



Audience Engagement Soars with Visuals

Presented by
Karen S. Watson, CMP
Cultivate Event Design & Consulting

Why is it important to add visual interest to your events?

Humans communicated with pictures before language. An article in *Inc.* tells us that 65% of the population are visual learners. What do visuals do for your event?

- Help gain or retain audience attention.
- Images help information get stored in long-term memory.
- Visuals help chunk information, making it easier to comprehend.
- Visualization is effective because of the brain's method of storing visual information. Images are processed in as little as 13 milliseconds (Trafton, 2014), nearly 60,000 times faster than words (Vogel, Dickson, & Lehman, 1986). This is due to the fact that the brain is constantly processing visual information, making decisions based on observed surroundings. Vision trumps our other senses.

Beyond the need to have less text and more images in session slide presentations, what about visual elements *outside* the meeting room itself?

- A picture can help a person recreate the experience in their mind. Thus remembering *your* event.
- Visual elements can assist in the storytelling of your event.
- Bonus? Almost all visuals create opportunities for your attendees to promote your event through social media. Pics with it, or of it, where your attendees advertise for you on Facebook and Instagram! Visuals inspire!

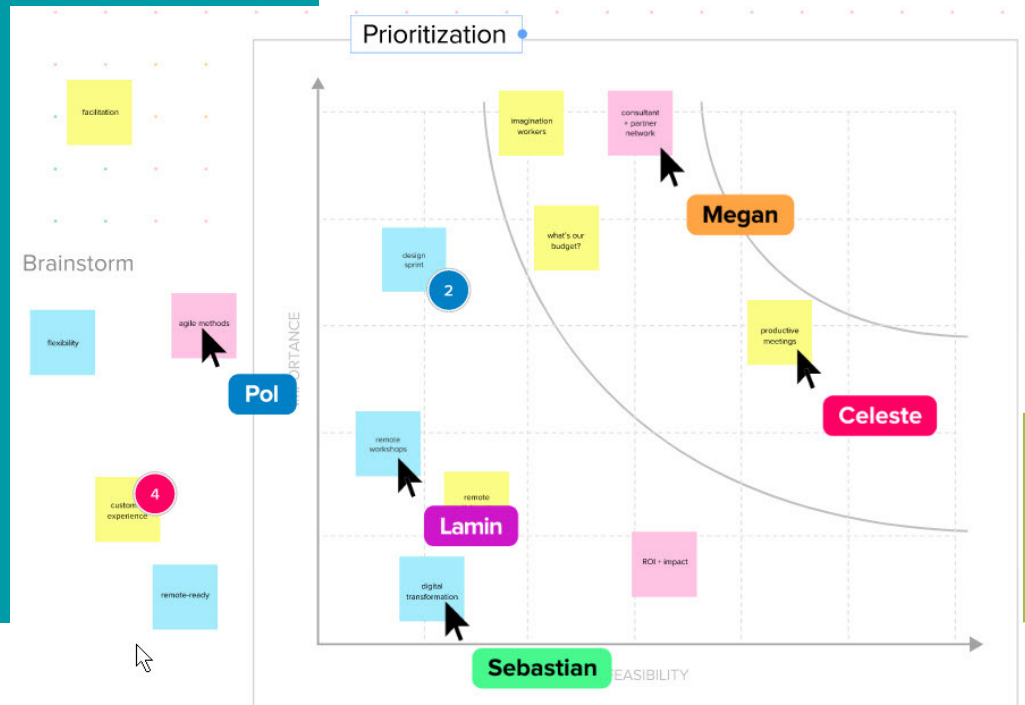
Capture your Content



Graphic Recorders capture the content as it is happening and create a visual record of the session and/or event.

Allow Participants to Create Content

Have you tried Mural yet? This tool works great for virtual events where all attendees can add their thoughts and ideas as a brainstorm is occurring.



Allow Participants to Create Content

The screenshot shows a virtual event interface. On the left, there is a QR code with the text "Scan to join:" and a "Copied to clipboard" button. Below the QR code is a timer showing "00:00". The main area displays a hand-drawn response to the question: "What are you most excited about returning to once everything reopens?". The drawing includes various colorful elements and text: "vacation", "Seeing faces", "Work \$\$\$", "MICE", "eating out", "FESTIVAL", "LE TOUR", "Music", "Sports", "FREEDOM", "Connect with Friends", "Family time", "HOLIDAY", "FRIENDS", "Live Music! Travel! Hugs", "Work", "MUSIC LIVE", "BIGGER IDEAS", "OUR INDUSTRY TOGETHER AGAIN", "FUN", "To Vegas", "Heart", "Waves", "Musical notes", "Panda", "Stick figures", "Football", and "Vacation".

Piccles is a great tool for audience engagement during virtual events - as its own session or to capture audience perceptions of a presentation or visual response to a polling question. For in-person events, how great would this be in a Foyer or Exhibit Hall with daily questions?

The screenshot shows a virtual event interface. The question is: "What are you saying 'good riddance' to and hope never comes back once everything reopens?". The drawing includes various colorful elements and text: "DAILY DEATH TOLL", "Imposter Syndrome", "Home alone", "NO MORE ZOOM FATIGUE", "GO HOME", "CAN'T BEAR Commute!", "Social Distancing", "Lockdown", "Losing money", "ISOLATION", "TESTING", "Balance", "Wife", "LIFE", "Wife", "THINGS TEARS FOR GRANTS", "Calls", and "Wife". A central diagram shows a balance scale with "Balance" written above it, "LIFE" on the left pan, and "Wife" on the right pan.

Let Attendees In on the Action



Award winning artist Brian Korte created **Brickworkz, LLC** to make amazing LEGO art for companies and families.

- What a great reveal for a new logo or brand.
- Let your attendees build the event logo with LEGOS.
- Attendees are part of the action and interact with each other while interacting with this LEGO build.
- Sponsors or exhibitors can draw attention and traffic to their booth.



Let Attendees In on the Action

Coloring tables or murals. Attendees interact with each other while coloring during breakfast or breaks.



Create a man-made version of a Wishing Tree where attendees add their own:

- Dreams for the next year
- Career goals
- Wishes for our environment or society

Let Attendees In on the Action



- Provide guitar picks, Sharpies and a logo, shape, or letter with nails on it. Attendees add their name or thoughts and hang it on the shape.
- Have attendees pin their home location on a map - virtually or in-person.



Pure Entertainment



Dan Dunn's PaintJam speed painting is a treat for your audience. Set to music, the audience is guessing as he quickly creates his pieces.

Bonus? Auction off the finished piece as a fundraiser for the charity of your choosing.

Want a highlight for your virtual event? Dan can create a spectacular speed painting video that can be embedded into a presentation or be the entertainment as part of a virtual Happy Hour. The finished painting can be shipped to a lucky winner or the company headquarters.



Reception or Dinner Entertainment



Paint your Event - this can be done as a compilation over several days or a specific event. Place it near the front of the room on a riser. Show it on IMag during a general session.

The original finished painting can be a gift for a retiring company president or hung up in the home office. Or share it with everyone. Reproduce it as a postcard follow-up to attendees or print it and frame as a gift.. Your event lives on for your guests.

Visuals That Change During the Event



Murals in Action

When PCMA's Convening Leaders was in Austin a few years ago, I loved how they recognized Sponsors and the host city through murals that were created DURING the event. It was great walking past them each day to discover what had been added. It was also a tip of the hat to Austin, a city with so many murals throughout its streets.



Watch Ideas Grow Over the Course of the Event



Storytelling Art Walls



Have attendees fill out an anonymous response to a question you determine. It could tie into your event theme, a challenge in your industry or the future of your organization. Then Round Table Companies' artists turn your attendees' words into art on a wall or a cube during the course of the event.

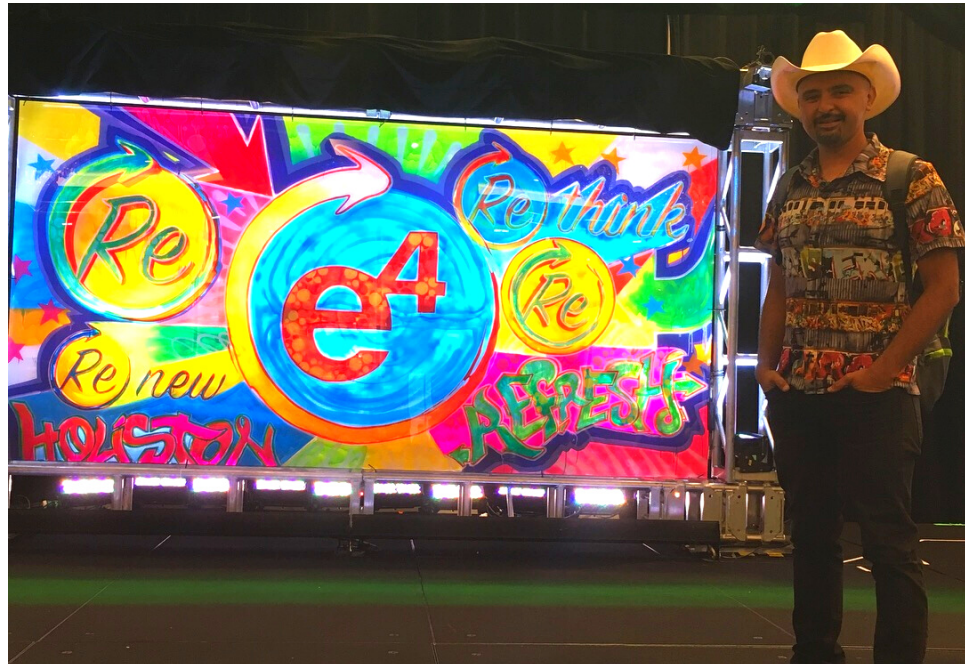
Let Attendees Share their Ideas



Provide Post-it notes and Sharpies and pose questions related to your event theme or current challenges. Watch the wall fill over the course of the event. What do you do with all these ideas at the end?

- Save them.
- Review them.
- Share them.
- Act on them.

Go Local



Engage local artists!

Houston graffiti artist, **Gonzo247**, is known for the amazing murals he has brought to the Houston landscape. Among his other skills? Creating his graffiti murals on plexiglass. In this case he painted it during the opening general session and finished it in time for a reveal in the closing general session.



Go Local



Hire local artists!

Baltimore's Little Italy hosts an annual chalk art event, the Madonnari Arts Festival. This led to the idea of hiring one of the local chalk artists to recreate the event logo in chalk in the Arrivals Lounge area. With food stations and seating surrounding the artist, the logo grew throughout the afternoon as attendees enjoyed the start to the conference.



FOMO Opportunities

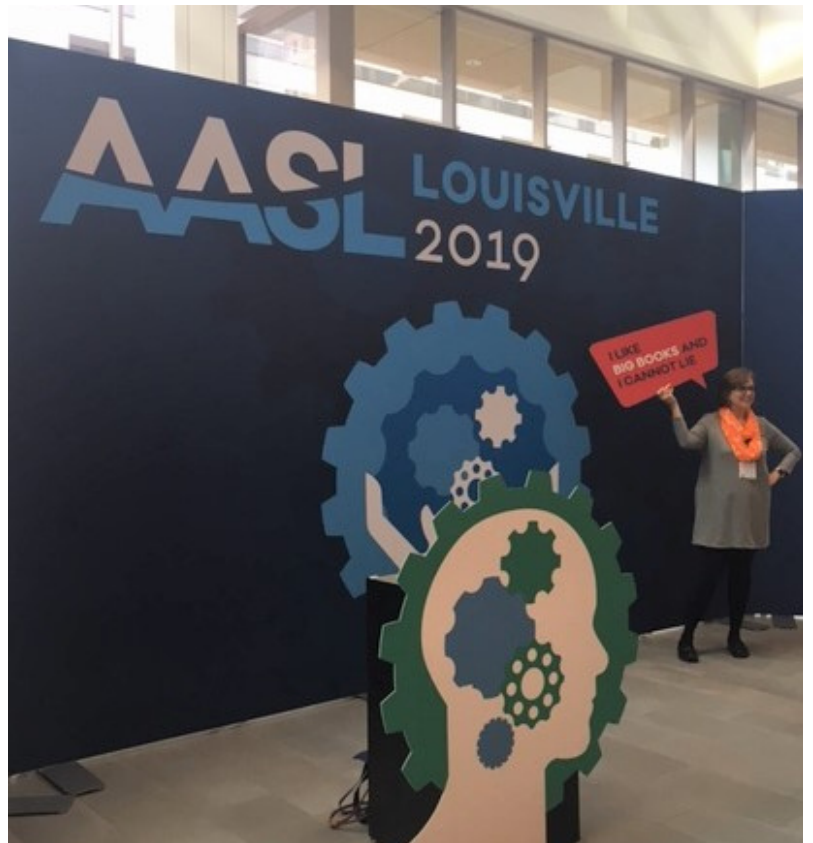
Great logo? Turn it into a Step & Repeat (or a LEGO mural!) and watch your attendees pose for selfies and team photos!



I bet people can't wait to show "I was here!" as they are returning to in-person events. Provide a wall they sign!

This event provided props to enhance their theme and make it 3D.

Bonus idea? A giant postcard branded to the destination of your event plus your logo.



FOMO Opportunities



Invite your attendees - in advance - to be part of the event logo! Mail an invite that they can use in a photo with instructions on how to send it back. Compile these into graphics you use onsite. In this case, it was a cling on the ballroom level elevator bank where attendees could find their contribution and pose for photos. You've personalized the event for them!



The benefits for utilizing visuals throughout your event are numerous. Why? Because visuals:

Content

- Capture attention.
- Create opportunities for facilitated, brainstorming and problem solving.
- Reinforce what attendees have heard.

Bringing Attendees in on the Action

- Help create memories of your event.
- When interactive, keep your audience engaged with your event and their fellow attendees.

Visual Elements That Change Throughout the Event

- Changing throughout an event give attendees a reason to return and check it out. Place these in high traffic areas (foyers) or areas where you want to draw traffic (part of the exhibit hall).
- Can provide attendees who are hesitant to raise their hand with an opportunity to participate that doesn't require them speaking in front of an audience.

Utilizing Local Talent and Creating FOMO

- Celebrate and recognize the destination where your event is located by using local artists or their artwork. This could include murals, chalk art, and more.
- Give attendees opportunities to share their participation in your event by posing and posting with backdrops and props. Almost everyone is on Facebook or Instagram these days.
- Can engage your audience and allow them to personalize elements of your event, especially when they have opportunities for interaction.
- Provide branding and marketing opportunities. They are built for social media posts.

Resources

BrickWorkz, LLC -
brian@brickworkz.com

Destinations by Design (DBD) - custom
table coloring murals -
<https://dbdvegas.com/>

Five Elements Consulting -
michelle@fiveelementsconsultinggroup.
com

Gonzo247 - <https://gonzo247.com/>

Mural - <https://www.mural.co/>
Paint Jam - Dan Dunn -
info@paintjam.com

Paint Your Event - through The Grable
Group - tim@thegrablegroup.com

Piccles - <https://www.piccles.com/>

Round Table Companies -
corey@roundtablecompanies.com

Sources:

*Visual versus Auditory Learning and Memory
Recall Performance on Short-Term versus Long-
Term Tests* - by Katie Lindner, Greta Blosser,
Kris Cunigan, Milligan College

Brain Rules - Dr. John Medina

About Us

Cultivate Event Design & Consulting, LLC is an event services company based in Austin, TX. offering strategic planning, networking enhancements, content design, event logistics and pandemic protocol advisor services.



Karen Watson, CMP
Founder & Chief Event Strategist