

The flip chart is essential to a facilitator's work in three key ways:

- It is the written document of what happens recording the thoughts, ideas, plans and action items defining the future.
- As a visual representation of the information presented, gathered and explored, the flip chart helps participants to understand the information that has emerged during discussion.
- It is a tool that helps control the direction and flow of the discussion or meeting towards the intended objective of the group's work together.

Here's how to be effective at flip charting.

- Always use multiple colors, alternating each bullet point as a different color. Avoid using colors in the red/orange range (because of color blindness) as well as pale pastel colors.
- Print large enough for everyone to see. Position the easel strategically so everyone can see (or arrange the seating to accomplish this.)
- Prepared flip chart information (prior to meeting) should be brief, bulleted, outline form.
- Stand to one side and write, not in front. This will be challenging for left handed people but you can do it with practice.
- Record what people say—the key phrases or key words. Begin recording as they speak. This can be challenging some times when a speaker is wordy. Your job is to pick out the salient nuggets, checking with the speaker as to whether you have gotten the key information and possibly using triplet questioning to hone on the salient information. Don't be shy about asking for clarification.
- Write the first word you hear that a participant says—let the participant help you finish the thought.
- Prior to starting the meeting ask someone to help you by taking care of hanging the filled chart sheets. Have a number of pieces of blue tape ready for your helper. You can rip off a dozen or so small strips and stick them loosely to the easel frame.
- Use a bullet dot or dash instead of numbering—keeps the items neutral (non priority) and you don't have to remember what number you're on when moving to the next sheet.
- Try not to get hung up on spelling or sentence structure—simply print as fast as you can.
- Number and date each page! You or someone else who transcribes this later will be very grateful!