

Tips for Effective Use of Flip Charts

by Jeanette Romkema

Flip charts are alive and well. In fact I use them all the time! Flip charts are still the best visual tool when your learning event is quite small, when you want groups to interact with the content together, when you are inviting group work and sharing, and when you want to post content in the room to refer to it throughout the event. So, here are some tips to maximize the effectiveness of this timeless visual aid:

1. **Refer to key flip charts as often as possible.** There are probably some flip charts (pieces of content) that are especially helpful and relevant throughout the course – use them! The more often you point to and refer to these content pieces, the deeper the learning.
2. **Use large Post-it Notes.** If learners are going to interact with information on a flip chart, use *large* colourful Post-it Notes (with large writing!). With a large group you may still need people to stand around the flip chart to see and discuss it.
3. **Write large.** If you are using a flip chart make sure everyone can see it. If your group is so large that they can't read the writing even when it is large, you are probably using the wrong visual.
4. **Use a title.** Learners will not remember what a flip chart was about once it is on the wall and time has passed. In a few words summarize the point of the flip chart in a title.
5. **Write with dark markers.** People can only see what is in dark colours – black and blue. Use lighter colours to highlight only.
6. **Alternate colours.** When you write a list of ideas, alternate the colour – black/ blue/ black/ blue. This will help learners more easily differentiate each line.
7. **Take down what you are no longer using.** Flip charts need to be purposeful; it is not wallpaper. If you are no longer referring or using one, take it down. Highly visual people can easily be over stimulated. Of course you should still have them in the room for reference, if needed (even if this means having them rolled up in a corner).
8. **Use bullet points.** Less is more – especially with words. Just add the key points.
9. **Include blank space.** This is an invitation for more ideas from the group. It is also helpful for the learners when there is not too much text on one sheet.
10. **Use flip charts to collect information.** Different from PowerPoint presentations, flip charts allow for adding, moving, grouping and categorizing information. Inviting the group to help with this is engaging and can ensure more learning.
11. **Ask your co-facilitator to scribe for you.** Doing it all on your own is challenging, so invite help. While your co-facilitator is scribing you can be pulling out information. This will help keep the energy in the room up.