

Visual Management



Benefits at a glance....

- understand a situation within a matter of seconds
- identify problems more rapidly than you would be able to through text-based communications
- alerts you to take action before it's too late
- provides focal point for communication, review and problem solving

Figure 1: An example of Visual Management

What is it?

Visual management is the communication of information in a simple, non-verbal manner which is quicker for our brains to process. It helps you to:

- share information with others (**Visual Display**)
- see what's happening and how well things are going to plan ... or not (**Visual Control**)

From a continuous improvement perspective, **Visual Management** is about orienting and supporting people and not about controlling their actions.

Visual Management can be used by a team to track and monitor how well progress is being made against the measurable criteria or KPIs (key performance indicators) identified as 'Critical to Quality' to the customer experience from *Voice of the Customer (VoC)* data.

When to use it?

Use Visual Management when you want to:

- communicate quickly and accurately
- expose problems and highlight good practice
- spot trends in data and compare performance
- keep everyone in the loop



How to use it?

The Focus Programme uses **Visual Management** to enable a *Daily update* for each of their projects and for the Team itself. This provides the basis for communication through **Visual Display**, for example, the team barometer (Fig 3a) and **Visual Control** (Fig 3b) showing progression on projects.

	A	B	C	D	E	F	G	H	I	J	K
1	Attendance and barometer - How are you today? Do you need any support?										
2		Aisha	Alex	Chris	Kim	Lisa	Noor	Pat	Ravi	Sam	
3	M	5-Jan-26	Happy	Annual Leave	Ok	Happy	Happy	Ok	Very Concerned	Happy	Happy
4	T	6-Jan-26	Happy	Ok	Apologies	Happy	Ok	Ok	Concerned	Happy	Happy
5	W	7-Jan-26	Apologies	Ok	Apologies	Happy	Apologies	Ok	Ok	Annual Leave	Ok
6	T	8-Jan-26	Happy	Apologies	Apologies	Very happy	Ok	Ok	Ok	Annual Leave	Happy
7	F	9-Jan-26	Non Working	Ok	Ok	Happy	Concerned	Happy	Happy	Non Working	Ok
8											

Figure 3a: An example from the Daily Update – A Visual Display showing who in the team is working on a given day and whether the individual might need support.

	A	B	C	D	E	F	G	H	I							
1	Action Planner: what are we all working on and how is it going?															
2																
3																
4	Projects	Project name	Lead													
5		Project 1	Aisha													
6		Project 2	Carlos													
7		Project 3	Lisa													
8		Project 4	Patrick													
9		Project 5	Sam													
10	Other	Local Practitioner Classroom Session														
11		Team Away Day														
12		Website Launch Day														
13																
14																
w/c 5 Jan 2026																
Mon	Tue	Wed	Thu	Fri												
Green	Amber	Amber	Green	Green												
Green	Green	Green	Green	Green												
Green	Green	Green	Green	Closed												
Green	Green	Green	Green	Green												
Green	Green	Amber	Red	Red												
Event																
			Event													
					Event											
						Event										

Figure 3b: A digital example of using 'Visual Control' to see how well things are going to plan (Projects Section) and Visual Display' to share information ('Other' Section).

Visual management is important in the presentation of information in person and online. Think how you could apply the principles to the high-level structure of a team SharePoint site or even to the design of forms and spreadsheets.

Accessibility Good Practice – Where colour is used, ensure alternative indicators (e.g., symbols, labels or positioning) are also provided.

Visual Management can be used so that differing levels of risk can easily be communicated, at a glance, using red-amber-green (RAG) colour-coding relating actions required to the level of risk as show in the risk register in Figure 4 below. Red is high-risk, amber is medium-risk and green is low-risk.



Risk ID	Description of risk	Cause (If this were to be the case...)	Effect (then this would result)	Impact (consequence to the programme)	Probability	Risk Mitigation	Impact	Risk	Probability	Monitoring (how could we tell if it's happening)	Response Plan & Actions (evidence of current control)	Assessment of residual risk	Assessment of residual risk	Assessment of residual risk
1	Programme output quality / staff morale	Staff have to work from home as staff numbers permit due to University closure.	Staff morale decreases	Low	High	1. Staff morale decreases	Medium	Medium	Medium	1. Staff morale decreases	All staff to be invited to regular update meetings from home. Team to ensure all staff attend at least one every calendar month.	Medium	Medium	Medium
12	Programme / project	Home computer hardware may not be of sufficient power.	Staff take more time to deliver work. Delays to programme/phase of deliveries.	Medium	Medium	2. Delays to programme/phase of deliveries.	Medium	Medium	Medium	2. Monitoring by home manager.	1. Temperature test checks issued to staff working from home. Team to ensure all staff attend at least one every calendar month.	Medium	Medium	Medium
17	Programme / project	Damage of centrally-managed or cloud-based technologies (owned by IT services).	Staff cannot communicate (loss of email/Teams) payments cannot be made (loss of Oracle).	Low	Low	3. Delays to programme/phase of deliveries.	Medium	Medium	Medium	3. Monitoring by home manager.	1. Monitoring by home manager including communication e.g. time test.	Medium	Medium	Medium
21	Programme / project	Delays to programme/phase of delivery due to lack of availability of staff.	Delays to programme/phase of delivery due to lack of availability of staff.	Medium	Medium	4. Delays to programme/phase of deliveries.	Medium	Medium	Medium	4. Monitoring by home manager.	1. Monitoring by home manager including communication e.g. time test.	Medium	Medium	Medium
22	Programme / project	Delays to programme/phase of delivery due to lack of availability of staff.	Less time for focus practitioners to work on projects.	Low	Low	5. Delays to programme/phase of deliveries.	Medium	Medium	Medium	5. Monitoring by home manager.	1. Monitoring by home manager including communication e.g. time test.	Medium	Medium	Medium
24	Programme / project	Delays to programme/phase of delivery due to lack of availability of staff.	Delays to programme/phase of delivery due to lack of availability of staff.	Low	Low	6. Delays to programme/phase of deliveries.	Medium	Medium	Medium	6. Monitoring by home manager.	1. Monitoring by home manager including communication e.g. time test.	Medium	Medium	Medium
33	Programme / project	Any decision-makers are not available. Decisions on how to proceed cannot be made due to sickness, caring, or other.	Delays to programme/phase of delivery due to lack of availability of staff.	Medium	Medium	7. Delays to programme/phase of deliveries.	Medium	Medium	Medium	7. Monitoring by home manager.	1. Monitoring by home manager including communication e.g. time test.	Medium	Medium	Medium

Figure 4: An example of actions colour-coded relating to level of risk

Other examples of **Visual** Management tools include:

- **Andons** – a visual device that indicates status or warns of problems or failure and alerts you to take action. A simple example of Andon is the availability status displayed in your profile on Microsoft Teams.
- **Warning signs** - such as the one below in a store room at the Ashmolean.



'A visual device is a mechanism or thing intentionally designed to influence, guide, limit or even guarantee our behaviour by making vital information available as close to the point of use as possible to anyone ... who needs it without speaking a word'

Dr Gwendolyn Galsworth, visual workplace expert