



Collaborative tools, services and training

Meet smarter, not harder!

Leaders must be tough enough to fight, tender enough to cry, human enough to make mistakes, humble enough to admit them, strong enough to absorb the pain, and resilient enough to bounce back and keep on moving.

– Jesse Jackson

professional news

I'm pleased to announce that:

- I'm now also a member of the **Australian Institute of Professional Facilitators** (AIPF), with 'post-nominals' to match
- I'm now a **Certified Technology of Participation™ Facilitator** (CToPF), having been part of the first rounds of assessment.

training events coming up

Brisbane

Strategic Thinking & Planning

20–21 April 2010

Contact: David Jago

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Understanding & Leading Change

15–16 June 2010

Contact: David Jago

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In praise of the humble marker

All right, all those who have inadvertently used a permanent marker on a white board please raise their hands! Isn't it annoying? A simple mistake – and then someone has to spend a tedious half hour cleaning it all off.

Or – why I'm still searching for the perfect marker...

Why do we use markers, other than habit? Well, one part of the answer lies in the "write it down and hang it on the wall" story. No one can read ball point text from the back of the room. The data is not available to all. This shifts the focus from shared to private data and reduces your ability to generate agreement.

What are some of the other considerations in choosing markers? Here are mine:

- A variety of **colours** adds visual interest and focus. For example, you can highlight areas of importance and/or agreement. On the other hand, colours like yellow are too light for distance work.
- Markers come in all **shapes & sizes**. I generally prefer bullet point because it's easier to write. Conversely, some people like the flexibility of chisel points to give both thick and thin lines.
- I have a box of markers in my tool kit that only get used outdoors. They **smell** so strong that some folks get headaches. Some markers have low odour or nice floral scents to enhance their use.
- Some markers use a special ink that **doesn't bleed** through thin paper. This can be important where venues are particular about keeping their walls and table cloths clean.



Image courtesy of KaveWall.com

What do I take into account when using markers?

- It's good to use high quality flip chart paper. A nice glossy paper makes text and lines more visible. Being more expensive, it encourages you to make the most of your material and be more professional in your presentation.
- If you are "card-storming", markers encourage participants to be more concise, because they can physically fit less words in the available space.
- Beware of the power of the marker. In every size of group, the person with the pen controls what is written – for better and/or worse. This applies to you too...
- Always put the cap back on!

Finally, what's my solution to the problem above? Only use white board pens if a white board is in the room. Other folks I know roll some masking tape around the barrel of the pen so they can immediately feel which type of pen they are holding.

So, what's your experience of markers? What do you think about when choosing and using them? Please, go online and post a comment.

Go well!

David

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