

Audio-visual Aids

Audio-visual aids are used to enhance the presentation. They can be handouts, photos, whiteboard, flip chart, OHT, powerpoint slide show, microphone, music. Be sure to focus your preparation on the speech more than the audio-visual aids.



and now, let's dim the
lights, so i can show
you computer slides and
read the exact text of
the slides to you

Select and Use Visual Aids Effectively

Because we live in a time when communication is visual and verbal, visual aids that reinforce your meaning can enhance any oral presentation. Research has shown that oral presentations that use visuals are more persuasive, more interesting, more credible, and more professional--i.e., more effective--than presentations without such aids. Particularly if your presentation is long--20 minutes or more--visual aids can help your audience follow your ideas easily and with fewer lapses in attention.

The benefits of using visual aids include:

- They help your audience understand your ideas. You can use visual aids to announce each main point as you begin discussion of that point. You can also use visual aids to accentuate and illuminate important ideas. However, the message that the visual carries should be immediately apparent. If audience members have to study the visual to interpret its meaning, they will not be listening to you.
- They help the audience follow your argument, your "train" of thought. In both oral and written presentations, readers/listeners must perceive the pattern of organization to comprehend effectively. Even if you don't use formal visual aids,

you may want to write the outline for the main body of your presentation on a board or use a transparency to let your audience see your plan and trace your movement from one section of your presentation to another. . Powerpoint is an effective tool for developing and presenting outlines to aid listeners

- They make your presentation more memorable and thus increase the chances that what you said will be remembered.

Guidelines for using visual aids:

Many of the guidelines for using visual aids in oral presentations mirror those for written documents: they need to fit the needs of the audience; they must be simple; they must be clear and easy to understand.

How many visual aids should I use?

Some kinds of oral presentations will require one kind of visual aid; presentations conveying complex information may require several kinds of visual aids.

What type of visual aids should I use?

You can use drawings, graphs, props and objects, a blackboard with an outline, charts, demonstrations, pictures, statistics, cartoons, photographs, maps, etc. Use anything that will help people SEE what you MEAN!

How do I design effective visual aids?

Because your visual aids will be seen while the audience is listening to you, you will need to be sure that all visuals are as simple as possible and as easy to read:

- Avoid too much information on any single visual.
- Use boldface type in a font size that can be easily read.
- Use sans serif type because it produces a sharper image for slides and transparencies.
- Limit the fonts you use to two per visual.
- Avoid all caps.
- Use a type--size and font--that contrasts distinctly with the background.
- Avoid visuals that use too many colors--more than four on any one aid.
- If you are preparing slides or transparencies for video conferencing, use the plain background and a color--such as yellow or light green--and black text. Color can enhance a visual, but it can also reduce the effectiveness of the message. The point is to use good judgment in visual design. Use visual aids, but don't overdo color or text.

- Templates available in programs such as Powerpoint are tempting, but they may not be readable when text is placed on them!
- Avoid making your audience study your aids. If they are busy trying to decipher your visual aid, they will not be listening to you.
- Bar graphs, circle graphs, simple diagrams, pictures, and lists are standard types of visual aids. Whatever aid you decide to use, limit the aid to only the concept, data, or point you are trying to make. Use bar graphs, line graphs, or circle graphs rather than tables, particularly if the table has more than one column.. Tables are harder to interpret than a graphic presentation of the content. Also, tables can easily contain too much information and are more acceptable in written reports, where the reader has time to study them.
- Be sure that what the visual says is immediately evident.
- Computer graphics and programs such as Harvard Graphics, Powerpoint, and Excel in combination with color printers and slide projection equipment give you the opportunity to experiment with graphic design. Try developing visual aids that are visually pleasing as well as clear.
- Use technology whenever possible. Some web sites have visuals that you can use for presentations about that topic.
- Technology allows speakers to download graphs, drawings, and figures from the World Wide Web. The Web is perhaps one of the richest, newest, most colorful sources of visual aids.

Many presentation rooms now have ethernet connections and even computers that have the appropriate software to run a browser such as Netscape. When the computer is connected to an overhead projector, Web images can be shown on a screen. Because of the increasingly rich range of materials available on the World Wide Web, resources available to enhance any oral presentations are almost limitless. Even if the room in which you will give a presentation does not have ethernet connections, you can still print Web materials via a color copier onto paper or transparency masters.