Utilizing Visual Aids

> *It's a visual world and people respond to visuals.*
> —Joe Sacco

Visual aids can be used to enhance your message by illustrating specific points using graphs, charts, diagrams or bullet points. Examples of different visual aids include digital presentations, flip charts, video, handouts and white boards. If used correctly, visual aids can add impact and interest to your presentation and can help an audience better retain the information you are providing.

Tips when using visual aids:

1. **Decide what type of visual aid would be most effective.** Choosing the wrong visual aid can hinder the success of your presentation.

2. **Limit the number of visual aids.** Remember: less is more. Use only visual aids that are absolutely necessary to illuminate your points.

3. **Master your transitions.** How smoothly you move from one visual aid or topic to the next can greatly enhance the effectiveness of your presentation.

4. **Talk to the audience, not the visual aid**. Try to avoid speaking with your back to the audience as much as possible. Avoid reading your material or visual aids word for word.

5. **Be prepared to present without your visual aids.** Technical problems can derail or destroy a good presentation, so be ready for anything. Bring along a hard copy of your presentation in case your equipment malfunctions.

6. **Double-check your equipment.** Before your presentation begins, inspect your equipment to make sure you have everything you need and it is all in working order.

7. **Do a dress rehearsal.** Practice your entire presentation with the actual equipment and visual aids you will be using on the day. Videotape and analyze playback.

Digital Presentation Guidelines

1. **Decide on a theme and be consistent.** Make sure you clearly understand the goal and intention for your presentation and the mood you want to create with your audience.

2. **Follow the Statute of Six.** The Statute of Six is a good guideline to utilize when building your slides: no more than six words per bullet, no more than six bullets per image and no more than six word slides in a row. If your audience cannot understand your slide in six seconds or less, it probably contains too much information.

3. **Pick a color scheme and stick to it.** You can often choose the color scheme for your slides based on your company's corporate colors. If you are including your company's logo in your template, choose colors that are compatible or complementary.

4. **Choose a font that is easy to read**. As a general rule, sans serif fonts are easier to read on a slide. Try to utilize text that is at least 28 or 32 point size, with titles being 36 to 44 point size.

5. **Avoid using all CAPS and italics.** Unless you are indicating a quote, or that something should be shouted, steer clear of italics and all CAPS.

6. **Use bold only for emphasis.** Utilize bold fonts sparingly and only to visually call attention to a particular word or phrase on a slide that you want to highlight.

7. **Make sure the words are legible against the background.** Keep your backgrounds simple and avoid patterns. Choose backgrounds that will be a clear contrast to the colors of the text.

8. **Limit the use of animation and transitions.** Use one slide transition style between slides, to maintain consistency.

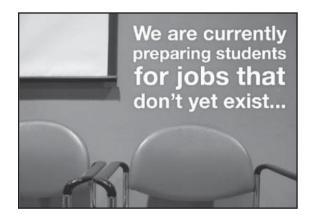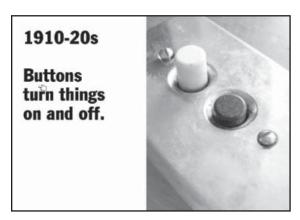> *When people read PowerPoint presentations to me, my head explodes.*
>
> —Roger Ebert

Digital Presentation Examples

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