

If you are artistic, you might use one of the drawing software programs to create your own unique designs and images.

Animation is not recommended for most professional business presentations, but you can use it to transition between slides or add interest in informal presentations.

You can embed tables and graphs into slides, but they should be simple and uncluttered to be effective. Check the table format if you type it in one program and then transfer it to another. Sometimes switching to a different program will cause your table and its contents to go askew.

Make a hard copy of your slides for yourself and, if appropriate, for your audience. Create a backup copy and store it elsewhere.

### Tips for Slides

- Limit the number of fonts; choose a sans serif font style.
- Limit the number of colors; use a color theme.
- Limit the text.
- Choose an easy-to-read font point size.
- Use only high-quality photos, images, and graphics.
- Avoid fancy embellishments and bullets.
- Analyze high-quality slides, and replicate similar ones.
- Analyze your slides.
- Avoid reading your speech from slides.
- Print a hard copy set of the slides.
- Make backup copies of your slides.

## Refresh Tired Slides

If your slides and other visuals are years old, it may be time for a facelift. Eliminate old-fashioned, overdone colors and styles for PowerPoint presentations. Where bullets, clip art, and lots of text were once the norm, they are scarce today. Modern slides have a crisp, clean look with a few key words or lines of text and superior images and graphics.

Search the Internet for slides and visuals. Look through a significant number of them to see what is new and what looks outdated. Take particular note of the visuals when you attend presentations. Check to see what your company is using in its marketing and advertising materials. Look through journals and magazines. Watch television ads and look at billboards. Take webinars. If you have friends in the marketing or advertising field, consult them on your visuals and ask for recommendations or improvements.

Analyze the visuals you researched to determine which are the most appealing. Emulate those that appeal to you and fit your presentation. Choose slides that are superior in quality.

Investing the time to research and create outstanding visuals will have a big payoff in the delivery of your presentation. Terrific visuals have the potential to engage and excite your audience.

## Practice with Your Visuals

Once you have created your visuals, practice using them with your speech. Become so familiar with what is on the visuals that you are not tempted to read from them. If possible, practice your visuals on the equipment you will use during your actual presentation to avoid surprises such as the visuals being difficult to read or being incompatible with the computer at the location where you are presenting.

Preferably, practice in front of people. If you cannot find someone to practice in front of, run through the presentation on your own out loud in front of a mirror.

## Proofread Your Slides

Read every word of every slide carefully. You will not want a glaring error to be displayed on the screen for all to see. Check your spelling and grammar.

Make sure you have covered all the important points but have not overused text. Analyze the overall appearance of the slides. Have a friend or an associate read and review the slides.

Complete the following checklist.

Checklist for Preparing Visual Aids and Handouts	Yes	No
Are my visual aids clear and easy to read?		
Have I limited text on my visuals?		
Have I used easy-to-read fonts and colors?		
Have I used high-quality images and graphics?		
Have I tailored my visuals to this particular audience?		
Am I using only enough visuals to get the message across?		
Will my visuals add to my presentation in a positive way?		
Have I considered the different learning styles of my audience?		
Is the information on my visuals credible?		
Have I credited my sources when necessary?		
Have I refreshed any visuals I used in the past?		
Have I carefully proofread the visuals?		
Are my copies clean and legible?		
Have I made copies of the visuals for myself?		
Did I make backup copies of my work?		

You should have answered yes to each item in the checklist. Work toward correcting any negative answers.

## Exercise: Research and Analyze Slides

Search various Internet sites for slides. Study the graphics and photos. Analyze each slide by describing the following:

Describe the visual attractiveness and appeal of the slide.

---

---

---

---

---

---

Describe the use of graphics and images.

---

---

---

---

---

---

Describe the appeal of the fonts and color.

---

---

---

---

---

---

Describe the use of bullets and other embellishments.

---

---

---

---

---

---

Exercise: Create and Analyze Slides

Analyze each slide you create for your next presentation by completing the following:

How will this slide complement the presentation?

---

---

---

---

---

---

Describe the visual appeal of the slide, including text, graphics, pictures and images, fonts, embellishments, and the like.

---

---

---

---

---

---

Have you limited the text on the slide? \_\_\_\_\_

Is the information on the slide credible? \_\_\_\_\_

Have you cited sources you used to create the slide? \_\_\_\_\_

Have you tailored the slide to your presentation? \_\_\_\_\_

Does the slide add value to the presentation? \_\_\_\_\_

Have you carefully proofread each slide? \_\_\_\_\_

If you are reusing visuals from a previous presentation, have you updated them? \_\_\_\_\_

Are you relying on reading the slide to get you through your presentation? \_\_\_\_\_

Do you have an appropriate number of slides? \_\_\_\_\_

Have you copied a set of slides for yourself and for your audience (if appropriate)? \_\_\_\_\_

Have you made a backup copy of your slides? \_\_\_\_\_

## VIDEOS AND AUDIOVISUALS

---

Videos should be professionally created or at the very least have a professional look and sound if you prepared them yourself. For videos in which you are the subject, prepare what you want to say and practice several times before the performance is recorded. Use quality recording equipment. Limit the information on the video to what is advantageous to your presentation. When other individuals are filmed in the videos you plan to show to the public, obtain written permission from them.

If you are showing a prerecorded video related to your subject matter, preview it beforehand and time it with your entire presentation.

Audiovisuals should be professionally recorded. They must be created with a pleasant-sounding voice that is free of accents, quirks, careless habits, and incorrect pronunciations.

## MISCELLANEOUS VISUAL AIDS

---

Some presentations lend themselves to other types of visual aids, such as equipment, clothing, merchandise and other goods. Check the safety, appeal, and visual appearance of all display and demonstration aids. Make sure equipment and products with moveable parts are working properly.

### Exercise: Practice Your Presentation with Your Visuals

Practice your next presentation from beginning to end using your slides, videos, and other visuals. Analyze how well the visuals complement the speech.