



Collaborative tools, services and training

Meet smarter, not harder!

What tools really do...

Pliers: Often used to round off bolt heads. Also used to create blood-blisters.

Vise-grips: Generally used after pliers to completely round off bolt heads.

Hammer: Used as a kind of divining rod to locate the most expensive parts adjacent the object we are trying to hit.

Two-ton hoist: Used to test the maximum tensile strength of everything you forgot to disconnect.

– From the internet...

training events coming up

Brisbane

Facilitation Expansion & Integration
20–21 July 2010

Strategic Thinking & Planning
18–19 August 2010

Working with Value Systems
14–15 September 2010

Group Facilitation Methods
19–20 October 2010

Understanding & Leading Change
9–10 November 2010

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Tools of the trade: beyond the question

What if collaboration was like woodwork? How would that help us think about the tools, materials, processes and places that we create and use?

What does it take to get the job done?

Technology has to do with tools. In this case, I am looking at tools for people to get things done together, whether they are drawing in the sand, writing with pens, modelling with clay, acting out a drama, or even using computers.

So, when I'm thinking about the knowledge, skills and attributes of facilitation, leadership and transformation, I sometimes find some type of physical analogy helpful. The knowledge, tools and skills are all clear.

For example: there is an amazing variety of saws just for wood – table, power and hand; western and japanese, big to tiny; rip, cross-cut, tenon, dovetail... It's one thing to know about them, it's another thing altogether to be able to use one.

Here are some woodwork type categories to be going on with:

- **Design brief.** You must determine what the client and/or situation really wants.
- **Materials.** Style, quality and cost are all important product considerations! Also, what consumables (eg: sandpaper) will you need?
- **Work flow.** You have to organise your work to deliver the specified product/s – on time and on budget. Different materials require different ways of working.
- **Tools.** Choosing the right tool for the job is a skill on its own, let alone being able to use it well! And don't forget maintenance.
- **Work space.** Being well set up makes a lot of difference: materials storage, space for tools, work-bench/es and moving around, good light & ventilation...

Of course, we don't always need the latest whizz-bang tool to achieve good results. Check out this photo of a carpenter in the Punjab. He is turning out good quality results in less than stellar conditions. The difference is the experience and skill that he brings to the task.

Some questions to help **you** use this type of analogy to explore and explain the knowledge, skills and attributes of facilitation and leadership:

- What thoughts occurred to you as you were reading this?
- What other types of work could you compare and contrast with?
- How would you implement any fresh insights in your practise?

So, what's your experience of choosing and using tools? Please, go online and share your thoughts.

Go well!

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Image by Atif Gulzar