PRESENTABLE PRESENTATIONS

or

(How to succeed in the business of giving good presentations without trying - too hard)

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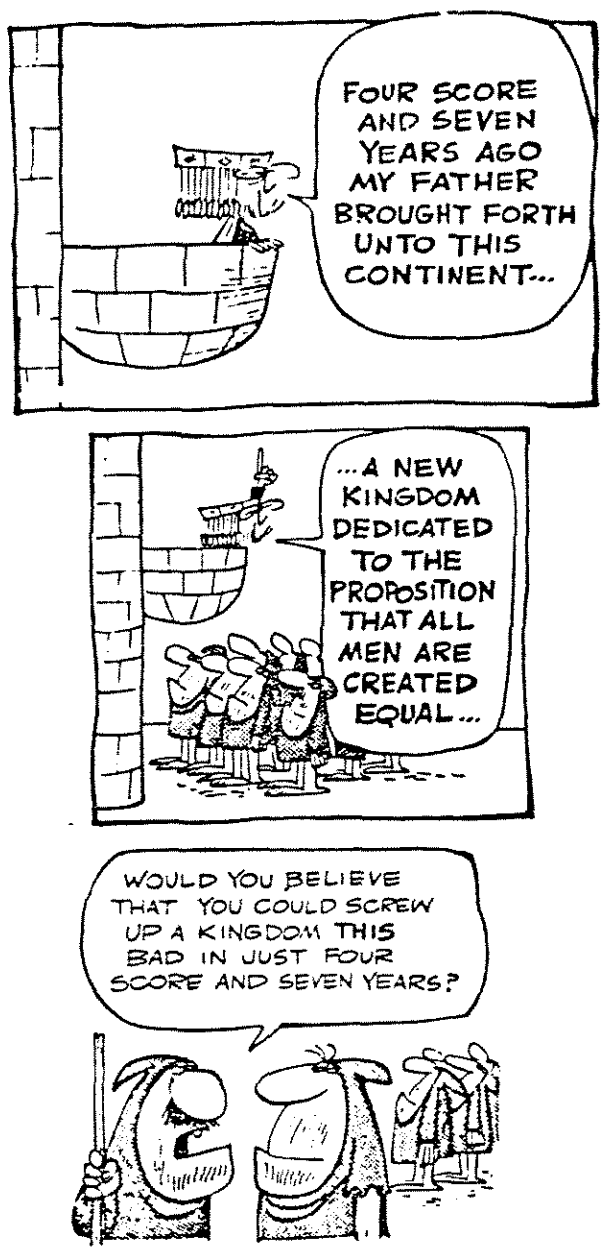
RULE 1 Know your audience.



RULE 1: KNOW YOUR AUDIENCE.

- Make an effort to learn who they are.
- Learn what their needs are.
- Use examples that they will understand to illustrate your points.

RULE 2 Provide at least two methods of getting the point across.

"Whose idea was this?"

RULE 2: PROVIDE AT LEAST TWO METHODS OF GETTING THE POINT ACROSS.

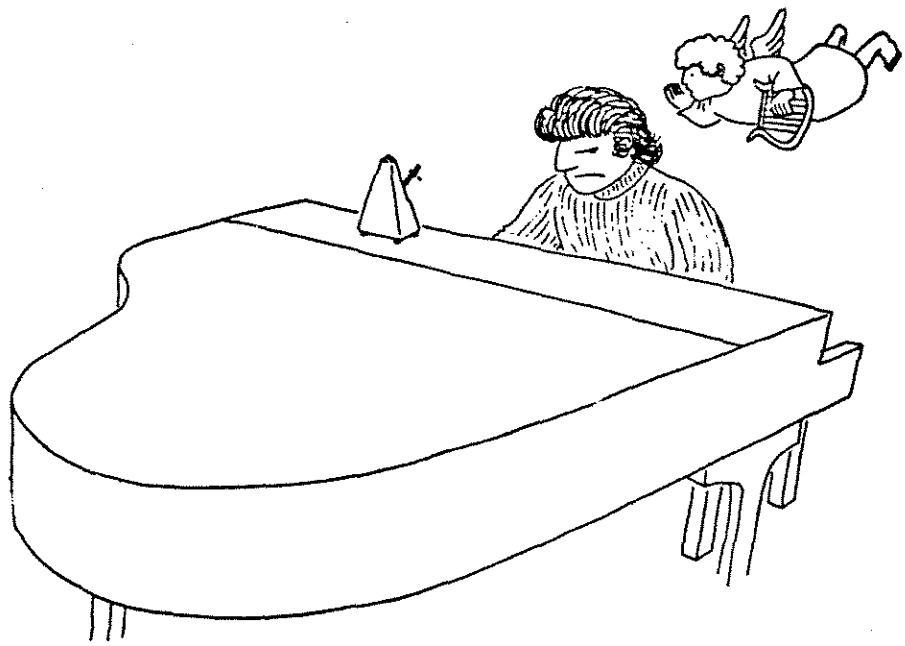
- Use both auditory and visual stimuli.
- Tools for visual stimuli include flipcharts, slides, transparencies and pictures.
- There are advantages and disadvantages to each tool.

RULE 3 Provide a hand-out of your salient points.

RULE 3: PROVIDE A HANDOUT OF YOUR SALIENT POINTS.

- Your audience will thank you for not having to take notes.
- Your audience will have something to refer to later.

RULE 4 Practice.

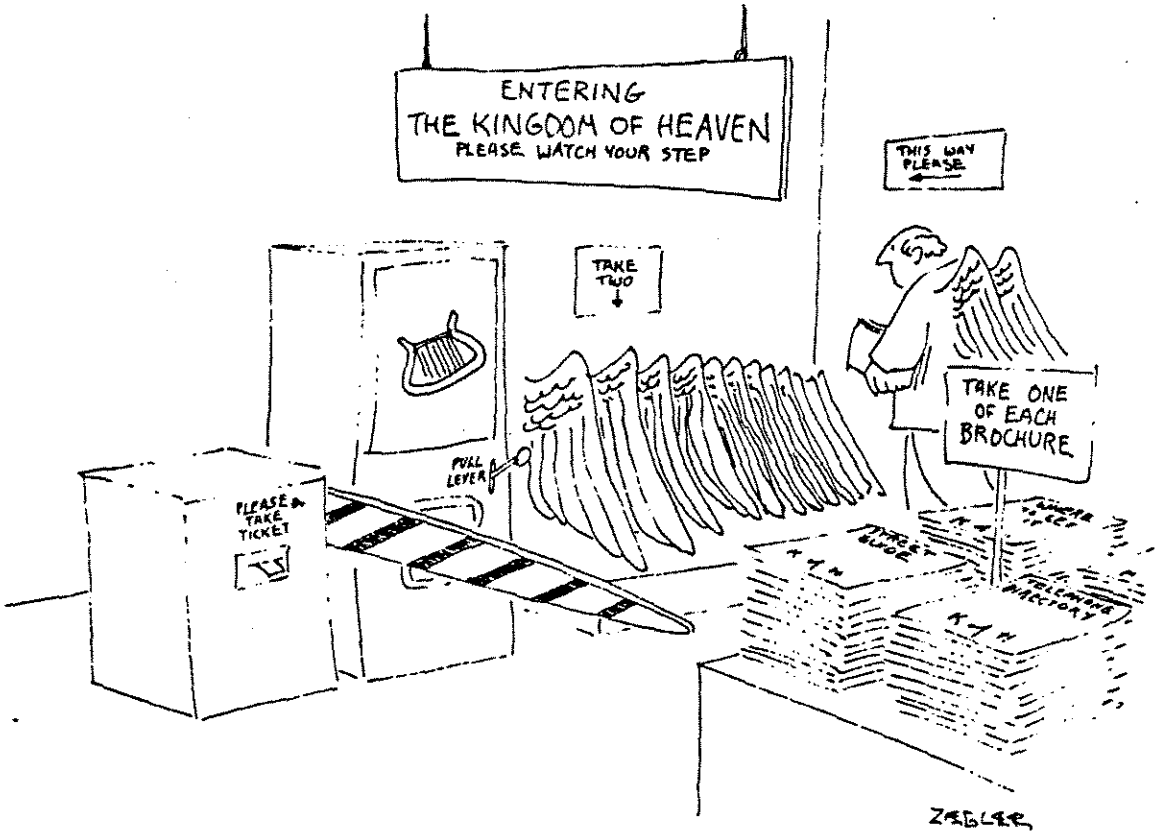


"And dentistry? I've heard dentistry has its rewards also."

RULE 4: PRACTICE.

- o Sounds corny, but practice in front of the mirror until you feel comfortable with the presentation.

RULE 5 Lay out your materials first.



RULE 5: LAY OUT YOUR MATERIALS FIRST.

- o Avoid panic.
- o Avoid delay.
- o Avoid embarassment when you discover that the equipment doesn't work.
- o Know <u>when</u> you are going to change a slide.

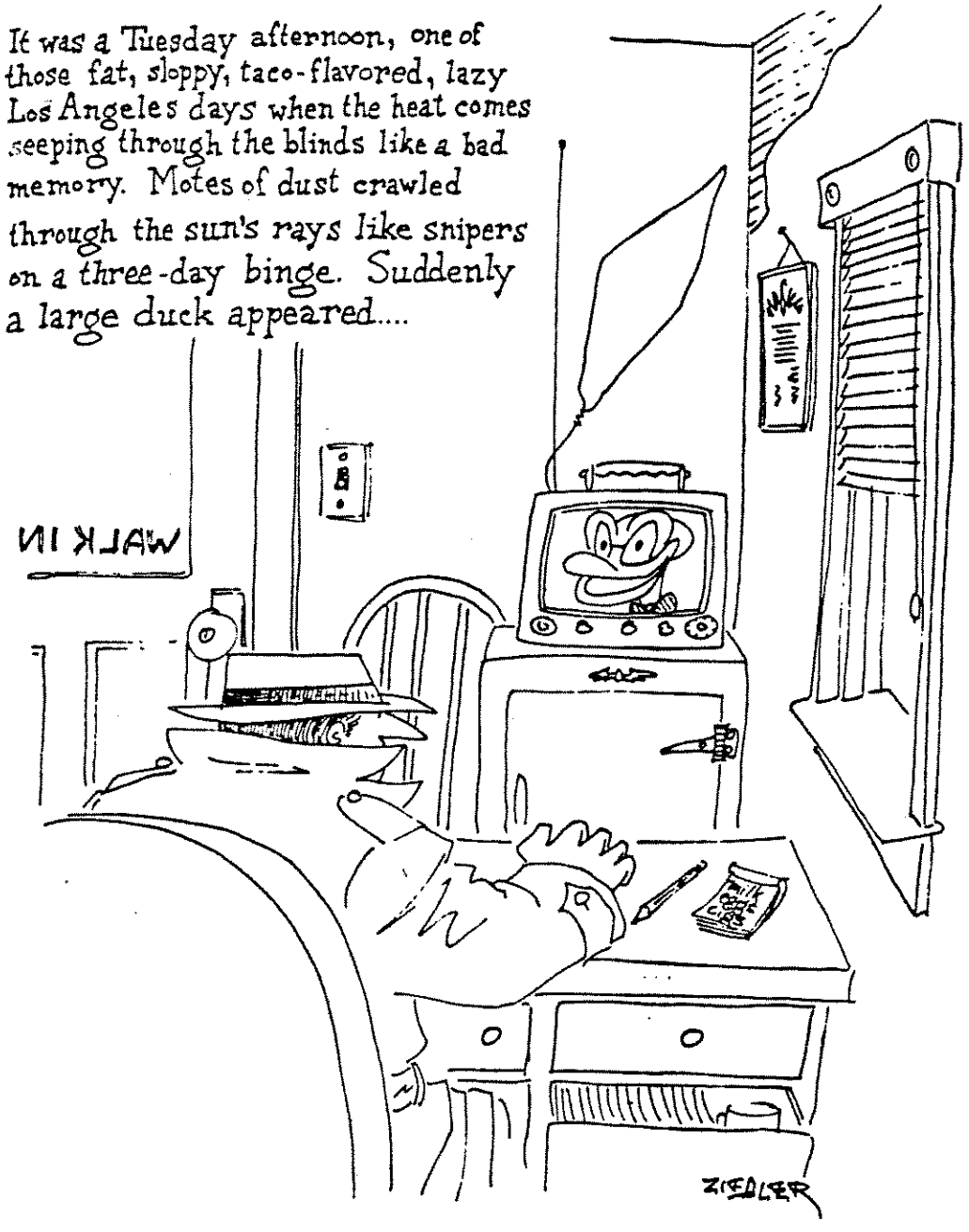
RULE 6 Speak as well as you can.

This means...

Avoid words you don't usually use.

- Corollary 1: Avoid words you don't usually use.
  - Someone may ask you what they mean.

Avoid complex sentences.



- Corollary 2: Avoid complex sentences.
  - No one, including yourself, can follow you.

Avoid ers, ahs, ums and "you knows".

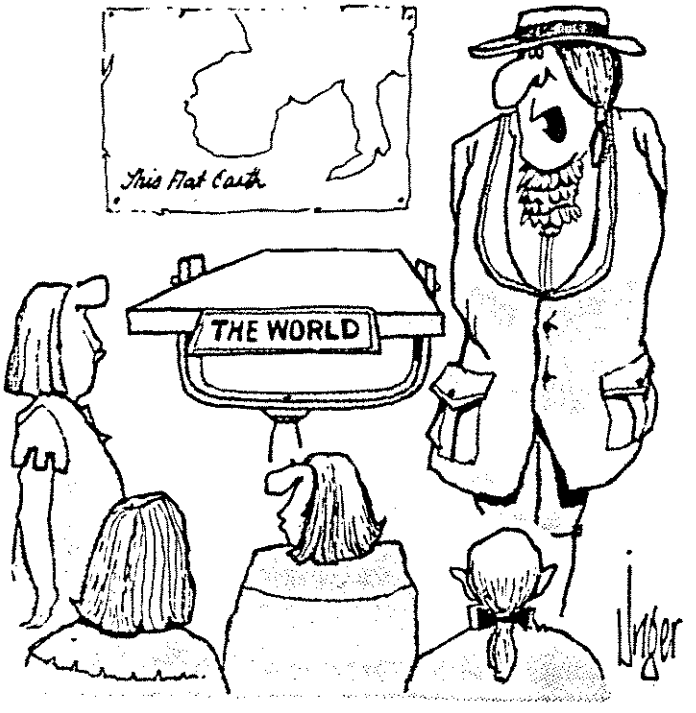
Ah, er, ah, police? Well, there's a giant, um,you know, ah, like, um...

- Corollary 3: Avoid ers, ahs, ums and you knows.
  - They might not know; then they might ask you.

Don't read.

- Corollary 4: Don't read.
  - Reading speeches promotes zz-zz-zz-zz's.

RULE 7 Relax and make contact with your audience.



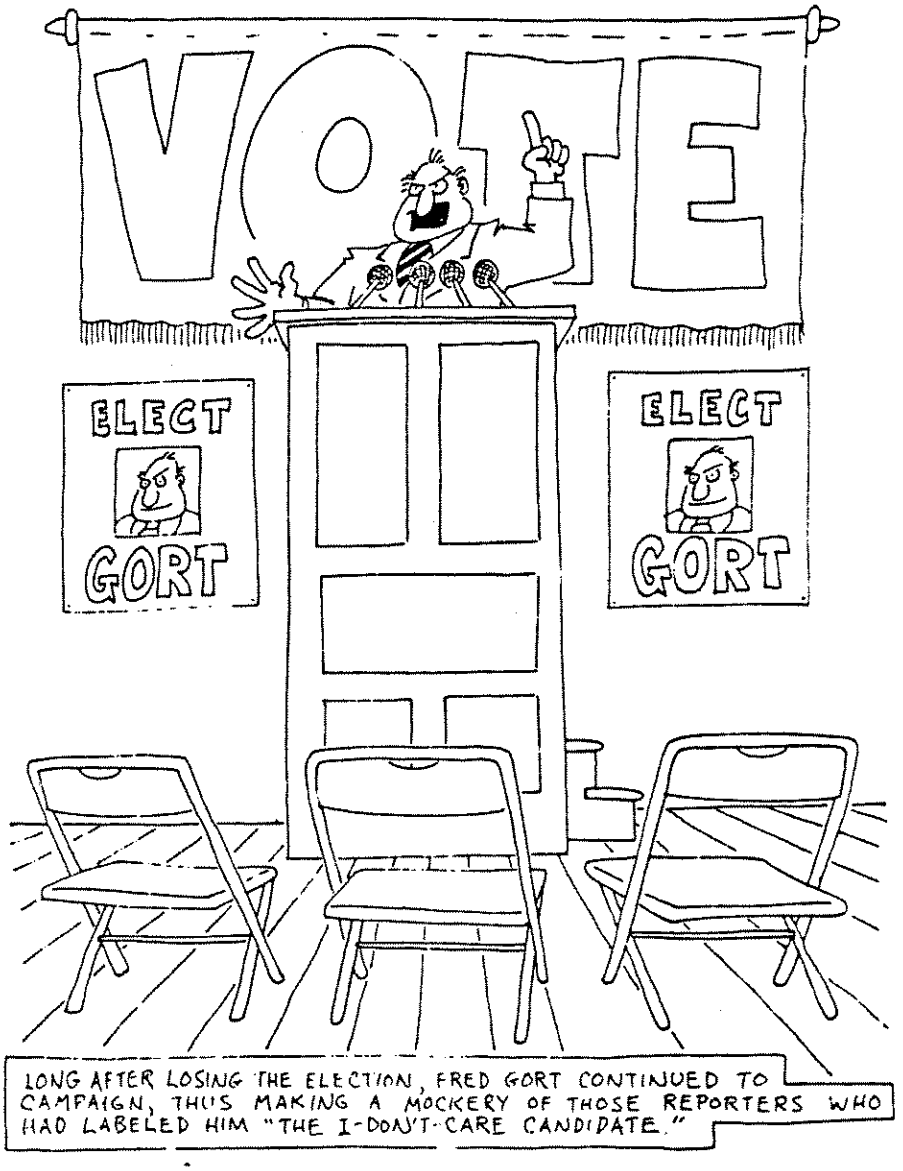
"Columbus, will yer sit down and stop asking all these dumb questions?"

RULE 7: RELAX AND MAKE CONTACT WITH YOUR AUDIENCE.

- Make eye contact with them - they really aren't out to get you...usually.
- Be yourself.

RULE 8 Tell them what you're going to say.

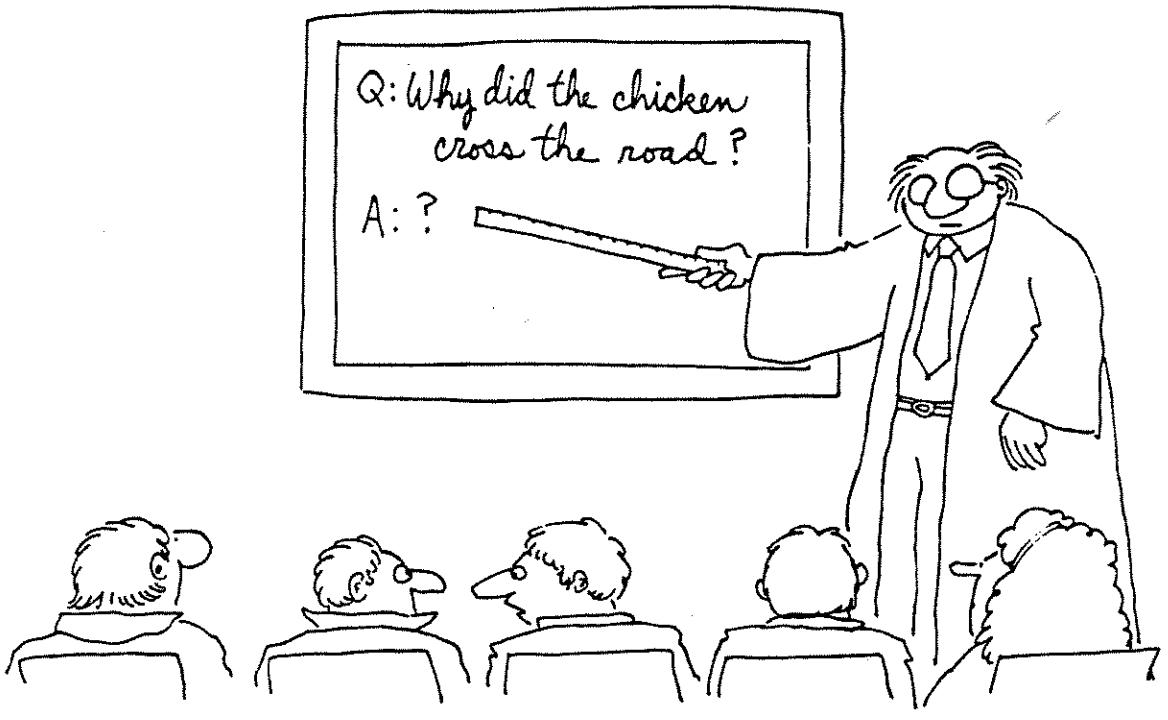
Say it. Tell them what you said.



RULE 8: TELL THEM WHAT YOU'RE GOING TO SAY. SAY IT. TELL THEM WHAT YOU SAID.

- o You tell them what you're going to say so that they know what you're talking about.
- o You should know why you're saying it. Hopefully, it's important.
- o You tell them what you said so that they get another chance to hear your major points.
- o Auditory memory benefits greatly from some repetition. Too much repetition gets boring.

RULE 9 Write BIG enough and CLEAR enough so that people can read it.

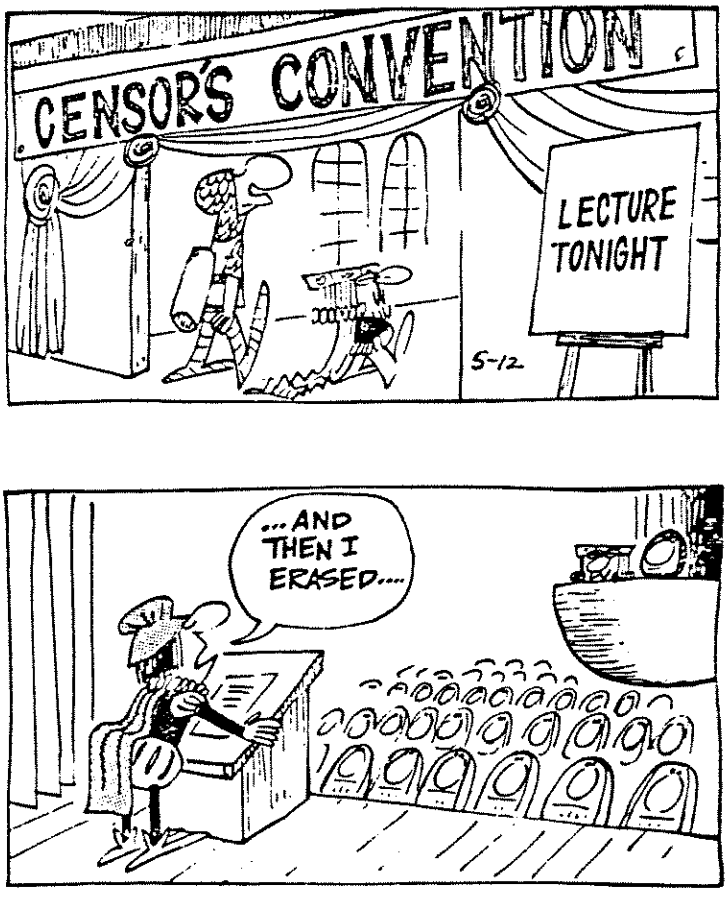


"What is this—some sort of joke?"

RULE 9: WRITE BIG ENOUGH AND CLEAR ENOUGH SO THAT PEOPLE CAN READ IT.

- What good are visuals if people can't see them?

RULE 10 Be aware of time.



RULE 10: BE AWARE OF TIME.

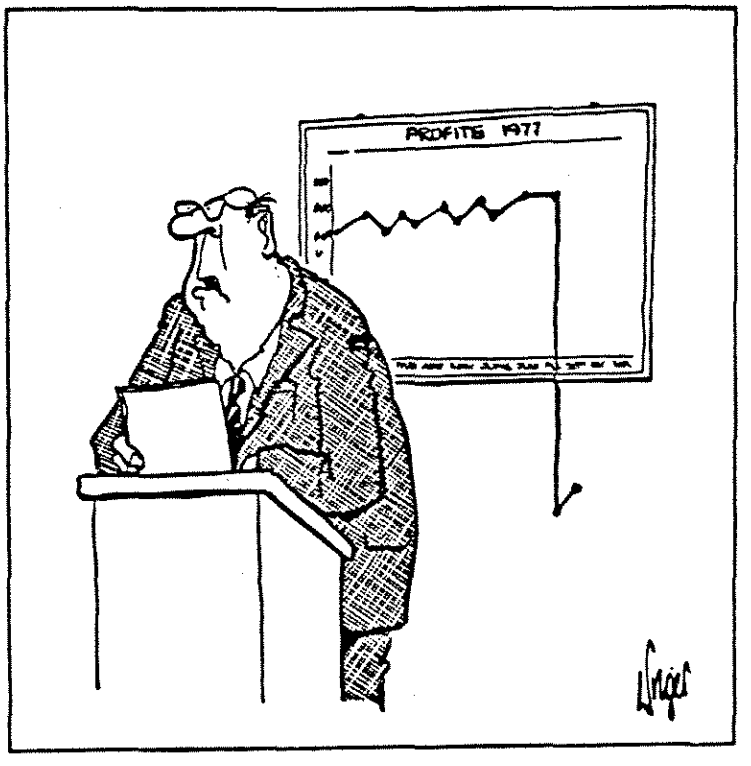
- No one likes half-hour presentations that last... and last...and last...

RULE 11 Learn from your experiences.

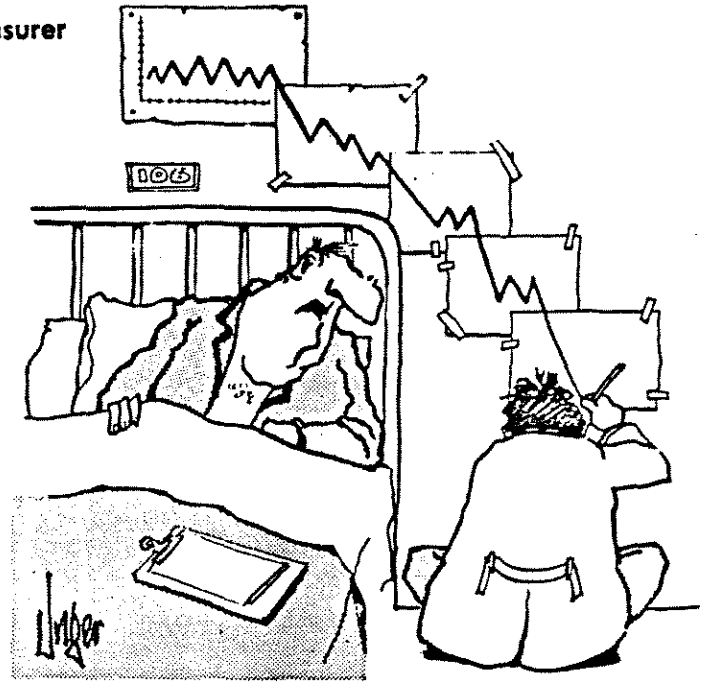
RULE 11: LEARN FROM YOUR EXPERIENCES.

- Face it! You will make mistakes. That's OK if you learn from them.

DISPLAYING DATA



"As most of you know, our company treasurer won't be with us for the next fifteen annual meetings."



"I really look forward to your cheery little visits."

WHAT DIFFERENCE DOES IT MAKE ANYWAY?

Starting with everyone's favorite trite saying, "A picture can be worth a thousand words.",well-displayed data is actually information, usually quantitative information, displayed in pictoral form. There are several reasons why it is especially important to put numerical information in other forms:

1. Most people don't think in numbers. The impact of the information gets lost because it's hard for most people to conceptualize what "an increase of 937 net bookings" means. Pictures can assist in that conceptualization.

2. When people try to remember things, they often try to visualize them. Well-displayed data provides an image which can be visualized.

3. Well-displayed data can highlight the most important points in the data.

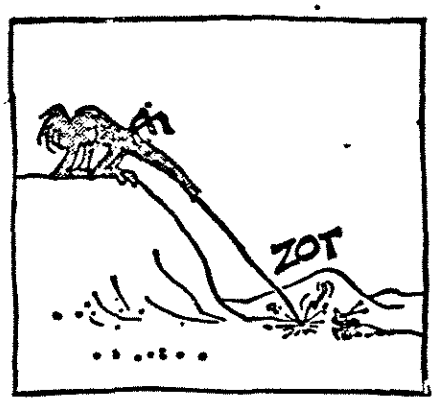
4. Rows and rows of numbers can be exceedingly boring... unless your audience is composed of those rare people who find numbers more interesting than words. Well-displayed data can counteract this problem.

GREAT! BUT HOW DO YOU DO IT?

Actually, there are some things that you have to do before you even put a single line on the paper. Assuming that you've analyzed your data and that you know what it means, you need to make some decisions.

DECIDE:

the most important point?



FIRST...DECIDE WHAT IS (ARE) THE MOST IMPORTANT POINT(S) YOU WANT TO GET ACROSS.

OK, you analyzed the data; you know what it means; and you are now going to use it for a specific purpose. Given your purposes and your knowledge of the data, decide what are the points you want to use the data to get across.

For example, look at the attached illustrations. The major point that the data indicate is that average monthly bookings have increased in 1978 over previous years. Which illustration makes that point most clearly?

I'd choose Illustration 5. Illustrations 1 and 2 just use numbers and consequently have the problems previously mentioned. Illustration 3 and 4 are somewhat better because they do make a picture. But I think Illustration 3 is confusing. Illustration 4 (when it's in color) clarifies that a bit, but because you show information over the whole year the point isn't made as starkly. So, if I wanted to convince someone that our average number of monthly bookings had increased, I think I'd try to stick with Illustration 5.

TABLE 3

MONTHLY VOLUME OF BOOKINGS, BOOK-AND-RELEASES, AND NET BOOKINGS
1976-1978

1976

	JAN	FEB	MAR	APR	MAY	JUN	JUL	AUG	SEP	OCT	NOV	DEC	TOTAL	AVERA PE MON
Bookings	321	239	261	317	338	304	309	325	332	356	293*	273	3,668	306
Book & Releases	140	103*	110*	150	134	96	126	119	139	139	104	116	1,476	123
Net Bookings	181	136	151	167	204	208	183	206	193	217	189	157	2,192	183

1977

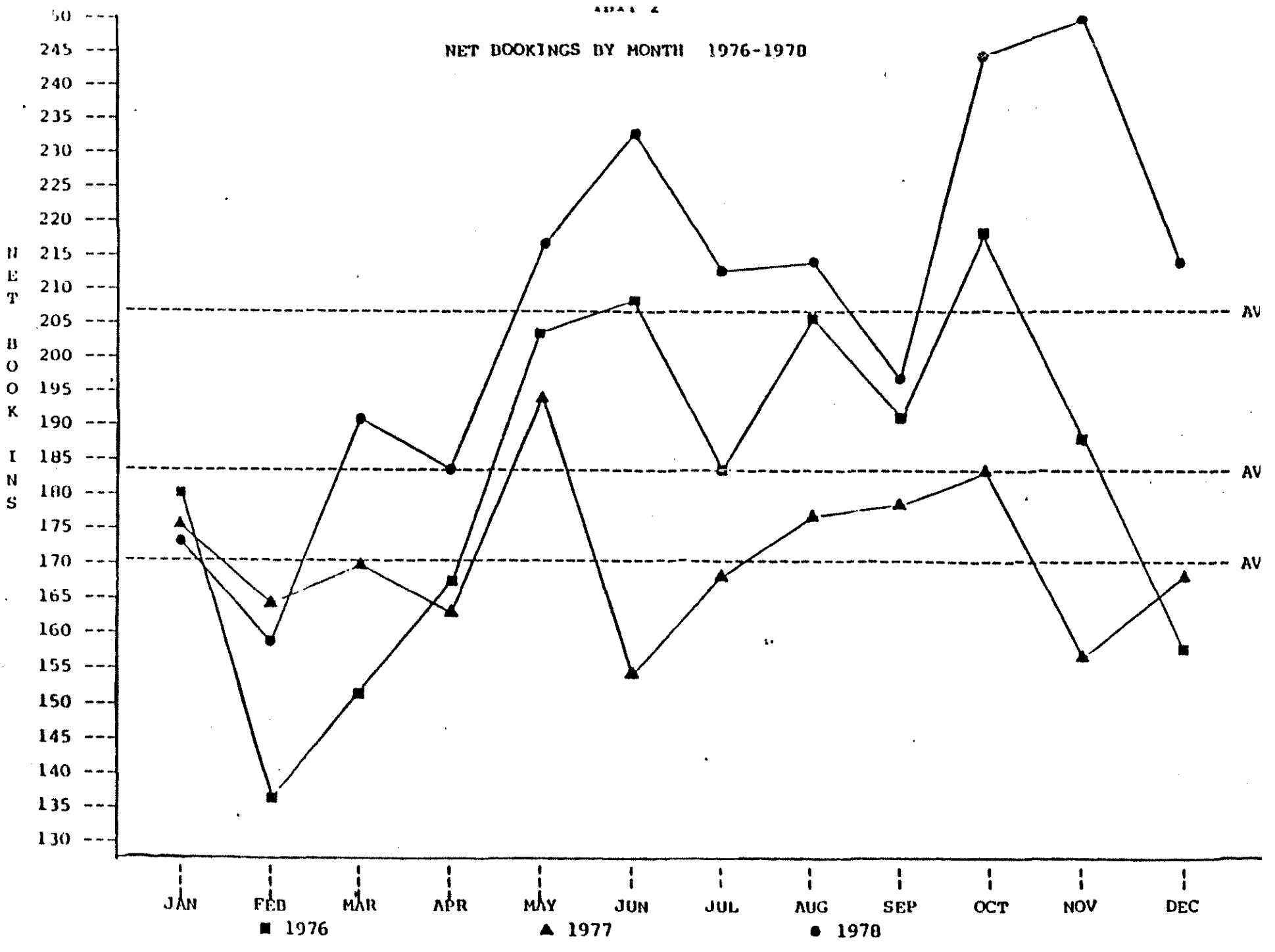
	JAN	FEB	MAR	APR	MAY	JUN	JUL	AUG	SEP	OCT	NOV	DEC	TOTAL	AVER PE MON
Bookings	306	329	323	300	341	264	298	299	327	310	297	294	3,688	30
Book & Releases	131	165	154	137	147	110	135	123	149	126	140	127	1,644	13
Net Bookings	175	164	169	163	194	154	163	176	178	184	157	167	2,044	17

1978

	JAN	FEB	MAR	APR	MAY	JUN	JUL	AUG	SEP	OCT	NOV	DEC	TOTAL	AVER PE MON
Bookings	330	288	352	341	373	440	403	346	356	443	418	373	4,463	37
Book & Releases	157	129	161	157	157	207	191	132	158	200	169	159	1,977	16
Net Bookings	173	159	191	184	216	233	212	214	198	243	249	214	2,486	20

MONTHLY VOLUME OF BOOKINGS

	JAN	FEB	MAR	APR	MAY	JUN	JUL	AUG	SEP	OCT	NOV	DEC	TOTAL	AVE
Bookings 1976	321	239	261	317	330	304	309	325	332	356	293*	273	3,668	3(
Book & Releases	140	103*	110*	150	134	96	126	119	139	139	104	116	1,476	1
Net Bookings	181	136	151	167	204	208	183	206	193	217	189	157	2,192	1(
	JAN	FEB	MAR	APR	MAY	JUN	JUL	AUG	SEP	OCT	NOV	DEC	TOTAL	AVE
Bookings 1977	306	329	323	300	341	264	298	299	327	310	297	294	3,600	3
Book & Releases	131	165	154	137	147	110	135	123	149	126	140	127	1,644	1
Net Bookings	175	164	169	163	194	154	163	176	170	184	157	167	2,044	1
	JAN	FEB	MAR	APR	MAY	JUN	JUL	AUG	SEP	OCT	NOV	DEC	TOTAL	AVE
Bookings 1978	330	288	352	341	373	440	403	346	356	443	418	373	4,463	3
Book & Releases	157	129	161	157	157	207	191	132	150	200	169	159	1,977	1
Net Bookings	173	159	191	184	216	233	212	214	198	243	249	214	2,486	2


NET BOOKINGS BY MONTH 1976-1978
NET BOOKINGS
250
245
240
235
230
225
220
215
210
205
200
195
190
185
180
175
170
165
160
155
150
145
140
135
130
AV
AV
AV
JAN
FEB
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OCT
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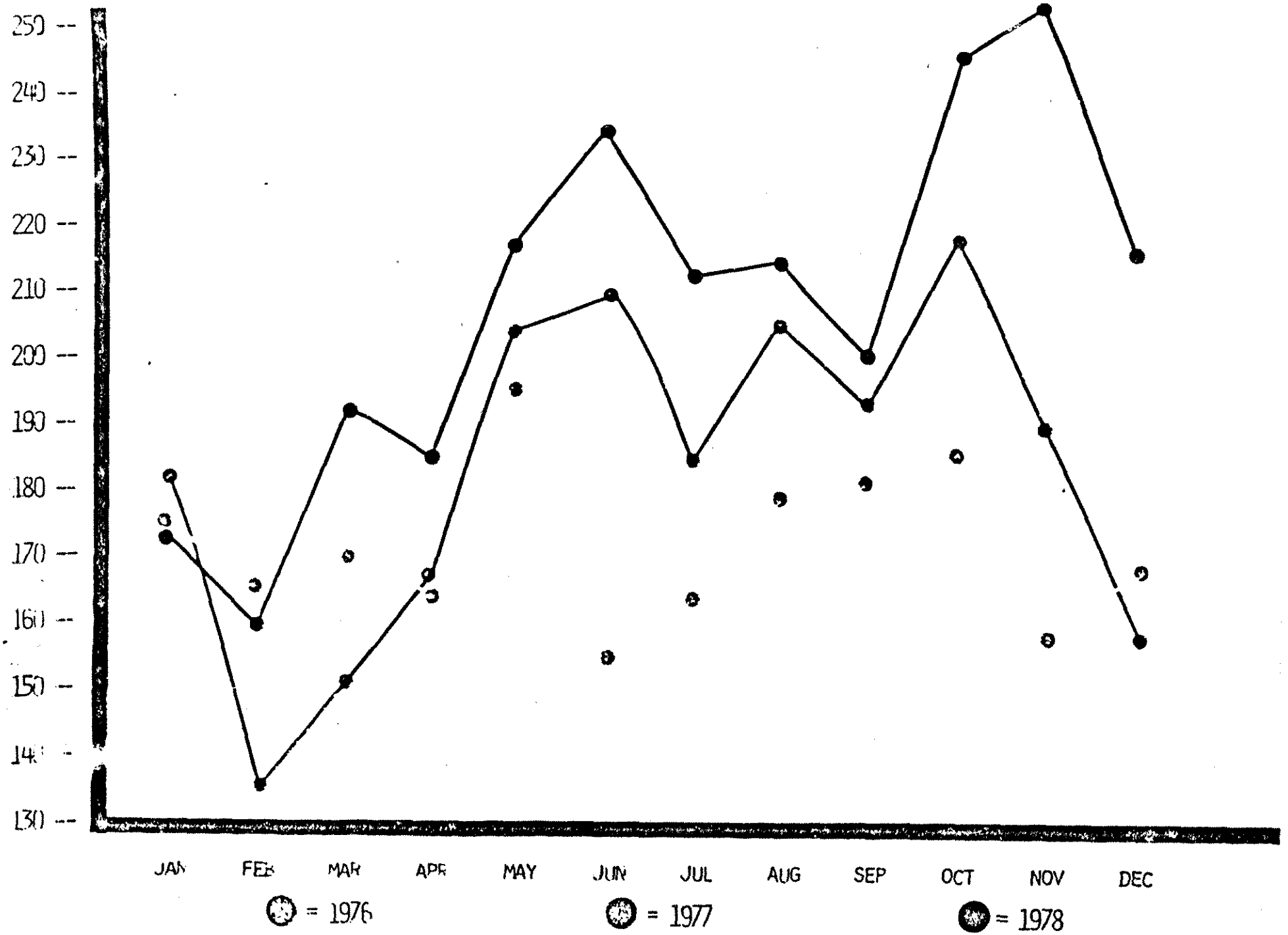
DEC
1976
1977
1978



NET BOOKINGS BY MONTH/1976 - 1978

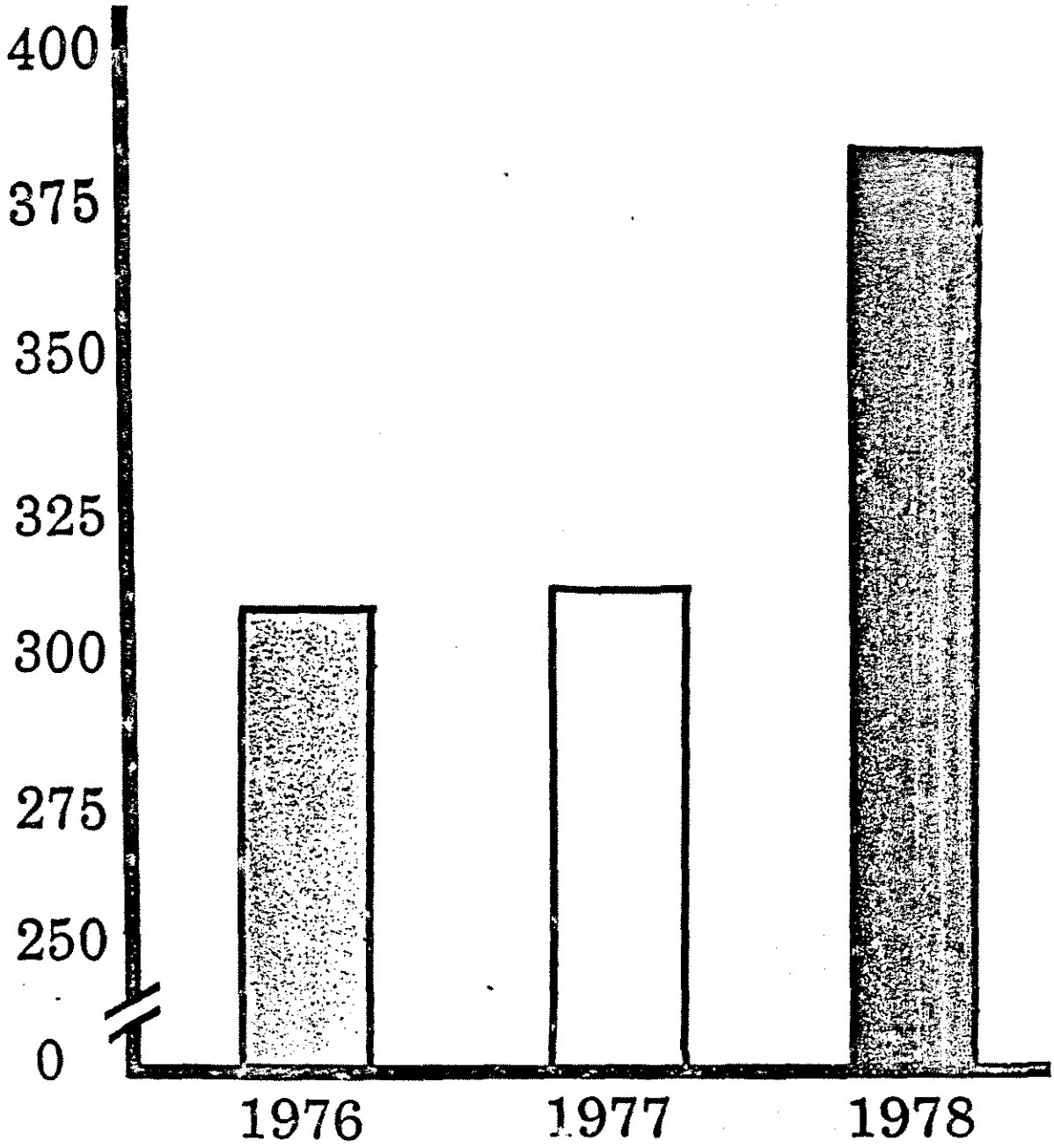


ILLUSTRATION 5

MONTHLY BOOKINGS

the best medium?

transparency, slides or flipchart?

NEXT...DECIDE WHAT IS THE BEST MEDIUM.

There are a number of possibilities:

1. Put it all on paper and hand it out to your audience first.

2. Put it all on flipcharts.

3. Use transparencies or slides.

4. Do none of the above.

Of course, there are advantages and disadvantages to all of the above.

1. When you put it all on paper and hand it out to your audience first, they'll probably read right along with you - and so they may not pay attention to what you're saying. Also, that will probably be duplicated effort since you have probably given them a report on the subject too. Another problem, of course, relates to the lack of visuals on which your audience can focus their attention. People drift off somewhere between 10 and 15 minutes into a speech (if you're lucky!).

2. Put it all on flipcharts. Flipcharts are a little less formal than transparencies and slides - and they have the advantage of letting you be more spontaneous, i.e., you can write on them, circle things, etc. However, they can take a long time to prepare. They also tend to remind people of consultants.

3. Transparencies are probably the easiest. You can xerox things right out of your report and so get two things for the price of one - a nice illustration in your report and something you can use in the presentation. Problems arise because you have to use some equipment... and mechanical failure can enter into the picture. Some people find it hard to switch them on the projector.

4. Slides are really slick. You can change the picture so smoothly...and your presentation can look really professional. If you're traveling, they're easier to carry than transparencies and (shudder!) flipcharts. However, this assumes that your knowledge of photography is adequate and that you have the time to get film developed. Also, mechanical failure can be devastating. (At least with transparencies, you can figure out what the presentation is about and transfer it to flipcharts or whatever easier.)

5. Doing none of the above might be a strategic move if you decide that you don't want your audience to remember anything you said.

I think that we all have our biases in this area. I tend to prefer transparencies for most presentations. The exception comes when it's important to be somewhat spontaneous. It's nice to vary the medium from time to time. As far as handouts go, when to hand them out can be a judgment call. If you do it first, they might take notes on them, or they might just read and not listen. If you do it last, they might have wanted them first. Sometimes you can't win for loosing!

the best method?

table, chart or graph?

NEXT..DECIDE WHAT IS THE BEST METHOD.

By method, I mean the techniques for displaying data. Generally, you can choose among tables, charts and graphs.

- Tables keep data in numerical form and display it in neat columns. An obvious advantage is the fact that, in numerical form, the data is easily retrieved and may be used again. However, there is no image of what the data mean, and tables alone tend to be rather boring. Do you read the tables in most reports you receive?

- Graphs display information about two variables on an 'x' and 'y' axis. Often one of the variables is a measure of time, like months or years. Graphs do provide an "image" of what the data means. And, in the case of the attached Illustrations, you can still translate the data points back into numbers fairly accurately. However, some detail is gone, i.e., is it 374 or 377 bookings in 1978? The graphs also don't reveal what the average monthly booking for the entire year was.

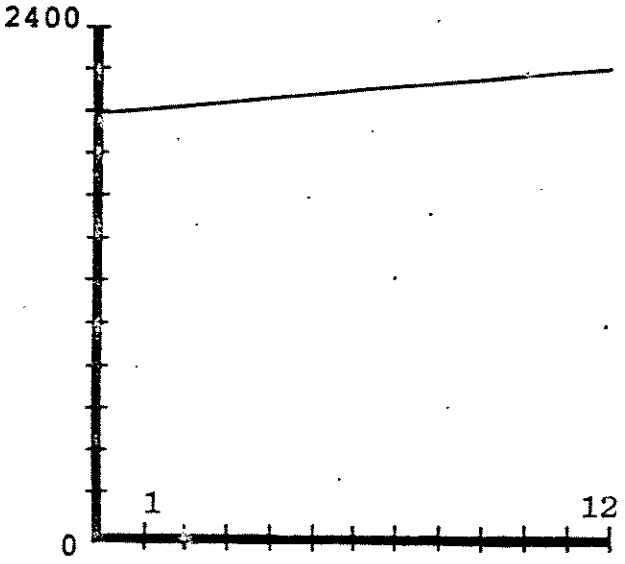
- Charts are closely related to graphs. They probably provide the best "picture" of the data. Illustration 5 is a bar chart. Another common chart is the pie chart (especially useful to show the divisions of a whole, i.e., the categories of a budget). Probably the biggest drawback of charts is that a certain amount of detail is lost. In the case of Illustration 5, only the monthly average of bookings for the entire year is presented.

In reports, one option is to use tabular displays of data to "warehouse" information and an alternate technique to supplement it and add extra impact.

NEXT...THERE IS THE QUESTION OF SCALE.

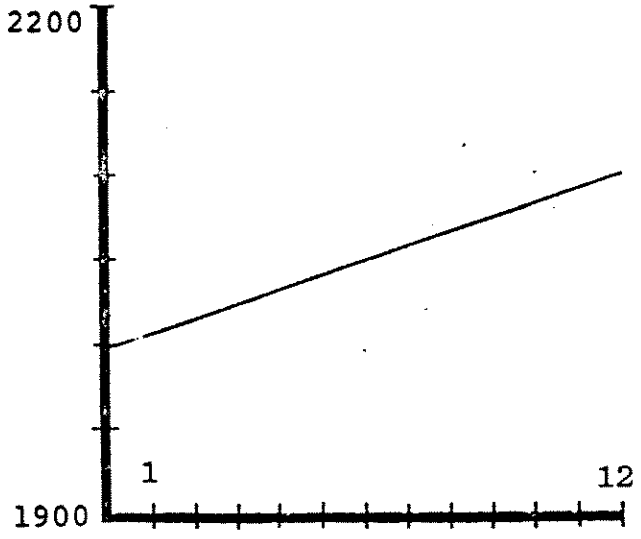
On the following pages are several examples of the same data displayed on different scales. Even Inspector Clousseau, famed for his daring escapades of deductive reasoning with the Pink Panther, could tell that they do not resemble each other. But it would probably take Columbo to sort out what the fiendish statistician did.

In this case, "the fiendish statistician" did them on purpose. Frequently, without thinking about how people will react to the manner and scale on which the data are displayed, we make similar errors. Sometimes...we make them on purpose.



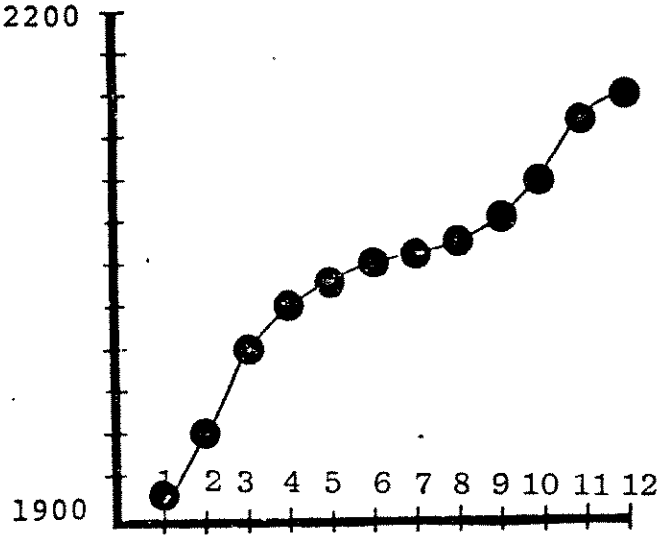
EXAMPLE 1

Example 1 displays the data at point 1 and point 12 - and connects these two points with a straight line. The scale starts at 0.



EXAMPLE 2

Example 2 displays the data at point 1 and point 12 - and connects these two points with a straight line. The scale, however, starts at 1900, not 0.

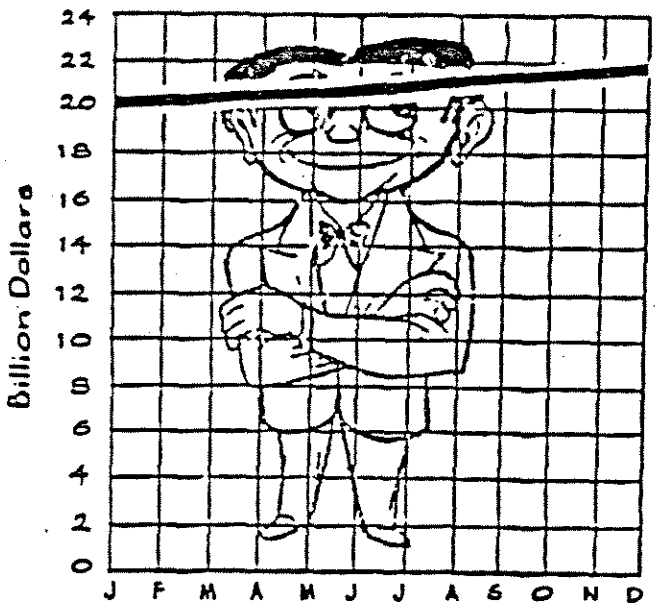


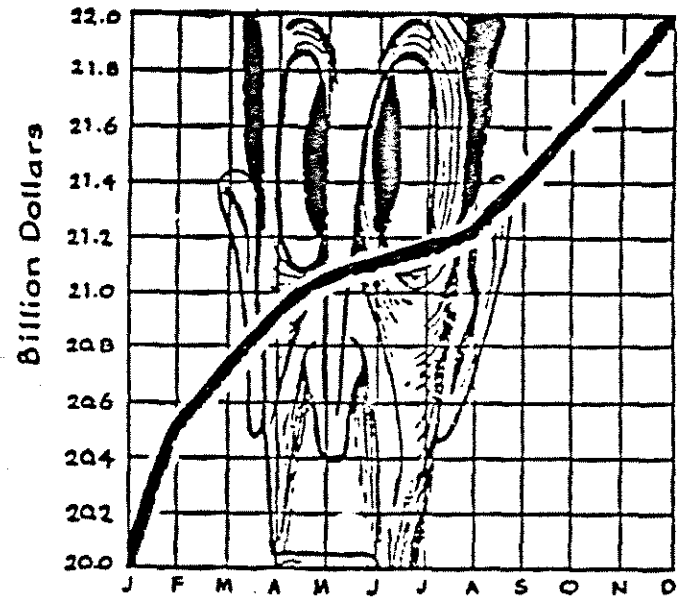
EXAMPLE 3

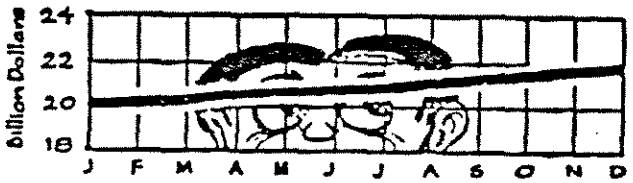
Example three displays the data for <u>each</u> point on the line. They also started the scale at 1900.

Illustrations 3 & 4 also illustrate some of the same concepts. Note that the scale starts at 130 (just below the lowest number of monthly bookings) and ends at 250 (coincidentally (?), the highest number of monthly bookings). Illustration 5's scale begins at 0 and ends at 400, but there is a break in the 'y' axis.

Why? It's a matter of ethics. Scales that don't start at zero can be rather misleading. Usually, people don't bother to read where the scale starts. If you need further convincing, take a look at the examples below. The notch or the gap in the 'y' axis salves my conscience enough by giving the eye something to indicate that the scale doesn't really begin at zero.





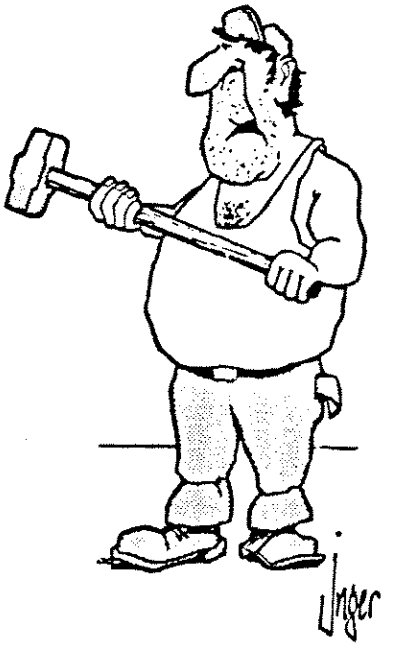


I rest my case.

Just when you think you're done and you're already to start drawing lines on the paper.....wrong!

ASK YOURSELF:

who will use the data?

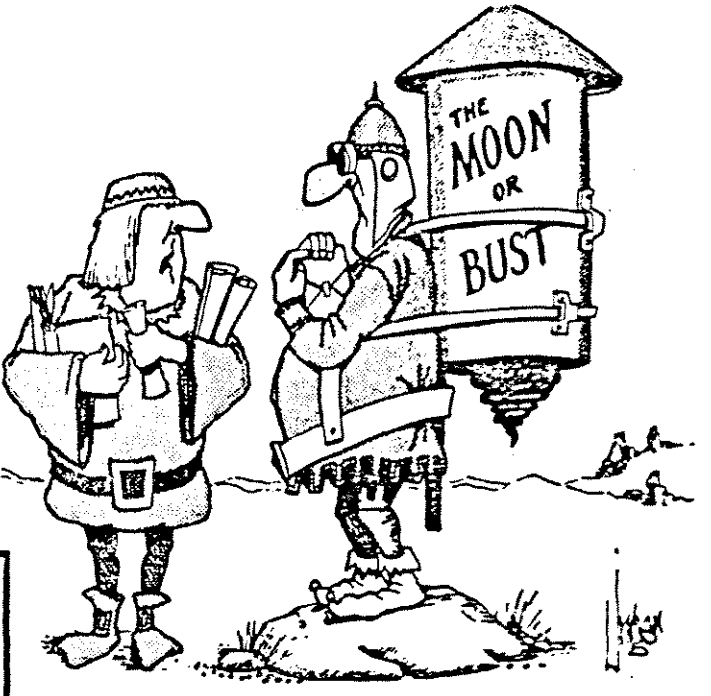


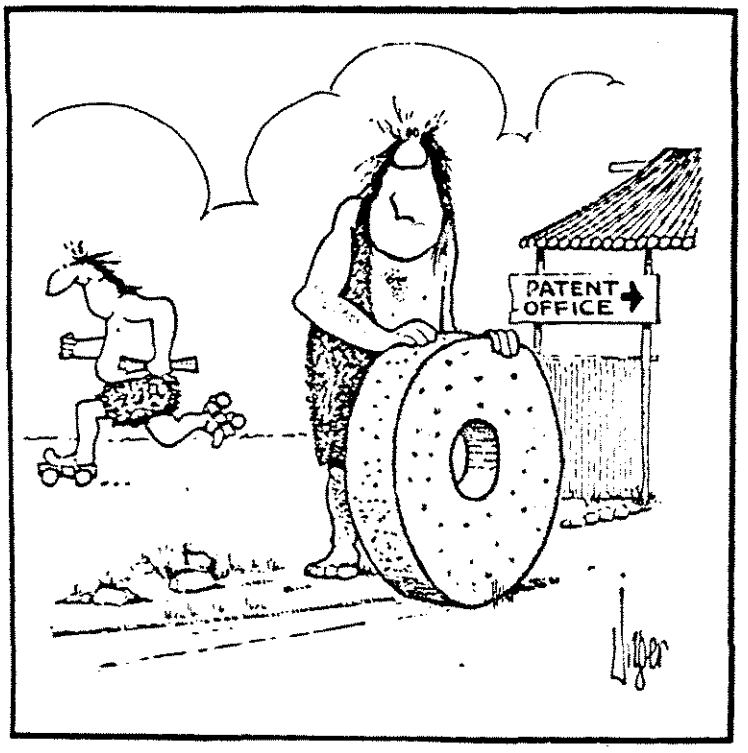
ASK YOURSELF...WHO WILL USE THE DATA.

You should be concerned about displaying your information so that your audience will understand it. Why go to all this bother if they won't understand it anyway? Make your presentation appropriate to the level of expertise of your audience - and try to avoid statistical jargon at all costs... unless of course, you are presenting your information to a convention of statisticians.

"Okay...here's the results of your medical."

for what purpose?





ASK YOURSELF...THE PURPOSE FOR WHICH THE DATA WILL BE USED.

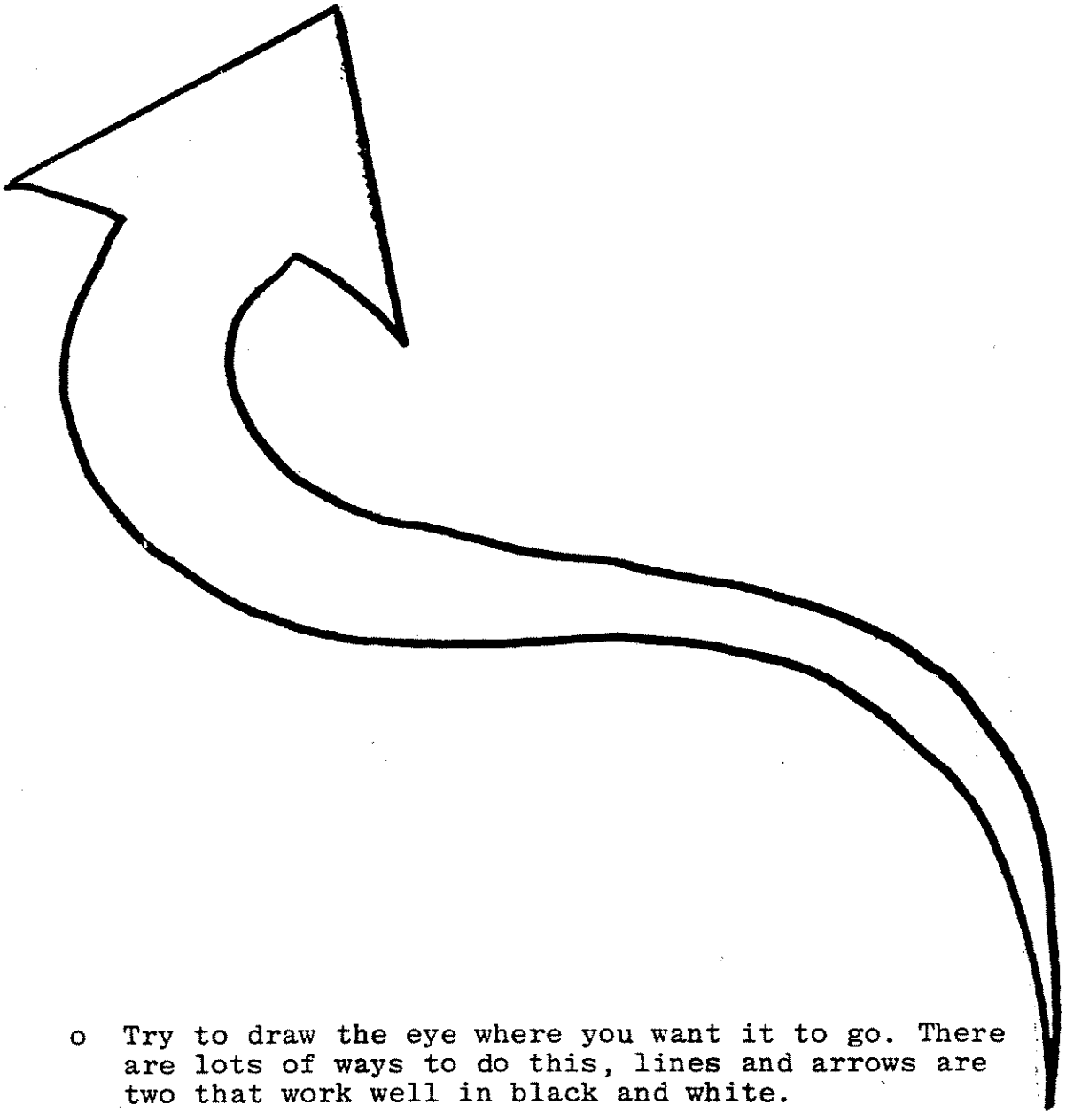
Data can be used for a variety of purposes, i.e., to provide feedback, documentation, information, etc. One additional way in which data is used is to compactly "warehouse" information for later retrieval.

These two questions should help you answer all the ones which have gone before. WHY you are doing something and WHO you are doing it for should help to determine HOW you do it.

AH, FINALLY, SOME TECHNICALITIES.

Well, you can finally draw something on the paper.

Draw the eye where you want it to go.



- Try to draw the eye where you want it to go. There are lots of ways to do this, lines and arrows are two that work well in black and white.

Send color messages.

'How d'yer want your eggs... black or dark brown?"

- Send color messages. If you have the luxury of working with color, it can be used to send <u>powerful</u> (sometimes subliminal) messages. Generally, "hot" colors, like reds and oranges, send warning messages; "cool" colors send calming messages. Ask yourself, "Do you want your commissioners to feel <u>calm</u> about the 70% increase in bookings?". If you do, feel free to use blue or green to illustrate that year. An after thought, it's better to use primary colors. Some "off-beat" colors, like puce or fuschia, may evoke some truly weird responses.

Make it clean,

clear

and pleasing to the eye.

"I found him working in the stockroom, J. D. He's perfect!"

o Above all, make what ever you do neat, clean and pleasant to look at.

GOOD LUCK!

A GRAPHIC SHORT STORY

Once upon a time, on Madison Avenue, some enterprising, but poor, young advertising executive discovered that people respond strangely to visual images of desirable objects. They tend to be overwhelmed by an uncontrollable urge to spend large amounts of money. The young executive toiled morning and evening in the executive suites. Buring the midnight oil, he discovered many other oddities about people's purchasing habits. A troup of artists gathered around the young executive. Marvelous works and "sleight of eye" feats were worked. The young executive so became President of the firm, made his fortune and married the pretty blonde secretary.

By now, you may be thinking, "What does this have to do with the business of giving presentations?" Well, in presentations, just like the advertising agency, you are trying to sell something. It might be wise, therefore, to borrow some of their research and technology.

Those of us in public agencies have often avoided graphics - and for good reason:

- o professional graphics are EXPENSIVE!
- o we lack awareness of the impact of good graphic presentations.
- o we lack awareness of quick and easy techniques.

The good news is that by borrowing technology from advertising, architecture and engineering, we can have good, inexpensive, easy graphics. The best resource is your art or drafting supply store. You can find a variety of materials there:

- o tapes
- o rub-ons
- o color film (not for your camera!)
- o exacto knives
- o artists adhesive
- o type machines.

A short period of experimentation can make virtually anyone competent in their use. All are very helpful in improving the quality of most presentations.

GRAPHICS? WHY ME?

And now for the last straw...By this time you may be thinking something like this, "%#*)¢%#!! Along with everything else I have to do and be, now I've got to know something about graphics and presentations! Isn't it enough that I provide those %&#(!@@!!'s with good information?"

The answer is that in the presentation game, good information is essential -- but it isn't enough. In this case, I've got to agree with Marshall McLuen. The medium is the message. Traditionally, local jail administrators and sheriffs have given their elected officials "the message". But in some cases, they might as well have been speaking a different language. Their message was not understood; the urgency of their message did not come across.Given that jails must compete for increasingly scarce local resources, the "message" must come across LOUD and CLEAR; the URGENCY of the "message" can't be lost in the translation.

Then, you have to combat the "report phenominon". Ask yourself (and don't answer outloud), "Did you read the Report of the Warren Commission, the Jaworski Report on Watergate, or the Surgeon General's Report on Smoking?" You, and most Americans, haven't - if you're typical. But these reports provide a wealth of information on two of the major political events in this country in recent decades and one of the major medical studies of our time.

Why? Well, most people simply don't have time to read such lengthy reports. When it comes right down to it, report reading can be pretty tedious...may be even downright boring.

The bottom line is that presentations are your best shot at getting your message across. Anything you can do to make them more effective"ups" your chances of making sure that the people you select to get your "message" HEAR what you mean to say.