

Magic Wall Recipe

Ingredients:

- ◆ One 8-to 14-foot-long piece of rip-stop nylon from a fabric store. Heavier weight looks sharper and is a bit easier to work with; lighter weight folds into a smaller package, but can get baggy.
- ◆ One full can of 3M Artist's Spray Mount - Artist's Adhesive (#6065) (black, white & red can). There are no known satisfactory substitutes.
- ◆ Markers - use dark, cool colors for text (blue, black, green, brown, purple) and hot colors for accents and highlights (red, yellow, orange).
- ◆ Paper (half sheets save paper, encourage brevity, and keep your wall from running out of space). Color paper as well as white allows you to keep different questions and activities sorted. Use a triangular architect's or engineer's scale as a straightedge to rip sheets in half, five or six at a time.
- ◆ Anchor brand masking tape, or blue painter's tape, or push pins to hang the wall. If you must leave no trace, then use more expensive white "artist masking tape."

Directions:

- A. Lay the fabric on newspaper-covered floor with stupendous ventilation, but out of the wind (a garage with open doors works well). I'm not kidding about the ventilation; this stuff is bad for your brain.
- B. With sheets of paper, mask about 6 by 6 inches in each corner and along the sides where you expect to hang the wall with masking tape (because the spray mount tends to dissolve the masking tape adhesive).
- C. Spray to cover the fabric completely, though lightly, with back-and-forth motion on one axis (say, lengthwise) and then in the other (say, crosswise). Spray in random patterns until the can runs out. Breathe as little as possible.
- D. Get out of there and let it dry for three or four hours, or overnight.
- E. Fold it up, sticky side in to keep dirt and hair from attaching to the fabric. Continue to air out for a week before using it for the first time, so you don't overcome your first set of meeting participants with the smell. Once it's aired out, the wall doesn't smell.

Set-up & Show Time!

- F. Don't be timid when pulling the wall open (it sticks to itself with great determination); it's rip-stop, so you won't hurt it. You'll probably need a colleague to help you pull it open and tape, or pin, it onto the wall.
- G. When it's show time, hand out black markers (one for every participant, if possible), distribute the white and color paper half-sheets as needed.
- H. The rest is up to you and your imagination. Hints: take digital images before you strip down each set of sheets so you have a permanent record of what was said and how it was arranged. When you pull sheets off the wall, keep them grouped by topic with a cover sheet showing the agenda item, or topic, they relate to; this makes transcription a breeze – especially when compared to bulky flip charts.
- I. If you are having a multiple-day meeting, it's likely that walls mounted with tape will fall during the night. It's not usually a big deal to re-hang it in the morning.

Care and Storage:

- J. At the end of the meeting, remove all the paper from the wall (paper left on for more than a day or two may stick permanently). Always fold the Wall sticky side in.
- K. Cleaning & renewing the wall. Your wall can be used many times before needing a new coat of spray mount. Throw it in the washing machine with hot water and detergent, then a dryer; reapply spray mount as before.