

Art for Work's Sake : Doug Shaw

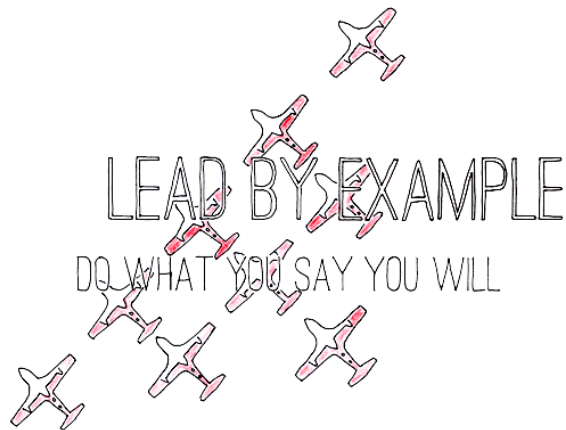
Helping you find greater effectiveness, enjoyment and meaning in your work, through an artistic lens.

Overview

Art for Work's Sake is a simple set of principles (see figure 1) and a highly adaptable framework, which help people explore and apply the creative process to their work.

Art for Work's Sake starts by explaining our learned reluctance towards creativity, using established research and data sourced from clients. Next it offers ways past this reluctance so we can benefit from creative approaches to learning and our work. It draws on Appreciative Inquiry and improvisational techniques, and its innovation comes from the encouragement and use of basic artistic principles and practices. Its innovation also comes from blending the use of analogue and digital methods where possible. I have not yet come across a similar learning framework which indicates that Art for Work's Sake is either a new, or substantially novel way of engaging learners, stimulating creativity, and linking that creativity back to work.


I've always had a keen interest in art, and in the Spring of 2011 I started to infuse my consulting and facilitation work with some intentionally artistic, visual thinking. From there, the work has developed into a regularly updated playbook of ideas designed to help people work better in a wide variety of different scenarios.





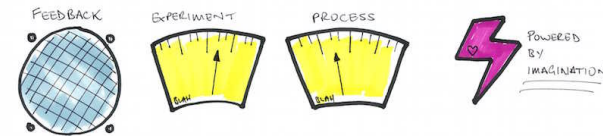
#1 OVERCOME FEAR

START SMALL - DRAW FOR THE BIN



#3 SHOW YOUR WORK

GAIN FEEDBACK AND ITERATE



#2 EBB AND FLOW

ADJUST THE CREATIVE DIALS TO SUIT YOUR ENVIRONMENT

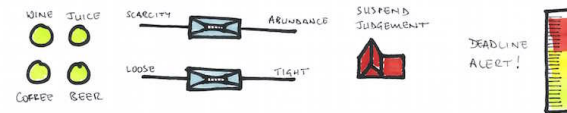


Figure 1
Creative Principles

These visual examples of creative principles are made available to participants digitally and as postcards. They serve as a handy aide memoire and a place to take and keep notes.

Meeting the challenges of creativity at work

Art for Work's Sake was initially developed after repeatedly observing people, teams and organisations seeking creative ways to work and learn; yet often unwittingly stifling the behaviours needed to unlock and apply that creativity. In her research on vulnerability, Dr Brene Brown and her team interviewed 13,000 people, 85% of whom can recall a time in school that was so shaming it forever changed how they thought of themselves as learners – 50% of those recollections related to art and creativity.

Art for Work's Sake is highly iterative and adaptable to meet the needs of diverse groups of people. The framework contains a mixture of learning opportunities for groups, pairs and individuals and although there are some recommendations on how to get started, the framework is open so that learners can move through it as they wish and add to it as they learn. The experience is designed to facilitate an environment free from judgment, to encourage ongoing solution development and high engagement, with each other and the process. The initial exploration of creative principles can be accompanied by a conversation and gathering of ideas relating to people's desired mood and tone whilst working together, as well as their wants, needs and performance outcomes. Examples of desired outcomes include:

- Improved coaching interactions
- Vision and strategy setting
- Making meetings more effective
- Exploring what social capital/better work/wellbeing/resilience and more means for various clients/stakeholders
- Visual thinking
- Exploring recognition
- Getting to know one another better
- Community and team development
- Organisational development

Lessons learned include: Overcoming fear/resistance to change, Patience, Improvisational Skills, Resilience

Outcomes

Art for Work's Sake is a live project in regular use, and new ideas are frequently added to the framework. The project began life in 2011 and continues to evolve and develop. As it does so, new applications are uncovered, explored and applied. Here are some examples:

Conferences. Art for Work's Sake has been successfully used to provide something different, engaging and creative at several conferences in the UK and USA. Art for Work's Sake is easy to scale so it's been used with audiences of less than 50 to well over 200.

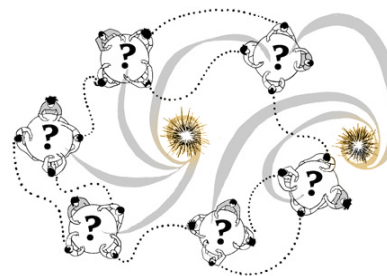
Creative Learning and Development. Art for Work's Sake has been awarded Continuous Professional Development credits for the Society of Human Resources Management in the USA.

Visual Thinking. Art for Work's Sake was used in the planning of the Latvian Government's online strategy to support the EU Presidency. All but one of the delegates said the programme met their learning objectives, with 73% saying their knowledge and skills were improved as a direct result of doing the work. Many people said they enjoyed learning in new emergent ways.

Effective Meetings. One team of IT professionals has used Art for Work's Sake to completely change their regular interactions. They now routinely start their work together with sketching and mapping exercises.

Research. Art for Work's Sake is being used by a major US based firm of office designers as part of a long-term research project. In the first two years, work has been undertaken to explore what social capital and wellbeing mean to various clients and other business stakeholders. The project explored work-life balance in 2016, and is currently looking at resilience and community.

Networking. The CIPD used Art for Work's Sake to strengthen its networking offer to HR Professionals at conferences for four years.



Current Achievements

Art for Work's Sake is primarily an exploration and cocreation of how we can improve our work, learning and relationships. It is also being used as an exploration of our vulnerabilities and how to see, think, feel and use these things to make us more resilient. Clients frequently feedback that the programme has been more impactful than anticipated, it is that deeper, gentler exploration of our vulnerabilities and how we work together which creates impact beyond the necessary business results.

Here's what a regular customer said after our most recent work together:

"Art for Work's Sake is a refreshing and engaging concept. There are many seminars and events where attendees are merely bystanders, but this is different. I have watched people share moving, funny and engaging stories after working on a piece of art for only a few minutes. Many attendees are disappointed that the time goes so quickly – that is a good enough reference in itself."

The past year has been transformational for Art for Work's Sake. It is developing beyond a creative exploration of work in general to a proven, innovative body of deeper work in its own right. Increasingly, clients are asking for help in specific fields, for example: creative learning and development, visual thinking, relationship development, social capital and wellbeing. Here are some core achievements.

The Latvian Government using Art for Work's Sake to improve visual thinking across internal communications in all departments.

Art for Work's Sake being approved for CPD/professional recertification by The Society for Human Resources Management in the USA.

Repeated engagements to support ongoing research on wellbeing/social capital and more, sponsored by a major brand operating worldwide.

Engaged by the CIPD for four years to facilitate networking at their annual conference.

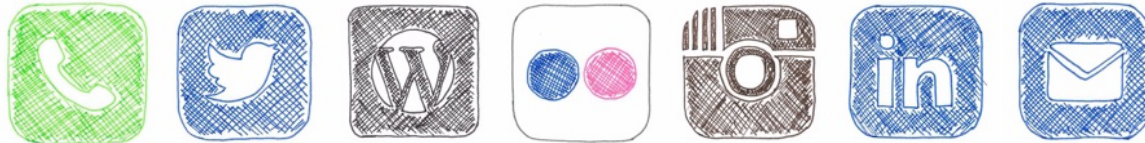
Successfully piloting a licensed version of the product in New Zealand via an associate.

Next Steps

Currently the principles and framework are being developed into a playbook to facilitate wider use of Art for Work's Sake, both here in the UK and abroad. The NHS has successfully piloted some art based learning in the North West of England and I have recently joined their associate network to develop opportunities for broader use of this work in the NHS.



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I look forward to working with you.

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