This is the story about the origin of sticky walls from my perspective. I don’t know the actual dates of these events. I think I have the “correct” general time frames.

It started when a colleague of the ICA community, Carol Fleishman first demonstrated her "sticky wall" technique in New Orleans, December 1990 by spraying adhesive on flip chart paper. There were 75 ICA colleagues present.

Pat Tuecke and Beret Griffin, ICA colleagues in San Francisco brought the idea to our facilitator training and used Photographers Back Drop paper which they got at photography supply store in San Francisco. At first they rolled the paper and taped it shut, then they found tubes, which they also found at the photography supply store. At the time it was the only place to get the heavy rolls of paper. The rolls purchased were large enough so we could get a couple of walls.

Then I continued the journey of the walls by spraying a large sheet of “bulletin board “paper and used it for doing the consensus workshop. We soon prepared our large “sticky wall on bulletin board size sheets of paper”. Maybe it was 4 ft tall by 12 feet in length. Since it was cumbersome to make, we found a large tube and rolled it up after each use and carried it on to the next destination. We started doing this in 1992 or 1993.

In 1995, another ICA colleague, Jennifer Vanica was going to Cairo to facilitate planning with a partner team there and couldn’t take the big cardboard with her. She tested a lot of materials and fabrics, and for that trip she took a piece of velvet, which worked, but we thought we could do better.  When she got back, Amanda (her assistant) came up with the idea of the light weight synthetic fabric and did the prototype, which we liked a lot and started using.

Amanda shared her sample with me and let me use it to facilitate many contracts with her organization, the Jacobs Family Foundation. We were asked many times, where can I get one of those? In the closing conversation of an event when we asked, what was a highlight for you today? Oh, the sticky wall was often a response.

So as a member of the ICA West staff, I continued to explore types and colors of fabric and made several copies of the sticky wall. Another colleague of ICA, Linda Vogelsong, talked us into creating a label for the sticky wall. Yet another colleague, Pat Drown was hired to surge the sides of the fabric and we began to sell them at trainings and ICA and IAF conferences. It soon became an additional revenue stream for ICA. In the beginning most of our customers were facilitators who were trained in ToP methods.

Since 1995, the product is now used in many different arenas. Since it sold on the ICA website as well as Partners in Participation’s website, we actually don’t know all the places they are being used. Other people have captured the idea and sell it as their product as well. After leaving the staff of ICA, I also continue to sell the sticky walls and have added additional colors to the inventory. They are now available in 3 sizes and 5 different colors. The orders come from all over the world.