

INTRODUCTION: THE BACK OF THE NAPKIN WORKBOOK



Why a Back of the Napkin workbook?

Twenty-five years of helping business leaders around the world develop ideas has taught me three things:

1. There is no more powerful way to discover a new idea than to draw a simple picture.
2. There is no faster way to develop and test an idea than to draw a simple picture.
3. There is no more effective way to share an idea with other people than to draw a simple picture.

This book contains many tools, rules, and concepts, but in the end it's about just one thing: how you can draw that simple picture.

A guidebook for creating problem-solving pictures

This book is as a follow-up to *The Back of the Napkin: Solving Problems and Selling Ideas with Pictures*. In that book I talked about using simple pictures as a way to solve business problems and introduced a set of tools and rules to help anyone create problem-solving pictures.

I created this second book, *Unfolding the Napkin*, to help you see exactly how the visual problem-solving process works in the real world of business. Every tool and rule I introduced in *The Back of the Napkin* is here, only this time we'll work through them together, step-by-step, putting visual problem solving into everyday practice.

Think of *The Back of the Napkin* as an introduction to visual problem solving; think of *Unfolding the Napkin* as the guidebook.



◀
The *Back of the Napkin* is the introduction to visual problem solving; this is the guidebook.

A self-contained four-day workshop

This workbook is set up as a four-day course on visual problem solving: my entire approach is spelled out picture by picture, taking us from “I can’t draw” to “Here’s the picture I drew that I think can save the world.”

Why four days? Two reasons: First, experience tells me that’s how long it takes to get through all the lessons in a meaningful way. Second, as we’ll soon see, the visual thinking process naturally breaks into four steps, and addressing them one at a time helps the whole approach make sense.