

The Purpose of a Visual in a Presentation

General Approach for Designing Visuals

1. Decide if you need a visual - ask yourself “Do I need a visual to enhance or help communicate my message to my audience?”

To answer this question, do an audience analysis. Determine the following:

- a. Are they mostly male or female?
 - b. What are their motivations?
 - c. What are their questions?
 - d. What do they know?
 - e. What do they want to know?
 - f. What do they need to know?
 - g. How do they feel about this subject?
 - h. How do they read information?
 - i. How do they process information?
2. Select the type of visual that best conveys your message

When you need to present . . .	Use this type of visual
How a thing looks or is constructed	Photograph, drawing (line art)
How to do something or a process	Photographs or drawings with labels, videos, animations
Trends and numerical data	Charts, graphs, tables

When you are showing trends and numerical data, use the following guidelines to choose the right type of visual:

- Table - categories of data
 - Line Graph - shows changes or trends over time or sequence.
 - Bar Chart - show comparisons or trends across categories.
 - Scatter Diagram - displays the data distribution of two variables related to a common event.
 - Pie Chart - compare a part of data in comparison to an entire data set.
3. Design the visual
 4. Be sure your visual is ethically designed

Designing an Effective Visual for a Presentation

Principles of Great Design

A well-planned, well-designed visual will help your audience hear your message.

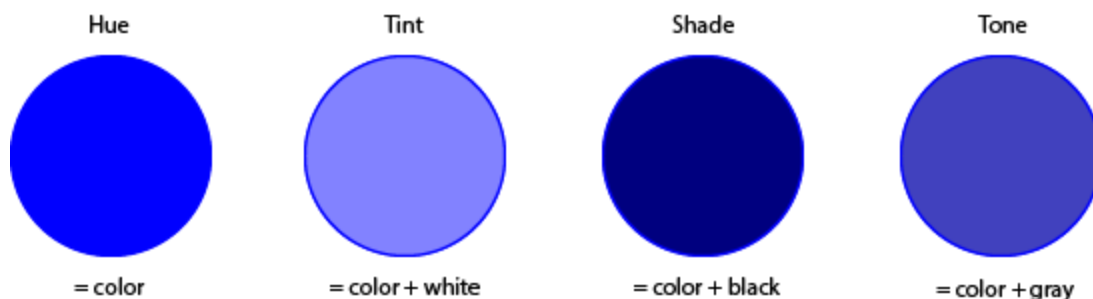
1. Proximity - related elements can be grouped together and unrelated elements can be separated.
2. Balance - the weight and distribution of the elements in a composition creates a sense of equilibrium for the audience.
3. Alignment - brings a sense of unity to an image, creates harmony, and eliminates chaos.
4. Repetition - repeating a color scheme or graphic in a presentation can create unity among several visuals.
5. Contrast - any significant difference of light and dark in a visual that brings attention to an element and makes it stand out.
6. Space - white space is the space either small space (micro) between or large space (macro) around elements.
7. Hierarchy - creates a visual map through your composition for the audience.

Designing with Color

Hue is just another word for color.

Saturation refers to a color's brightness or intensity. A color/hue is pure when it hasn't been mixed with white, black, or gray.

Value is the lightness or darkness of a hue.



Designing Presentation Slides

Best Practices

- Each visual should make or contain only one main point.
- The point of your visual should be obvious; don't make your audience guess.
- Eliminate as much noise as possible; preferably all of it.
- Use a full sentence for the slide title, not just a word or two.
- Express concepts using a visual and use text sparingly, if you must.
- Make sure your image is clean, without a background image or lots of labels and titles.
- Be careful in your use of color to choose pleasing colors and follow expected norms.

Supplemental Materials

- Doumont, Jean-Luc. *Trees, Maps, and Theorems: Effective Communication for Rational Minds*. Kraainem: Principiæ, 2012.
- Anderson, Paul V. *Technical Communication: A Reader-centered Approach*. Boston, MA: Wadsworth/CENGAGE Learning, 2014.
- Williams, Robin. *The Non-Designer's Design Book (4th Edition)*. San Francisco, CA: Peachpit Press, 2014.
- Wong, Dona. *The Wall Street Journal Guide to Information Graphics: The Dos and Don'ts of Presenting Data, Facts, and Figures*. New York, NY: W. W. Norton & Company, 2013.