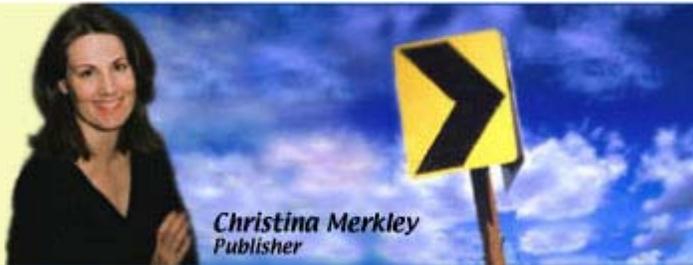


Make Your Mark Graphic Facilitation & Coaching



Christina Merkley  
Publisher

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## A Note From Christina

Dear Christina,

I can't believe I'm saying this – but I'm actually glad that summer is coming to an end - Me, the summer lover. Might be because I was indoors with my nose to the grindstone: incorporating as **SHIFT-IT Coach, Inc** and pulling together the new website and online store (to launch in a mere couple of weeks – I'll send you a note when its ready!).

I didn't play one round of golf this season (a travesty for sure), due to the Herculean effort that has been required (and I thought the makemark site was a lot to create!). Geez, you should see the gray hairs I have now (and you think I'm kidding – wink).

However, it's all worth it. Foundations and space are so important. Feels good to have a nice, organized base to work from. I've cleaned the coaching content off of makemark so it is focused entirely now on strategic planning and visioning with groups. The new site will house all the cool new stuff on personal planning and visioning for individuals and couples.

Welcome to your September SHIFT-IT e-Zine.

## THE ART OF THE VISUAL BIO



Visual bios are really handy documents – they are a creative and unique way to summarize and share your career path with others. I've seen them applied in job interviews, grad school applications, used by CEOs, experts, workshop leaders, etc to communicate the path of their development, etc. They are different from the Life and History Maps that I've written of before – Visual Bios focus pretty strictly on your career or professional path (as opposed to your whole life). I have [my own version](#) that I use on my website, when clients ask for my C.V., as well as in my workshops when I'm explaining the path that lead to me being an expert on the graphic way of working.

I just completed a Visual Bio for my favorite Internet Guru, Lorrie Morgan-Ferrero of [Red Hot Copy, Inc.](#) down in Los Angeles. Lorrie's a fabulous copywriter and speaker (copywriters write the content for press releases, sales letters, websites, etc – they help you best promote your product or service). She needed a big presentation chart she could use to explain her own path of development at her next workshop.

Working with Lorrie and having her appreciate how useful (and fun) the Visual Bio is: I thought this would make a good article for the ezine. Share with you the overall concept of this particular visual tool and give you some tips for creating your own. You never know when a Visual

Both sites have the 'graphic twist' that you know me for.

It's happening. I'm moving swiftly now (after years of prep and laying the groundwork) from one phase of my life (graphic recorder, facilitator and mapmaker) into another (coach, mentor, product developer/author). Yes, lots of work and definitely stressful at times, however its feeling really great to see and feel the fruits of my labor emerging.

Identity seems to be the overarching theme for this month. I had my 20th high school reunion a few weeks back. It was a wonderful and very poignant night. (I missed the 10th as I was embarking on my San Francisco experience back then). For those who have had one, you'll know what I mean when I say it kind of stays with you for a while afterwards --- lots of thoughts of old times and who we once used to be. I'm very grateful (now) for the path I have taken in life (a bit hard to explain it to my school mates though – what's a Graphic Coach?).

To go with the identity theme, this month's article is entitled "The Art of the Visual Bio". Visual bios (one of my favorite things to do) are graphic maps that lay out a person's career or professional track. Creating one helps you see and appreciate your journey and communicate it effectively to others (could have used one at the reunion!). I hope it will get you thinking about and being grateful for the wisdom of your own trail.

Bio might come in handy!

**The Three-Phase Process:** The creation of a Visual Bio chart occurs in three main phases: Research, Draft & Edit and Large Map Creation.

**Research:** interview the client (or yourself!) to get the basics on the story. Invite them to tell you the story of whatever it is they want to communicate and take notes like crazy or record the call for replaying. I'm a bit of a master interviewer after all my years of coaching --- you just trust yourself to be a curious observer. Ask for more detail when you are confused on something or need to figure out its relevance. Trust that people are telling you details for a reason – if not apparent at first, wait, the significance will become apparent. Notice when the tone or inflection of voice changes – clues for what was exciting, scary, and wondrous, etc. Be natural, kind and respectful – people's stories are sacred and sweet territory!

**Draft & Edit:** work that raw data into a small draft sketch that can be faxed or emailed back and forth to sort the order and content out (what goes first, what's in, what's out, what's most relevant to highlight, etc). Sometimes you get your sketch pretty good right off the bat, but sometimes there are a few more rounds of edits that you need to go through before the final content is settled upon. Also, this round is pretty word-oriented. I might have a few icons or images sprinkled in, but I'm mostly concerned about getting the actual word content worked out, than having the visuals perfectly mapped out yet.

**Large Map Creation:** Most of the specialty chart work that I do and am known for is in the large wall-size mural format – so there comes a point when you need to convert your small notes and sketches from the previous stages into a large size mural. The one I did for Lorrie (see snapshot above) was 3.5 feet tall and 12 feet long.

For me, this is where the creative juices flow. I loosely place the order and exact wording on the paper first (using large stickie notes and pieces of paper) – this helps me figure out how long it will be. Then, I fill in the gaps with imagery and color. Imagery comes from the content itself (what would best depict that event, person or circumstance? What is the emotional tone? Is this serious and corporate kind of material or can the approach be more playful – take some poetic license?).

**Other Things to Consider:** What kind of a personality does this person have and how can you best get that across? For color – are there certain colors in their brand or logos? Lorrie's is a good example for this – she's a gorgeous red head and we also had the fun 'Red Hot' in

See you next month. Happy Shifting!

Christina Merkley, The SHIFT-IT Graphic Coach

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her biz name. At this stage I flip through magazines, my portfolio of previous work, my 'swipe file' (my colleague Peter Durand's message to new graphic recorders and facilitators is to 'steal, steal, steal' --- this doesn't mean rip off people's work, it means collect up things you like and use them for inspiration and idea fodder) and I also browse [online clip art](#).

**Materials:** You can create your own Visual Bio – good to do even if you never show it to anyone – just to see and make sense of your own professional journey. Do it small, or make the leap into the big size (most art supplies stores carry or will order in the paper for you: 20lb bond paper, I use the 42' size but you can go up or down depending on what you want to do. When I do these large size bios I usually have them digitally scanned by my friends at [Landau Chartworks](#) in Tiburon, California (scanning makes a digital file of the big chart, that you can then print out at smaller sizes for various uses). Or, if you are beginning to do more graphic work yourself, invest in the [Pixid Whiteboard Photo program](#) – it makes editing of flip charts and large paper charts a breeze!

Well there you have it – the lowdown on Visual Bios. Kind of a natural for Labor Day (or Labour Day – 'Canadian' spelling)– appreciate how your labor in life is following a path, hopefully a path that is getting more and more joyous as you progress along it.

If it doesn't feel like it – perhaps you just need a few more years of 'grock' time before things shoot up and then flower. Or a kick in the pants to take a more proactive stance in shaping and molding your own journey. Your life is your responsibility. Get in the game!

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**WANT TO USE THIS ARTICLE IN YOUR E-ZINE OR WEB SITE?** You can, as long as you include this blurb with it:

Christina Merkley, "The SHIFT-IT Coach" is creator of the SHIFT-IT Graphic Coaching Process. To learn more about SHIFT-IT, Graphic Coaching and Personal Visioning and Planning, visit [www.makemark.com](http://www.makemark.com)

**In-person Coaching Group:**



**October 27-29, 2006, Victoria, BC, Canada.**

Come work on your own thinking process. Share what you want to share and keep the rest to yourself. We'll work step-by-step through my custom SHIFT-IT Graphic Coaching Process. You'll have all 17 gorgeous color maps in an individual sized binder - that you'll privately work through over the course of the weekend. I'll explain and demo the process as we go along.

Gain clarity, perspective and self awareness about your path-to-date, your current crossroads and what you really, really want from here. Build a custom Personal Vision and detailed Action Plan. All in the graphic, visual way of working.

Flip your negative thoughts, uncertainties and doubts and remove that procrastination or self-doubt that is standing in the way of you becoming your next self.

"Fabulous workshop. Gave me a crisp picture of where I'm going and my major steps. Wonderful group. I found the large graphics, small maps and all the demos and personal help from Christina to be immensely beneficial". **Karen Stratvert, Graphic Recorder, Napa, CA**

"The SHIFT-IT graphic maps really helped me identify my values and beliefs. And helped me make a decision about the future of my work and how to move forward. Its a very measured process that helped me think logically about my thinking process. Very useful visual tools that are culturally accessible (translates well for European perspectives)". **Barney Cunningham, Change Manager, Stockport, United Kingdom**

"What a powerful way to shift my life into a state of achievement rather than staying in a dreaming or aspirational state. Its tough but rewarding work - come ready and willing to grow." **Lisa Morgan, Internal HR Professional, Calgary AB**

Held just minutes from Victoria B.C.'s beautiful Inner Harbour. In my arts and craft style 1912 character studio.

**Registration Info**

**Public Basic Skills Workshop:**



**When:**Friday, October 20, 2006, 9:30-5pm

**Where:**Royal Roads University, Victoria, B.C

Intrigued by the graphic way of working? Want to learn useful tools that you can use in group or individual settings? Come to October's Meeting Graphics 101 Workshop.

No art or drawing experience is required (art phobes fully welcomed!). A fun and practical day - you will walk out with skills you can put right into action!

"This was an exhilarating, fun filled introduction to the world of graphic facilitation. Christina's style put me at ease and set the stage for me to step outside of my comfort zone". **Melissa McLean, Senior VP, Marketing & Communications, Tourism Victoria**

"These skills offer me new ways to creatively bridge chaos and complexity, a value add to my skills as a consultant working with whole systems and culture- shifting in organizations!" **Michael Keller, Consultant, Learning Inside-Out**

"The whole session was excellent. Well thought out, good pacing, good mix of talk and hands on, useful resources - and Christina was very encouraging and helpful. She also provides post-workshop coaching and has shown a real interest in her students' progress. Great to have a generous pro now here in Canada. My confidence is growing and I'm stepping out as a graphic recorder and facilitator. Exciting!" **Avril Orloff, Graphic Recorder, Vancouver, BC**

**Six spots left. This will be the last public workshop offered in '06.**

**Registration Info**

### **About Christina, The SHIFT-IT Graphic Coach:**



Christina Merkley, M.A. is a Graphic Facilitator and Coach specializing in Strategic Planning and Visioning. Having worked for such notable companies as BBC, Readers Digest Funds, eBay and Stanford University, she uses

interactive, visual thinking processes to literally draw the best thinking out of organizations, groups and individuals. Creator of the SHIFT-IT Graphic Coaching Process, after years in San Francisco, she is now based in charming Victoria, British Columbia, Canada.

[Full Bio](#)

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### Private Mentoring:

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