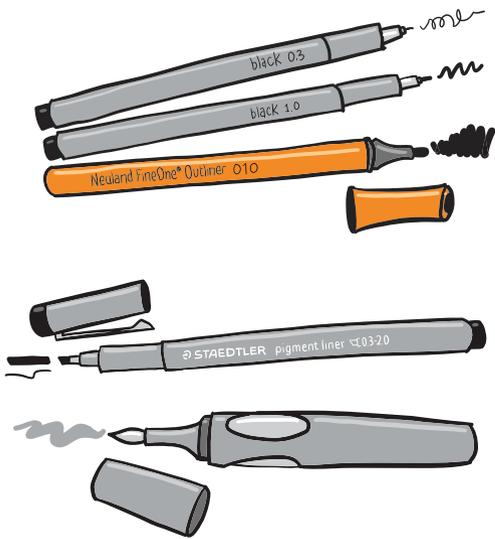
In this chapter we will talk about the materials we use, and how visual hierarchy, visual articulation and shadows can help with interpreting a visual. And finally we'll look at basic shapes and why those are a good foundation for effective communication.

WHAT YOU WILL LEARN

- 2.1 Materials
- 2.2 Visual articulation and hierarchy
- 2.3 Shadows
- 2.4 Basic shapes
- 2.5 Effective communication

2.1 MATERIALS

Drawing materials are fun! We usually work with a combination of black and gray markers, and some coloured ones for a bit of extra pop. We will give you a few suggestions that work for us. And don't forget; this book is to work IN. Don't be afraid to fill the blank sections. Just start!



Give them a try

TIP Use a variety of markers. Get familiar with what each one does and figure out what works for you.

BLACK

You need some thin markers for this book. We will start with black ones as they form the base of our drawings. You need them in two or three different thicknesses.

We recommend the following black pens:

- Any fineliner of 0,3 mm
- Any fineliner of 1 mm

We are fans of chisel tip markers like the Steadtler 1-3 mm fineliner. Try drawing some lines. One as

thick as possible, one as thin as possible. Draw the thickest line by dragging the broader side of the marker across the paper. For the thinnest line, use only the corner of the marker. Et voila; one pen, two lines with two different thicknesses.

Why use so many different black markers? Well... when all lines are one thickness – and one color – the drawing becomes what we call doodle soup!

Because everything looks equally important, your brain can't easily distinguish one part from another. That means it takes a bit of mental effort to 'read' the drawing. People don't want to feel like they have to work to understand the message. Some might even give up. That's the opposite of what you want!



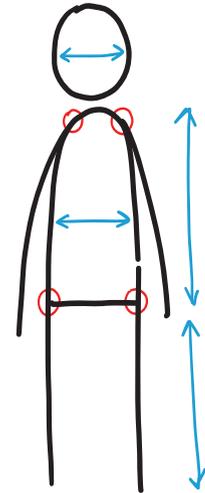
Have Confidence
in your skills



3.5 THE ENTIRE BODY

When drawing an entire person, make sure the body is closed. The arms come from the shoulder joints, the legs come from the hips. We try not to draw hands, but when we do, we keep it simple! Lines, a zigzag or mittens are all you need.

Look at how we draw hands in these situations. Just draw the hand as a basic shape; a circle for a fist, or a short line for an openhand.



Copy to practice!

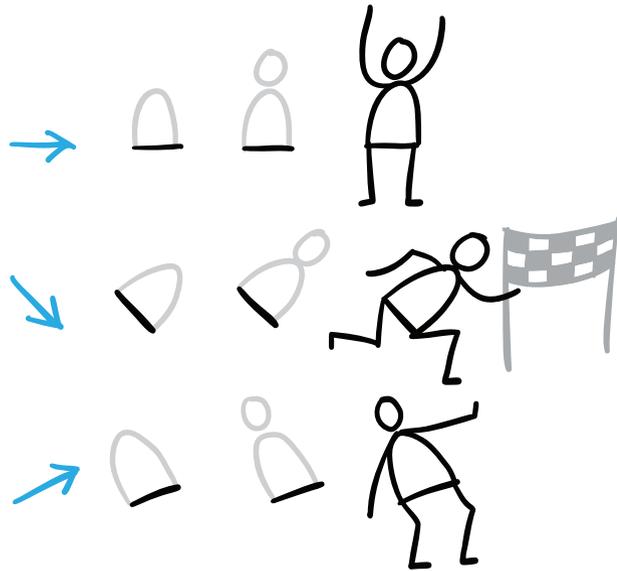


TIP Look in the mirror while posing as the person you want to draw and really study your reflection.

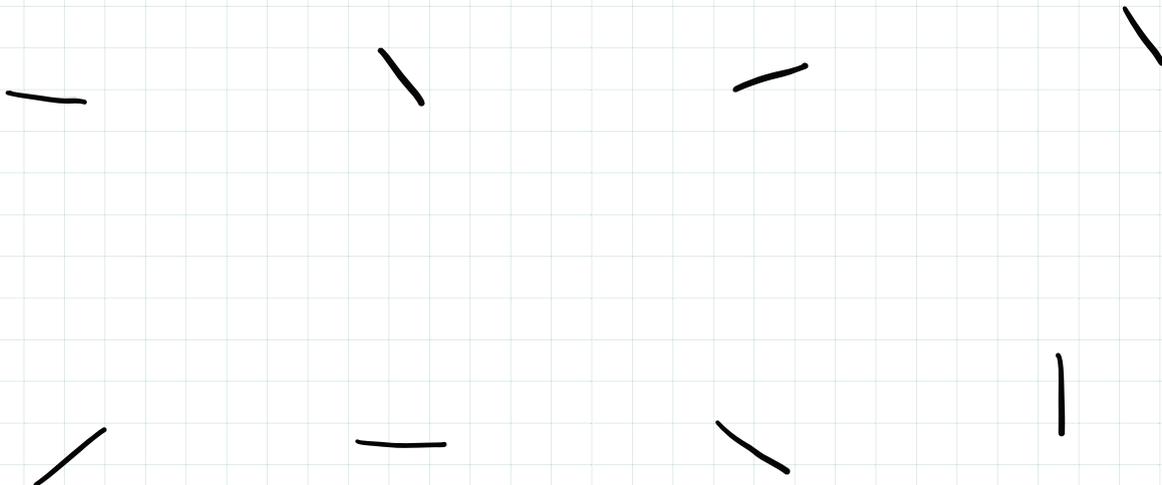
TIP You can also use a different shape for the body, or experiment with different proportions

3.6 POSES

If you want to draw a person on the **move**, start with the torso at the **correct angle**. Next add the head and finish with arms and legs. You can include extra details such as facial expressions and movement/expression lines later.



We've drawn the bottom lines of the torso for you. Can you finish the people yourself, including arms and legs? Play around!



4. BASIC ICONS

We have noticed that when you challenge people to draw a word or concept they can often express themselves visually, even if they only know some basic icons. That's why we believe it is very useful to master some essential icons that fit almost every environment.

You can transform a drawing of something as basic as a stack of paper into a strategic plan, a to-do list or a document with important data.

They are effective on their own, but you will also see them popping up in a lot of combined icons, which we will talk about in chapter 5. With these icons in your visual library, you will be able to make endless iterations and combinations!

In this chapter we will practice a range of basic icons that we've come across often, when drawing in a business context. We've clustered them into three groups, circle-based icons, rectangular icons, and arrow-based icons.

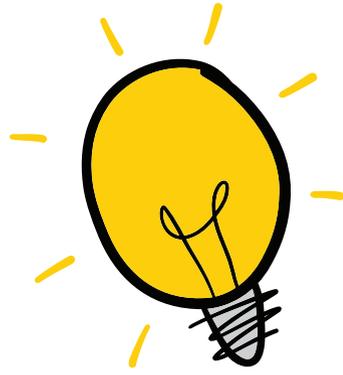
Basic icons are a foundation for your creativity. Build on them!

WHAT YOU WILL LEARN

- 4.1 Circles
- 4.2 Rectangles
- 4.3 Arrows

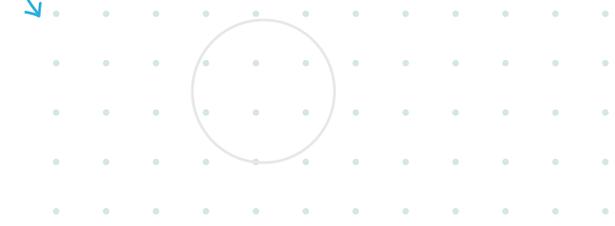
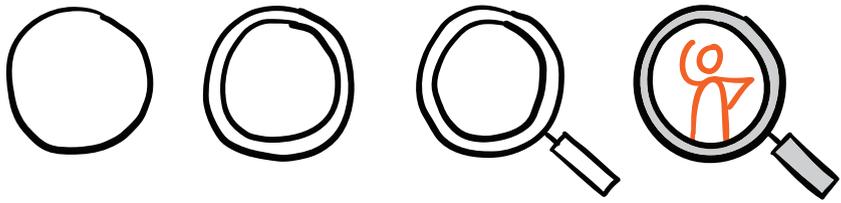
4.1 CIRCLES

The starting point for these basic icons is a circle. Start with the circle and add to it, step-by-step. When you've mastered drawing the basic icon, try adding more elements.

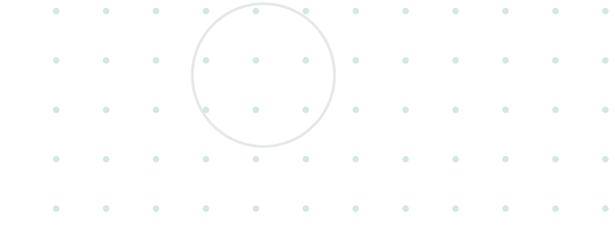
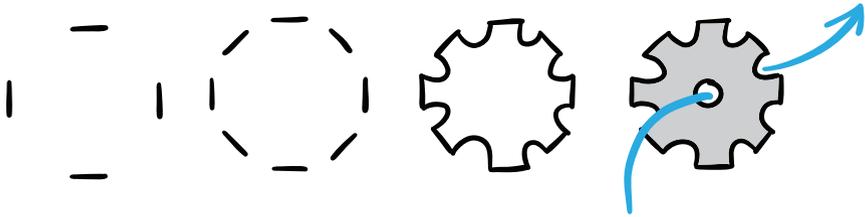


Copy the icon here

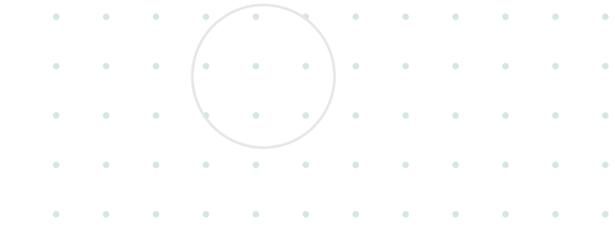
magnifying glass: research, analysis, focus



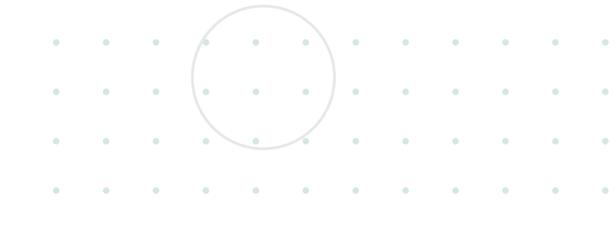
gear: how things work, processes, working like an oiled machine



globe: earth, globalization, virtual



target: goals, targets, the 'why'



7. VISUAL STORYTELLER



Visual Storyteller

Creates striking metaphors **to clarify,**
and inspire others

A Visual Storyteller uses Visual Thinking to quickly convey ideas, inspire people and ‘talk’ visually. They focus on using metaphors and visualizations to engage people in a story and to make ideas memorable.

They often show **leadership** through their inspirational stories. They can communicate **strategy** or **change** by visualizing the desired future, impact or outcome. Thinking in pictures and being able to use them to explain things or stimulate the imagination of others is also a great coaching tool.

It’s important to be able to grab your audience’s attention with a recognizable and relatable storyline. That way, they will remember your story much better and understand the interplay of different elements. To help you tell this sort of visual story, we are going to show you how to find and use metaphors!

In this chapter we will give you inspiration for metaphors, set you some creative exercises and do an assignment to find and visualize your own metaphors in a presentation about yourself.

WHAT YOU WILL LEARN

- 7.1 Creative examples
- 7.2 Metaphor hunting
- 7.3 Assignment: Introduce yourself

TIP Make a prototype to test your story! This is how you can check whether it resonates with your audience.

7.1 CREATIVE EXAMPLES

You may not realize it, but we already use metaphors a lot in business language.

“This process is like a ‘journey’ towards our final goal; we will encounter uncharted paths, and we have to watch out for ‘hurdles’ along the road.” Or: “We want to work together like ‘a well-oiled machine’”.

A common metaphor is ‘the tree’. People say: “We want to grow as a team or organization. To do that, we need resources!”

We can break down each element of the tree metaphor and how it applies to daily work. 



sun energy to grow



bad weather threats we cannot control but we can anticipate



saw threats we can control



high-hanging fruit outstanding products - to make them takes a lot of effort



low-hanging fruit easy products (cash cows)



rotting fruit products that waste time and money



banana are we focussing on the right product?



core our purpose



branch one of our strategy pillars

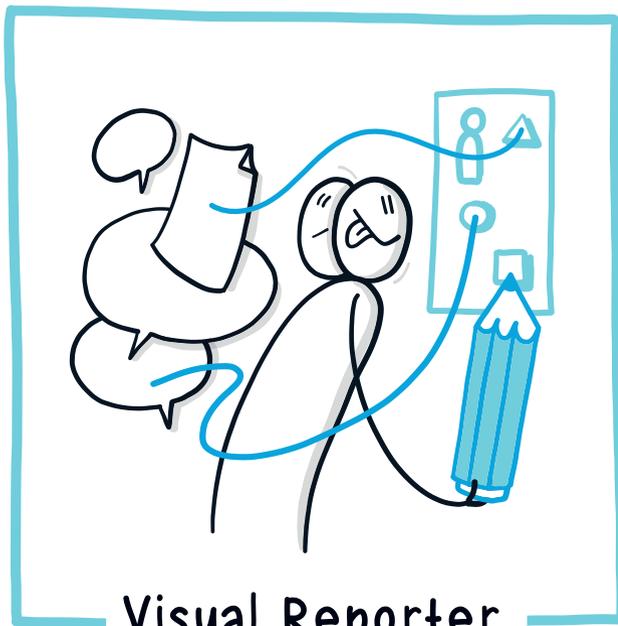


ladder what do we need to reach our goals?



basket how do we want to market?

9. VISUAL REPORTER



Visual Reporter

Translates words into visuals
to get to the point

A Visual Reporter uses Visual Thinking to get to the core of a story, to summarize it and/or better understand it. Their focus is on translating text into (an) image. Think of developing appropriate icons, visual minutes and finding the perfect balance between text and image. They often work in **communications**, or need to communicate things regularly. They use visuals to help with their **presentations**, as their audience loves them to present things in a clear and 'to the point' manner. This helps people – including themselves – **to get things done**.

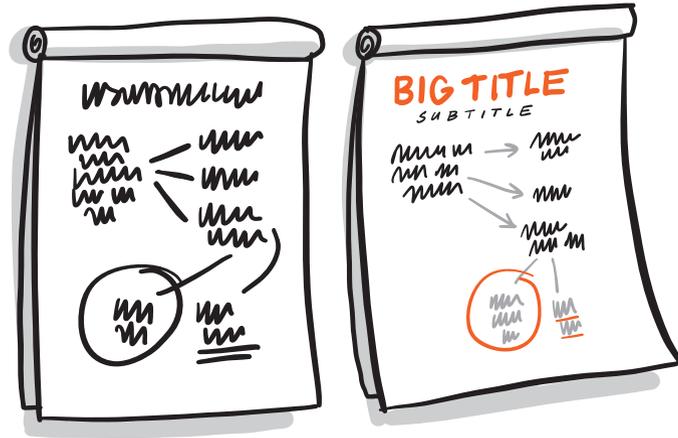
As you can see, when working on a larger canvas, it is important to pay close attention to the layout. You want to help people 'read' the overall image by providing a clear visual hierarchy. And you probably cannot draw everything, so your handwriting is also important. These are all subjects we practice in this chapter! It is also vital to have an extensive icon library at hand and know all about containers and dividers. Being a good listener/reader and being able to recognize key points are also what makes a good Visual Reporter. Combining all these elements will allow you to make summaries, visual notes and to-the-point illustrations.

WHAT YOU WILL LEARN

- 9.1 Visual hierarchy, articulation and layout
- 9.1 Visual hierarchy
- 9.2 Layout
- 9.3 Typography
- 9.4 Assignment: Visual agenda

9.1 VISUAL HIERARCHY

You've already been introduced to the concept of visual hierarchy. In this chapter, we take the idea beyond a single illustration, and look at how to create visual hierarchy in situations where you have multiple illustrations and information components vying for attention. You make it much easier for your audience if you add visual hierarchy. Because we want people who look at your drawing to be able to instantly "read" it. It helps your viewers to see the big picture and the order within that picture before breaking it down into smaller components.



what usually happens

what we want

Circle the drawing that is the most eye-catching of the two: that's the one that stands at a higher level in the visual hierarchy.

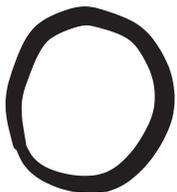
TIP One color and thickness makes the drawing difficult to break down and "read". Vary your colors and thicknesses.



vs.



vs.



vs.



vs.



12. BRINGING IT TOGETHER

In the previous chapters we talked about Buro BRAND's Five Visual Thinking Types®. We did some specific drawing exercises that fit those types, but these exercises are useful for more than just one type! That's because you aren't bound to only one.

The **Buro BRAND's Five Visual Thinking Types®** can be interchangeable when you're working. Think of them as specific hats you wear as you need them when applying Visual Thinking.

For example, if you're making a hand-drawn infographic: First you consider the information you want to bring across. Maybe you want to dive into it in a creative session with your team, so everybody is in line with the goal. This would make you the **Visual Co-Creator** type at that moment.

Perhaps you want a metaphor for the story, or you want to think about how you can make the story as visual and tangible as possible. For this you use your **Visual Storyteller** type powers.

But what should you and shouldn't you show? What's important and what are unnecessary details? How would you visualize this in a clear and to-the-point way? Put on your **Visual Reporter** type 'hat' to figure this out.

Make some sketches, see how it all comes together and visualize your story. Grab people's attention with a clear visual hierarchy and reading direction. That's a task for the **Visual Designer** type. Of course you also need to think about logical structures, the use of color and consistency throughout the drawing. So somewhere within this process it's a good idea to put your **Visual Analyst** type 'hat' on.

As you might've guessed, this chapter is about bringing together all our types. We ask you to put all the Buro BRAND's Five Visual Thinking Types® to work and complete a final assignment. But before you get to work, let's first give you a few, final tips!

WHAT YOU WILL LEARN

12.1 Chunks and clusters

12.2 Final assignment

12.1 CHUNKS AND CLUSTERS

When you want to communicate something, you first have to work out what exactly it is that you want to express.

Break down your story into chunks. Small pieces of information, often combined with a visual or a popping title and, if possible, combined in a container.

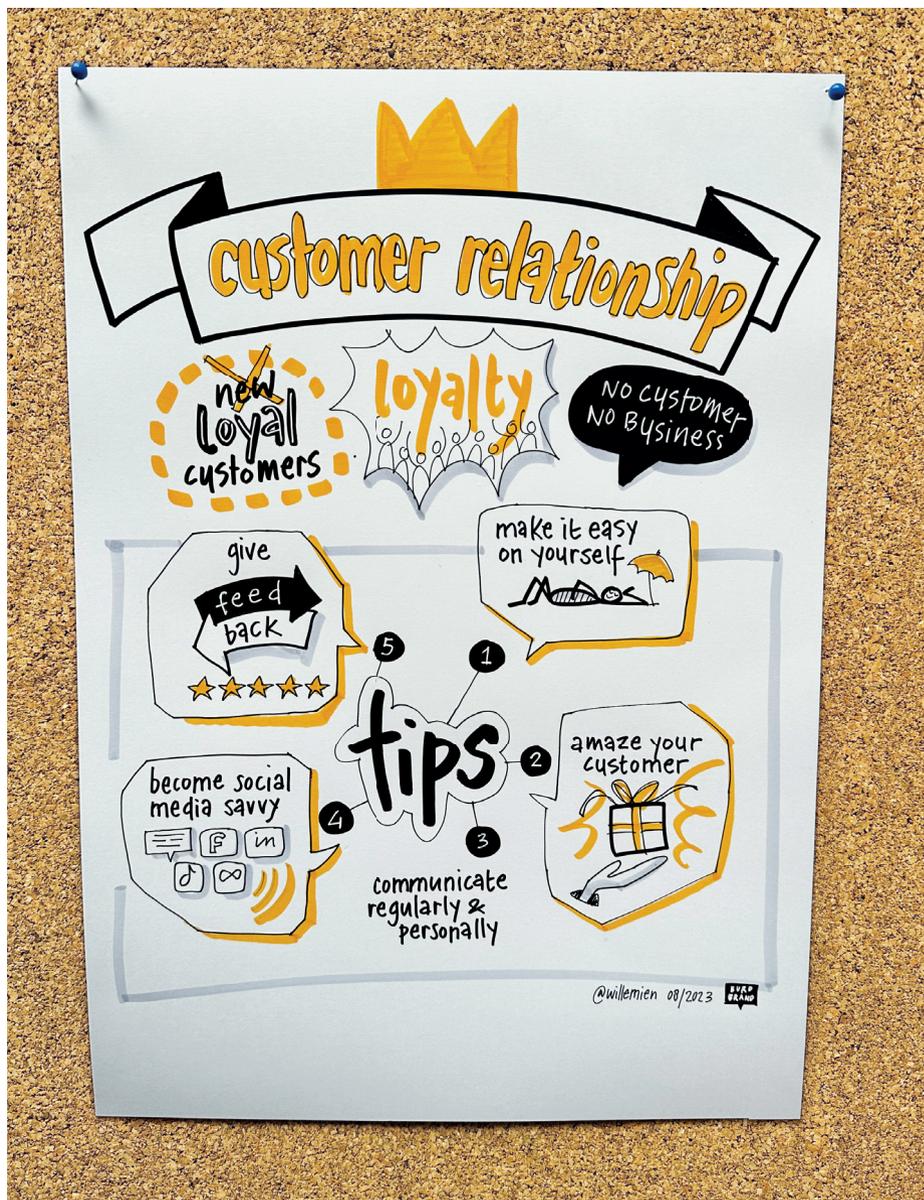
There are several ways you can design chunks.

Look at all these chunks, they're all clearly visualized within their own container.

The tips are in a text balloon and the three results or forms of impact have their own type of container.

Even the title has a banner shaped container!

The five tips are all accompanied with a short description and a descriptive illustration.



TIP This is a good example of how to divide your information into readable chunks!

HOW WE MADE THIS BOOK

The creation of this book could not have been possible without the help of so many people! A special thank you to all our Buro BRAND colleagues for the support, inspiration and critical notes!

All illustrations in this book were done on a 12.9-inch iPad Pro with an Apple Pencil. We used the Adobe Fresco app, in combination with Adobe Illustrator on the desktop.

In addition to Willemien's own handwriting we used the following fonts:

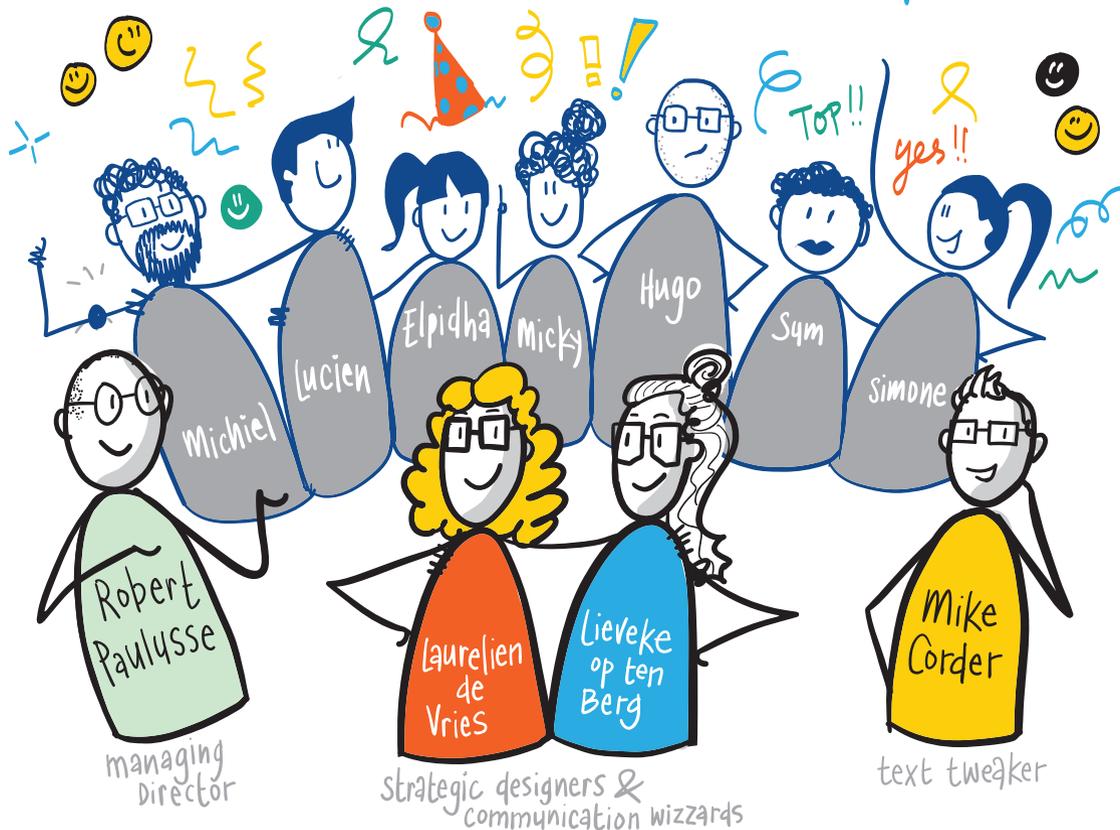
Montserrat

Open Sans

American typewriter

buroBRANDhandwriting

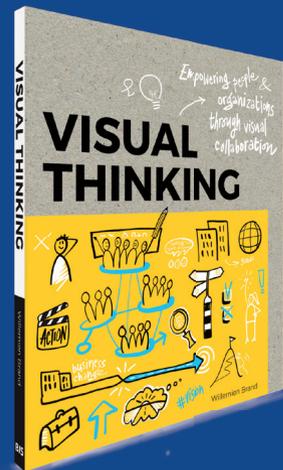
thank you so much!
for making this possible



OUR OTHER BOOKS

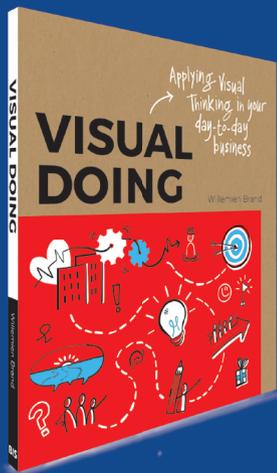
Visualization is a crucial part of the journey for companies seeking to boost enterprise agility, break down silos and increase employee and customer engagement.

Visual Thinking will help brush aside misconceptions that may have prevented you using these techniques in your workplace. From learning basic drawing skills to proven tools and models visually executed.



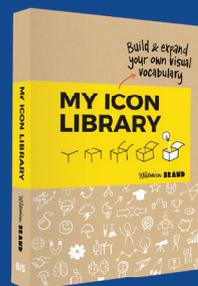
Companies are changing and in order to adapt and keep up they need to be flexible and fast. This calls for new tools and a visual culture within your organization.

Visual Doing leads you through a new range of exercises, techniques and subjects which will help you to tell your own visual story by looking at these subjects from different perspectives: 'me as an individual', 'we as a team' and 'us as a company.'



My Icon Library is an essential collection of impactful drawings that will empower you to embark on your own journey of visual thinking and storytelling.

My Icon Library is a source of inspiration and a go-to reference for whenever you need a visual that's a tad too complicated for your imagination or a Google Images search.



Build your
business drawing
skills for effective
communication
at work

VISUAL WORKING

Don't forget to buy
black fineliners and
some colors!



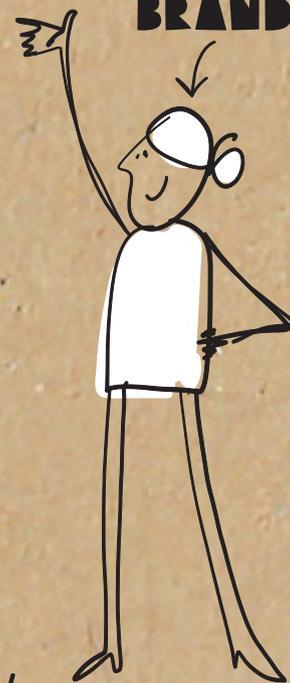
Picture this: Visual Thinking at work!

After the success of Visual Thinking and Visual Doing we now present you the third edition: Visual Working. We go back to the basics of our visual thinking practice and show you where it all began: with **business drawing skills.**

This practical workbook guides you step by step in applying business drawing in your daily routine, so you can communicate with images just as easily as with words. Boost your productivity and make drawing at work a fun and effective way of co-creation.

Discover the Buro BRAND's Five Visual Thinking Types[®] to communicate your ideas and concepts immediately in your work. Use the practical tips and tricks to enhance collaboration and communication within your organization.

Willemien
BRAND



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