FROM AN IDEA TO A COMPELLING STORY IN
7 STEPS

Show, tell, inspire, and engage with an *illustration*

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Worldwide, millions of dollars are lost in productivity and poor communication, thanks to bad presentations. I know because I've witnessed it for the past 11 years serving as a graphic recorder… *(that's when you take complex stories and turn them into pictures).*

As a graphic recorder, **I listen to stories** during keynotes, meetings, and events and stimultaneously **translate them** into **straightforward, compelling visual summaries…** *live*.

What I've learned through the years is: it's not PowerPoint's fault.

It's our decision to fill slides with too much text and bullet points.

These slides don't work. Big chunks of text are overwhelming. Bullet points are boring and forgettable. They do not convey an engaging, compelling message that sticks.

NO! BULLET POINTS

So, what's the answer? Make it visual!

We all know that pictures are worth more than a thousand words. That's because an illustration forces you to think about the essence of your message and simplify its complexity.

But most people don't have the confidence to draw—especially not at work. That's why we developed **Drawify.** With Drawify anyone can be a visual storyteller and use illustrations to convey a message.

It's not only about the visuals, but the story behind it, and that's where we help you craft a compelling visual story. Step by step… in order to engage your audience and, yes, ***draw their attention*** to your message and its importance.

Enjoy!

Axelle, Founder Drawify

What do Elon Musk and Jeff Bezos have in common?
(Hint: It's not their fortune - nor their obsession with space).
See the answer on page 10

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1

FIRST THINGS FIRST *(GET YOUR STORY STRAIGHT)*

You're eager to share your insight and perspective. You want to explain a strategic concept or pitch an idea or describe an incredible new product… You can't wait to spread the word, find followers, and let your enthusiasm ripple through your audience.

Whatever you want to talk about, it's clear to you: the information, the logic, the possibilities, the power.

But how do you make it immediately clear to your audience?
Visuals enhance messages because pictures inspire connection. They spark engagement. So now your pen and paper are at hand, you're ready to draw. Let's go for some illustrations! But, uh, wait a minute, before jumping in, let's think. In French, they say *"reculer pour mieux sauter"* which means something like, "retreat to better advance."

Let's first consider your message in relation to your 'reason why'

Think first, draw later...

KNOW your **BIG WHY**
WHY do you care?
What's the **AIM** of your illustration?
HOW will it be used?
WHAT'S the **ONE THING** you want your audience to remember?
SUMMARIZE it in one sentence, one tweet.

Your core message should remain central to your illustration. During the next steps, keep this at the fore — it will be your guiding light or "North Star."

GOLDEN TIP
If the idea is new to your audience, skip the details. They distract. If you bore them with details, it will be hard for them to absorb the purpose. Draw a compelling big picture… and before you know it, they'll become interested and ask for more details. That's exactly how you want them… engaged!

Don't fall in love with your idea. Fall in love with your audience.

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ADOPT A JOURNALIST'S MINDSET

Journalists make their living from communicating, explaining, demonstrating a story. Although an article can vary in length and depth, it always involves six simple questions: Who, What, When, Where, How, and Why?

- **WHO** is involved? Who are the main characters? How do they feel?

- **WHAT** are they doing and WHAT happened?

- **WHEN** does the story place?

- **WHERE** does it take place and in what context?

- **HOW** did it happen?

- **WHY** is it important? WHY do the main characters care? What's the goal?

The answers form the basis of your visual and will make your story come alive.

Make it easy for your audience, do the heavy thinking first. List all elements needed to express your idea. You will refer to this later to create your illustrations. Knowing how many elements you need will help you come up with a form and develop a composition.

Who-What-When-Where-How-Why...

THE ELEMENTS OF MY IDEA
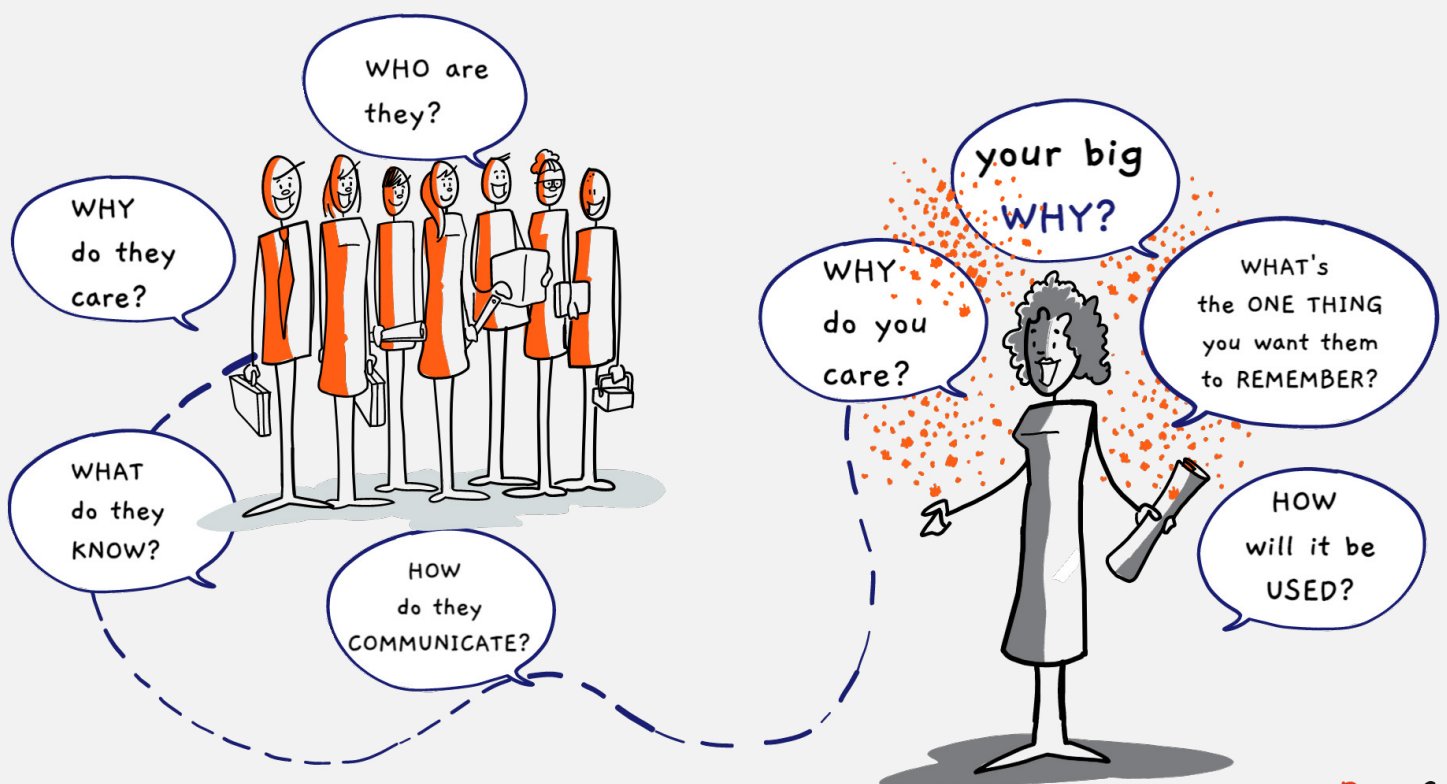
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GOLDEN TIP 1

This might be a good time to think of a catchy title. What would draw your audience's attention? Speak to their minds and hearts.

GOLDEN TIP 2

Stay focused. Remember to use your core message as a North Star. Skip whatever leads you in other directions.

GOLDEN TIP 3

Communicate clearly. Make it as specific as possible. Avoid abstract words or business jargon.

3

FULFILL THE NEED FOR CONNECTION

We're human beings, we love to see images representing other humans. Babies are drawn to faces. Even adults will register people before an objects. Human depictions literally give your story *life*.

Approach human figures like they are actors in your story. Figures help us empathize, understand and relate to what is being told. Engaging the heart makes your message more memorable.

If you can imagine catching a play with actors aimlessly staring any which way or their arms hanging listless down their sides, you can already understand that *that stance is boring*. Let your actors to the work! Body language says a lot... Let your "people" express emotion and action instead.

Expressive faces, bold actions

Figures in the throes of action move the story forward. Let your actors jump, bend, dance, sing, walk, stretch, point, sit, run,...

Don't be afraid to exaggerate the expressions and the expressions and action. The viewer picks it up in a glance making it easier to relate to.

Which expressions are needed to communicate your idea? Which directions you would give your actors? How will you draw your "people" in the final drawing?

Golden Tip 1
Stick figures, abstract figures or figurative drawings? It's up to you. Or better said: it's up to your target group. If you're done your homework in Step 1, you will know what to choose.

Golden Tip 2
Don't forget to add speech bubbles. Use them to describe thoughts, ideas, conversations.

Golden Tip 3
You don't always have to draw the full body... you can zoom-in on the face. Show what really matters to tell your story.

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BRAINSTORM VISUALS FOR YOUR STORY

Now, it's time to come up with more ideas for visuals. Take your list from Step 2 and think of ways to visualize the different elements. Try to find simple icons that depict what you want to express. Use different angles to visualize a word or a concept.
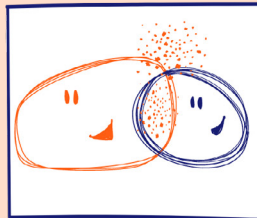
I pose three questions:

1 What do I "see" when I think of this word?

2 What emotions go with this word?

3 What's the result, the impact?

Example: collaboration

COLLABORATION

What do I *see*?   What *emotions* go with this word?   What's the *result*?

In this phase, come up with as many images as possible. Make quick sketches. You won't use them all, but it helps to build your mental visual library, so next time you will be even faster at coming up with ideas.

Beware of *iconitis*! There's a tendency to replace each word with an icon. You hear a word; you draw a word. That makes for too many visuals. It becomes messy and easy to lose focus. Better choose one powerful icon or combine different icons into one.

The moment you start combining icons. One big drawing that has different parts and points of view, will be the anchor for your idea or message. That's what attracts the eye and what viewers will remember.

Golden Tip 1: Use fewer icons or images to say more

Golden Tip 2: Anthropomorphism (when you give human characteristics to objects or animals) can be a playful and fun way to visualize your message. In Step 3, you drew expressions and actions, so just adding them to inanimate objects should be easy.

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BUILD YOUR VISUAL: DESIGN A FLOW AND COMPOSITION

It's time to bring it all together. And after this step, you can finally start to draw your idea.

Building the visual is like setting the stage for your actors.

You've created a title and elements for your message/idea.

You created a few actors and have an idea how to draw them. You've sketched some icons. How do we get them to fit together in one page?

Consider the form of your idea or message. How do the different elements relate to each other? Is it a path? A sequence? A list? A map? Or more of a timeline?

Choose a lay-out that fits the objective, but to keep the attention of the viewer, don't use a

predictable format. Try thumbnail sketches. These are small quick drawings that can help you to map out the final drawing. They are especially useful for understanding the composition and help you define the underlying structure of your drawing.

Push yourself and make a least five different compositions. Balance text and images. Play with landscape and portrait format, experiment with the placing of the elements. Probably your 4th and 5th thumbnail will give the most interesting flow for your drawing.
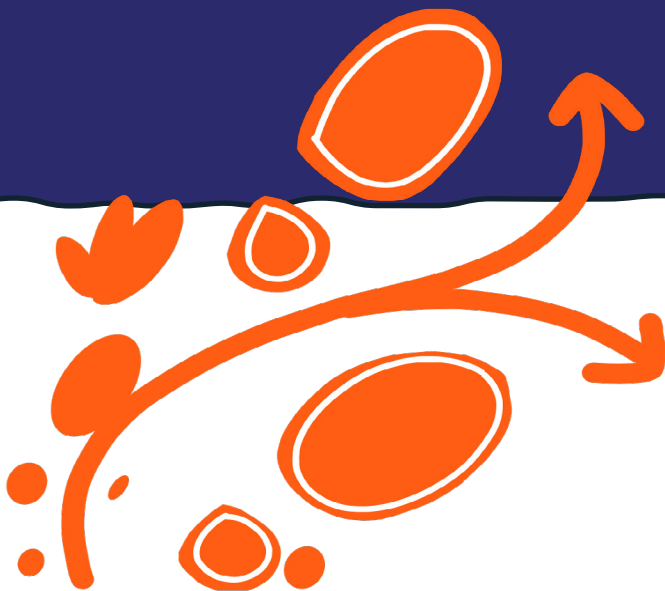
This is the stage where you can finally start to draw it out. With all the information you gathered, this shouldn't be too hard.

Golden Tip 1
Draw only in black in this stage.

Golden Tip 2
Make sure you have the fundamentals and all needed elements have a dedicated space.

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LEAD THE EYE AND SEPARATE IDEAS

Yay, you've got your illustrations! Let's see if you can enhance them for more clarity.
Arrow and frames are great tools.

Arrows will lead the eye to "read" image (like a newspaper from top to bottom and up again). You can achieve similar results working with numbers. Add a bit more creativity with ladders, footsteps, etc. Perhaps, throw in a bit of humor if it's appropriate for both your message and audience.

Frame different elements; they help highlight, or separate, items from their surroundings. Frames can link elements or tie the entire work together.

If you are able: draw in three dimensions to add depth. It will also draw the human eye and keep it from looking like Egyptian hieroglyphics. Although it works, add some more interest and don't draw like a Egyptian. Don't worry, about nailing perspective.

Golden Tip 1
Another way to create depth is by using shadow. Imagine a light source and draw from the direction that light would cast a shadow across the different elements in your illustration. You should always have the light source hit your objects from the same side.

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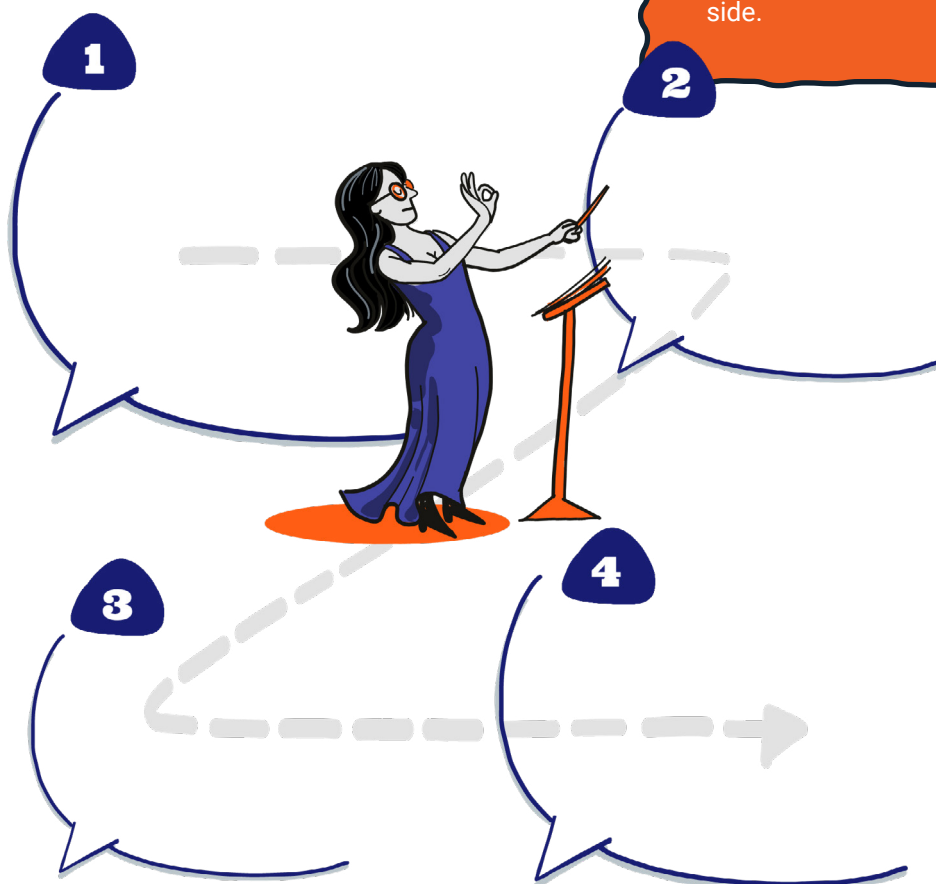
USE *COLORS* FOR DRAMA

Time to add some color to bring your work to life!!
One thing to remember: Use color a lot, but don't use lots of colors.

Colors convey mood. Think about how you want the viewers to feel. Are warm colors more appropriate? Or do you need to create calm with a range of cool colors? You can also combine contrasting (complementary) colors to make your drawing pop.

Color provides structure. Use a bold color to draw the viewers' attention to something specific. Make sure to give elements that belong together the same color.

Golden Tip 1
Choose to work with colors and their lighter shades to vary the amount of emphasis.

Golden Tip 2
Ta-da! Your drawing is done!

Time for one last check. Are there typos? Correct those! Any details missing? Add them. Don't forget to add the date, your name and contact information (can be in small type). That way the audience can find you later, if they want to reach out and discuss your ideas or content.

*They both forbid PowerPoint in meetings.

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WHEN YOU NEED PRESENTATIONS THAT POP AND....

You can't draw? Or don't have the time? No problem! Compose stunning visuals by selecting world-class illustrations from our library. Not only can you make your point clear, but with Drawify, you can make it memorable, too!

" WE MADE VISUAL STORYTELLING EASY, FOR YOU. "

Explore the advantages:

→ **Wide variety of visuals**

Drawify brings together top-notch visual storytellers, who are able to translate complex concepts into simple illustrations for increased clarity. Our outstanding visual library allows you to select only what you need!

→ **Express your own style**

Visual needs always reflect diverse tastes. That's why we deliberately select Visual Artist Storytellers across a wide range of styles. You can choose illustrations, colors and fonts that match your brand or

→ **No drawing skills required**.

Anyone can use Drawify—you don't have to be creative or able to draw. Whatever level your skills, Drawify can make your presentation or message more visual, compelling and memorable.
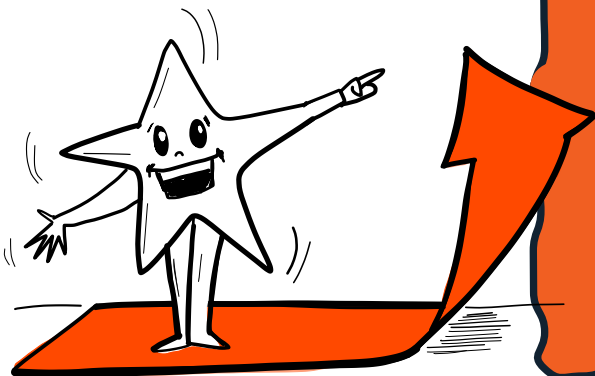
Register for free at www.drawify.com and join the Drawify community.
Being part of our worldwide tribe, you will be invited to monthly free workshops, led by top-notch visual thinkers. We can't wait to meet you!

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