**Document Design**

How the text looks on the page is very important. It is not only cosmetic, but also functional. It helps make the material visually accessible to an audience. This is important because a busy audience needs to be able to quickly and easily access the information that the sender sends. It is also important because the document sent represents the company or institution that sends it. It creates a first impression of the company and even elicits an emotional response in the receiver beyond just what the message says. There are some important aspects of document design to consider.

* ***Organization* is clearly important.** The text should be presented in small, easily accessible chunks. To do this you should use headings, white space, rules, and section dividers for long documents.
* **A second important design aspect is *order.*** Generally documents are set up in order of importance or chronologically.
  + The relationship of ideas is shown to readers by the headings and visual clues that we most typically associate with outlining.
  + To achieve order, take into consideration the use of typefaces (fonts), with serif typefaces best used in text because they are easier to read and sans serif typefaces for headings.
  + Also consider type size, using smaller sizes as subpoints in descending order, density, spacing, as well as the positioning of headings for effectiveness, whether centered, left-margined, indented, or outdented.
* **A third major aspect is the document's ability to *allow readers to access information rapidly.***
  + Be careful not to overwhelm the reader's eyes with too much razzle-dazzle.
  + Use vertical white space, which will break up the density of the text.
  + Bullets, maintaining parallel structure; numbering; a limited use of all capital letters; a limited use of italics; windowing, placing information in boxes; fills, the amount of shading or patterning you might want to include in windows; including color, making sure the colors are appropriate to the message's purpose; and using inverse type and headers/footers.
* **One last aspect to consider is *variety.***This might include considering other possible print production options available.
  + Printing the document in landscape format instead of portrait format, using columns, varying gutter width using ragged right margins
  + Inserting graphics to add clarity and accommodate some readers' learning style differences can also be helpful.