

Research Placement and Scale

Go to the room you will use to give your presentation. Examine how far away everyone will be and where they will sit. In order to make something big enough but not too big and to find the optimum size for your letters (be they pre-printed or written by you at the moment), you need to get a clear picture of the requirements that room dictates. Practice by writing on chart or blackboard in that room and seeing the size from the audience's viewpoint. Notice the lighting for best placement.

Control the Information

The single biggest mistake I see in my work is the tendency to *overload* visual aids with too much information at once.

Result? You lose control. While you're explaining the upper left-hand corner or column one, they've gotten to all the bottom lines and are roaming all over the place making judgments, and incidentally totally missing *your* explanation of the upper left-hand corner or column one. Therefore—you must control your visual information.

Only give one piece at a time—just show as much as you can explain, in small, self-contained pieces. Then add the next point and talk about it, then the next, and so on. Whenever you add a point, you challenge your audience to keep thinking, to stay active and involved.

Adding Information

In order to control each piece of information you give, add additional pieces visually. And only when you are ready to talk about them. To help your audience stay with and absorb only *your* explanation, when *you* give it, not their guesses as to what you mean, try these:

- If you're using a blackboard or a flip chart, draw or write *while* you explain and stop till you're ready for the next point. Don't reveal great gobs of information and then talk. Introduce, then draw and explain as you do. Your material will then unfold naturally, and only when you're ready to add it.
- With prepared charts use transparent overlays, if possible. Separate your data into individual points, time lapses, chronology, or new information, each of which modifies previous data. Add them one at a time or draw on a slick transparency to make each new point.
- When creating slides or overhead transparencies, use the "build" system. Slide one has only the basics or the outline. Add a piece of data