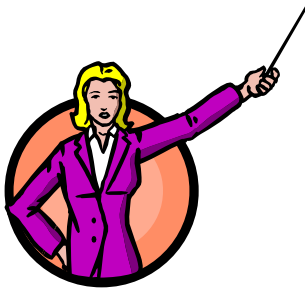


VISUAL AIDS 101 **- the use and abuse -**

Visual Aids can be utilized to help the audience comprehend and understand specific concepts or steps in your speech; however, their execution can 'make' or 'break' a speech presentation. While professional and creatively designed and utilized visual aids can enhance the audience's experience with the speaker and presentation, poorly executed visual aids can actually detract from your message, leading to audience confusion and detachment. Consider using a visual aid when...

- Presenting technical data or other quantitative information (via charts & bar graphs)
- Referring to a particular location or place (via a map)
- 'Words' are simply not enough (via a powerful image)
- Describing a particular process or skill (via your own demonstration)
- Outlining specific points of the speech (via a handout, poster, or other form)
- Demonstrating your *ethos* (via great execution of your visual aids)

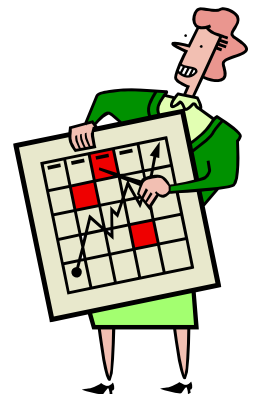
Visual aids can take various forms



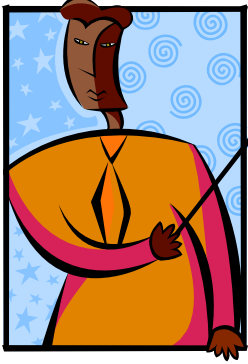
- PowerPoint technology
- Posters
- Props
- Overhead transparencies
- Handouts
- Media (visual/audio material)
- Human models

Some key factors to consider when presenting with visual aids.

1. "You are your visual aids." Remember, your visual aid is an extension of yourself; consider it a part of your attire. Would you present with uncombed hair or a wrinkled shirt? A sloppy visual aid is an indicator of a sloppy presenter.
2. Visual aids should accompany the speaker, not overtake the speaker. When using a visual aid, the audience's attention should continue to be on the speaker.
3. "Less is more." Your audience should not be able to understand the message via the visual alone, let the speaker be the 'true' source of information. This will require the audience to pay close attention, rather than simply rely on the visuals. Visual aids, typically, should only 'highlight' the important information of the speech.
4. "Use them and lose them." Visual aids should only be used during the segment of the speech that they illustrate. Once they are utilized, remove them from your audience's sight either by clicking, covering, removing, hiding, etc.



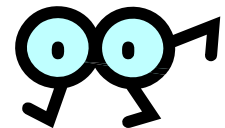
5. The use of visual aids should be fluent and undisruptive. Be sure to practice your speech several times, executing the visual aid each time, in order to perfect your technique. Always have a Plan B in case problems occur (computer crash, burnt out bulb, broken easel, etc.)

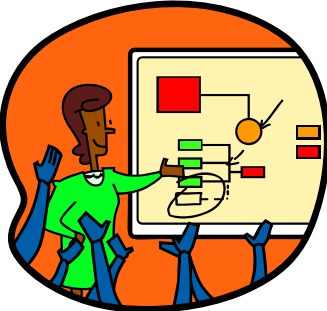


6. Always retain ownership of your visual aid. Do not pass props, photos, or other items around the audience. You may “lose” them, or they become distractions for your audience.
 7. Be sure your visual aids don't give too much away too soon. Disclose bullet points one at a time. Your audience should not know where you are going with your speech until you disclose it.
 8. Try to minimize the forms of visual aids; the more ‘choreography’ your presentation requires, the more opportunity for problems with execution.
9. Remember, all visual aids should help and assist the audience. Do not alienate your audience by focusing on your visual aids more than them. Your execution should be a simple and easy process, requiring little attention and effort away from your communication with them.

Steps to Preparing Your Visual Aids

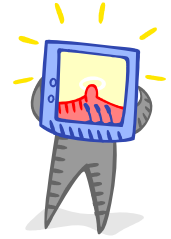
1. Do not wait until the last minute. Last minute visual aids are usually *primitive* or sloppy.
 - a. Do not write/print your visual aids. Unless your printing/handwriting style can be considered as neat and clean as a computer font, let the computer do the work for you.
 - b. Always computer generate your graphs and charts.
 - c. If you are eliciting feedback from your audience and recording it on a visual aid, use a different color pen/marker and take your time to write it neatly on the poster, white board, or overhead transparency. Make sure you are using a new and working marker before the speech.
2. Be sure your visual aid can be clearly seen by the entire audience. Are your images too small? Is your font large and clear enough?
3. When using **posters**...
 - a. Is the poster board thick enough to stand on a visual?
 - b. Do not roll your poster board.
 - c. Start your presentation with a blank poster; during the presentation, when not referring to the posters, continue to cover it with the blank form.
 - d. Do not speak to the posters – remember, the audience should always maintain your focus.
 - e. Be sure your poster board and font coordinate in color. Avoid bright, fluorescent poster boards. Be sure your colors are easy to view and read.



- f. Consider cutting larger poster boards in half; the smaller your posters, the easier they are to use; however, keep in mind rule #2.
 - g. Work with the specific easel before the actual presentation. Do you need to make adjustments?
4. When using **props**...
- a. Use them then lose them. Once you utilize your prop, place it in the lectern, in a box or other container. Don't continue holding it while speaking.
 - b. Don't use in a distracting manner. If the prop may be distracting to your audience, consider another form of visual aid (i.e., a live prop or food).
 - c. Be sure your prop is large enough to be seen by the entire audience. If it is too small, consider an enlarged photo/poster.
 - d. Know how you will hide the prop before the actual presentation.
5. When using **transparencies**...
- a. Computer generate your transparencies with an ink jet or laser printer.
 - b. Be sure to setup the appropriate placement/position/focus of your projector before the actual speech.
 - c. Verify how the transparency transfers to the screen; some printer ink does not transfer light well. Confirm this before the actual presentation.
 - d. When presenting bullet points, do not divulge your entire speech via the overhead. Disclose each bullet point, one at a time with a sheet of paper.
 - e. If you need to write on the overhead, take your time and write very neatly.
 - f. Turn on the projector when it is needed; shut it off when don't need it.
 - g. Have your transparencies organized and coordinated before the speech begins. Place a white sheet of paper between each one, so they are easily identified and accessible when presenting.
- 
6. When using **handouts**...
- a. Avoid handouts unless absolutely necessary. Audience members will frequently focus on the handout, rather than the speaker.
 - b. Do not divulge the entire speech via a handout. If audience members see what your entire speech is about, they can 'tune you out.'
 - c. Do not pass out handouts of your entire PowerPoint presentation, until after the presentation ends. Again, an audience who actively listens, formatting/recording their own notes, will retain the information to a greater degree. The handouts can be used later for information that the audience member missed or for sharing with other individuals.
 - d. If you need to offer a handout, remember, "less is more." Make sure the audience must pay attention to you the speaker in order to achieve the full picture or receive the complete information.

7. When using **media**...

- a. The use of visual/audio media should be purposeful, not to eat up time when you could be presenting information. Try to limit the use of video/audio to 10% or less of your complete presentation time.
- b. Be sure your video/audio are cued before the presentation. Use the timer on the LCD readouts of the VCR/DVD/CD or other media player as a guide.
- c. Be sure the volume is adjusted accordingly so the entire audience can hear and listen comfortably.
- d. Remember your audience, some content of video/audio may be objectionable or offensive to members. An offended audience member is a *lost* audience member who will stop listening and be resilient to your message and goal.



8. When using **human models**...

- a. Make sure your models don't upstage you, the presenter. Their involvement within the presentation should be subtle and as brief as possible.
- b. Do not allow them to stay in the staging area for any longer than absolutely necessary.
- c. Your human models should appear as interested in your presentation as you are. Bored human models will lead to bored audience members.
- d. Be sure to conduct a dress rehearsal with your models beforehand to eliminate any unforeseen problems or confusion.

Remember....

1. **The focus is always YOU the speaker, not the visual aid.**
2. ***A professional visual reflects a professional speaker.***
3. **Practice and Preparation = Perfect execution of visual aids**
4. ***Less is more* - let 'you' be the key to vital information, not the visual aid**



PowerPoint

Why should I use it in the first place?

The Purposes of PowerPoint

1. **To enhance speaker's *ethos*.**
 - A well-developed slide show exudes professionalism and creativity.
2. **To aid the audience's comprehension.**
 - Outlines of content
 - Graphs of difficult quantitative data
 - Visual accompaniment to enhance the message
3. **To provide variety within the presentation.**
 - the audience's focus changes throughout the presentation.
4. **To offer convenience for the speaker.**
 - provides a one-source medium for all video and/or audio accompaniment
 - creates outlines and handouts to accompany the speech.
 - 'notes' feature reduces need for cumbersome outlines and note cards.
5. **"A picture can say a thousand words."**
 - Many times, pictures can convey a higher degree of *pathos* than the speaker alone.



PowerPoint Guidelines

1. **Try to average one slide per minute of delivery.**
 - Too many can become distracting.
2. **Avoid more than five lines of text per slide.**
 - Audience should be focused on you, not squinting at a screen.
3. **Avoid more than five words per line.**
 - Avoid wordiness; keep it simple.
4. **Colors**
 - Be sure colors reflect the tone and mood of the topic.
 - Avoid dark fonts on dark slides (i.e., black font on red background).
 - Make sure colors coordinate.
5. **Fonts**
 - Avoid *ornate fonts*.
 - Be sure letters are large enough. (16 pt. Minimum)
 - Don't forget to **BOLD** for emphasis.
 - *Suggested Fonts:*
 - i. Times New Roman
 - ii. Arial
 - iii. Tahoma
 - iv. *Comic Sans MS*
 - Provided the tone of your presentation allows for a 'youthful' tone.
6. **Don't overdo the animation.**
 - Remember the focus is on the speaker, not the slide techniques.
 - Keep slide transitions and animations consistent with each other.
7. **NO SOUND**
 - Exception: Sound can enhance when it has a clear and necessary purpose (i.e., to provide an example of a song, lyrics, speech, etc.)

8. **Start and end your presentation with a blank slide.**
 - a. You don't want to give away too much, too soon.
 - b. Let the audience focus on you during the opening and closing.

9. **Timing**
 - When you are finished with a slide, change it.
 - You don't want your audience focusing on it after its intended use.
 - This may necessitate inserting blank slides within your presentation.
 - Try the "automatic timing" feature.
 - Enhances your credibility.
 - Eliminates being anchored to the computer.

10. **Keep all slides and fonts consistent throughout the presentation.**
 - Don't vary the color and font schemes.
 - Try a 'thematic' series of backgrounds

11. **Practice, Practice, Practice**
 - Be sure to conduct a run-through with the specific equipment you will be utilizing in the presentation.
 - You want to ensure the graphics, colors, and images will translate well.

