



The Visual Mapping Challenge

REBECCA PETZEL | SEPTEMBER 10, 2012

I'm pleased to announce Groupaya's Visual Mapping Challenge! Before I get into any details, I'll quickly explain why we're taking on this challenge.

The why?

We love helping groups take collective action. Generally, the first step towards collective action is building shared understanding. Now helping a group build shared understanding and focus around just simple organizational issues can often feel like a daunting task. (If you're struggling to do so with your own team or group, we always recommend some simple whiteboarding or shared screens to help bring everybody on the same page.) When the issue is complex, the task of building shared understanding can seem almost impossible.

Luckily, we have a few slightly more advanced tools in our toolbox to do just that. Similar to whiteboarding, many of our favorite techniques rely upon shared visual mapping. These include [Dialogue Mapping](#), [Systems Thinking Mapping](#), and [visual facilitation](#). We've seen all three make a powerful impact in helping groups navigate complexity... collectively.

The question we often ask ourselves (or debate vigorously over drinks) is, which technique is the best? Okay, okay. Not the best. ;) We know each technique has different strengths in different situations for different groups. What we are looking to do with the Visual Mapping Challenge is push our collective understanding of each tool's strengths and under what circumstances each technique thrives.

The what?

We know all three of these tools are extremely powerful for helping solve complex challenges. We figured, as long as we are learning with the team, why don't we take the opportunity to tackle some of the real problems facing our friends and community? And thus, the visual mapping challenge was born.

This is where you come in. We're looking for a group that is tackling a really complex challenge and that thinks it could use some help getting to the bottom of it. We'll invite you into our experiment, divide your group into three, and give you three different (extremely) experienced facilitators helping you all tackle your challenge. You'll see below a beautiful map by [Mariah Howard](#) that not only demonstrates what we're proposing, but also serves as a tremendous example of the power of visual facilitation.

We think this is a pretty remarkable opportunity for the right network to get some world class support. If you think you have the complex problem this visual mapping challenge needs to succeed, drop us a line. And for the rest of you, stay tuned to this space to hear more as the challenge unfolds.

