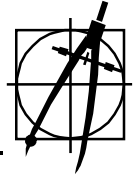


Presentation Aids



A number of studies have revealed that presentation aids significantly contribute to the retention of presentation material. They help organize a presentation, capture and focus attention and maintain the interest of the audience. Presenters that use visual aids are generally perceived to be better presenters.

Project activities in which presentations are useful:

- * All crucial junctures in the project where information is to be shared and feedback received, especially during design reviews

Other tools that are useful in conjunction with presentations:

- * Design Reviews
- * Effective Meetings
- * Eliciting Input
- * Presentation Design
- * Presentation Logistics & Delivery

Introduction

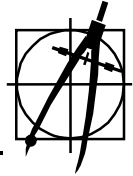
There are a number of different presentation aids that can be used alone or combined during a presentation. Overheads are generally used the most frequently, usually in transparency format, however computer-based presentations are being used more and more.

Selecting Presentation Aids

Every type of presentation aid has benefits and drawbacks, and selection must be carefully made to ensure the most effective presentation possible. There are a number of aids that can be used individually or in combination to enhance the quality of a presentation as well as increase audience interest and information retention. Some of these aids include:

- overhead slides
- videos
- white boards
- prototypes & models
- photographs
- flip charts
- handouts
- real objects

Presentation Aids



When selecting aids to use in a presentation, consider the following general guidelines:

- The selected aid(s) should fit smoothly into the presentation and should support the theme and objectives of the presentation.
- Aids should complement and enhance a presentation – not take over.
- Aids should be easy to use by the presenter and easy to view by the audience.
- Multiple approaches in longer presentations help maintain interest.
- Make sure the technology is available to support use of the selected aids (and have a back-up plan in case the technology doesn't work).
- If in doubt, use the KISS (“keep-it-simple”) principle, and select the least complicated format that supports the content of the presentation. Remember, the more complicated the aid is to use, the greater the probability that something will go wrong.

Attachment A contains a table that evaluates various aids with respect to appropriateness based on audience size, room size and layout, and lighting. The pros and cons for each aid are also presented.

Creating Presentation Aids

General Guidelines

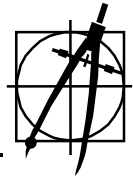
The following guidelines are useful when preparing presentation aids:

- Make drafts or mock-ups of aids; then use them during a rehearsal. Consider asking someone to view the rehearsal and to make suggestions as to the appropriateness of the aids and any improvements that could be made. Immediately make note of suggested improvements as they are identified.
- Rehearse with back-up aids as well. A presentation using electronic media may run smoothly but using flip charts for the same material may be a little awkward at first.
- Don't create aids at the last minute. Poorly developed and thought out aids will make a presenter look ill-prepared and can ruin a good presentation.

Guidelines for Text and Graphic-Based Aids

Text-based aids may be in the format of overhead slides (transparencies, 35mm slides, computer based projections), white or chalk boards, or flip charts. They are excellent tools for conveying information as well as keeping both the speaker and audience on topic. Unfortunately, many presenters go overboard on these aids (e.g., too many, too

Presentation Aids



much information) thus sabotaging the presentation. Others make the mistake of creating works of art, drawing focus away from the content of the presentation. The following guidelines are targeted towards overhead slides however much of the information is applicable to other text and graphic-based aids as well other presentation media such as posters.

Content

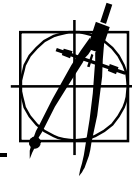
The most important thing to remember about the content is to keep it simple. A few simple guidelines will help achieve this:

- Each slide (or page) should contain no more than 5 to 6 lines of text with no more than 5 to 7 words per line, allowing the audience to read the entire slide within 10 seconds. Greater content per slide will result in the audience reading throughout the entire presentation rather than listening to the presenter.
- There is no single rule regarding the number of slides that should be used in a presentation. Opinions vary from one slide every thirty seconds to one every five minutes. The ideal number will depend on the content and format of the presentation as well as the style of the speaker. It is better to use simple and more slides than complex and few.
- Avoid using a number of text slides in series.
- At least half of the slides should contain graphics to maintain interest and prevent the audience from reading the presentation. These graphics should be related to the presentation and not just be included for artistic impression.
- Graphics should not be complex. The audience should be able to interpret the meaning of the slide within 5 seconds.
- If presenting data, only present what is meaningful and pertinent. Do not present raw data in slides.
- Check spelling and grammar!!! Computer spell checkers are useful but won't catch words that have been spelled right but used incorrectly.

Use of Colours

The use of colour can dramatically improve the comprehension of slides when used effectively. The selection of these colours can be based on many factors- mainly physiological, and psychological or perceptual.

Presentation Aids



Physiological Factors

The following provides a summary of physiological factors that should be taken into account when selecting colours for use in presentations:

- Colours from opposite sides of the colour wheel (e.g., red/green, blue/orange, yellow/purple) appear to vibrate when placed side-by-side making them difficult to look at.
- Red/green colour deficiency is fairly prevalent, especially in the male population. Therefore, when creating graphic elements such as charts and graphs, avoid the pairings of red/green, brown/green and purple/blue.
- Blue text or lines against black backgrounds tend to look fuzzy due to the lack of blue receptors within the focal area of the eye's retina.

Perceptual and Psychological Factors

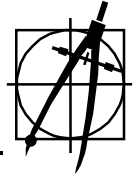
There is a great deal of literature on the psychological influences of colour, in general and when used in presentations. The following is a brief summary of some of the perceptual and psychological factors:

- Be cautious of connotations colours may elicit. The use of red text or graphics on a positive financial chart may not be the best choice.
- The audience may not share the presenter's affinity for certain colours. Using orange or pink for background colours may not appeal to the audience.
- Colours are believed to elicit emotions:
 - Red elicits desire, passion, competitiveness and risk taking
 - Blue is believed to be calming and conservative
 - Green and teal stimulate interaction and therefore are a good choice when discussion is desired
 - Black gives the connotation of finality
 - Brown causes uneasiness and passivity
 - Purple communicates immaturity and unimportance

Colour Usage in General

- Do not use highly saturated primary colours (e.g., red, blue, yellow) for backgrounds.
- Choose light coloured text against a dark background for high contrast (e.g., yellow on black). Light backgrounds can cause uncomfortable glare.

Presentation Aids



- Red is a strong colour. Use it wisely.
- Highlighting meaningful text results in better retention

Selection of Fonts

Fonts are often selected based on what looks good when creating slides on the computer. However, some thought should go into their selection as the proper use of fonts can affect not only the clarity and effectiveness of the slides, but also the mood of the presentation.

Font Type

The type of font selected should be based on the mood of the presentation and the size of the venue. Serif fonts (e.g., **Times**) are more elegant and acceptable choices for smaller, intimate settings, while sans serif fonts (e.g., **Arial**) are better suited when slides will be read from the back of a large room. If an informal atmosphere is desired, consider using fonts such as **Comic Sans**. When selecting fonts, consider if the electronic version of the presentation will be used or printed off of a different computer than the one on which it was created. Not all computers will have the same font selection therefore uncommon fonts may become meaningless symbols.

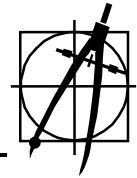
Although it may look good on a computer screen, avoid using font shadowing as this reduces the readability of the text on slides. Instead, make text bold if emphasis is desired.

Font Size

Many presenters make the mistake of using too small a font on their slides. What looks big on a computer monitor will not necessarily be big enough to read on an overhead. As a rule of thumb, if the font looks outrageously big, it is probably the right size. A 24 point font may be acceptable but 36 point or larger is best.

48 pt. 36 pt. 24 pt. 18 pt.

If possible, create a test slide and see if it can be easily read within 10 seconds while standing at the back of the presentation room. Alternatively conduct this test on the computer by sitting at least six feet back from the monitor.



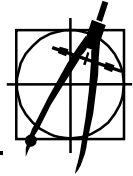
Presentation Aids

Capitalization

Using ALL CAPS to make a point may leave the audience feeling that they have been yelled at. Instead, use a combination of CAPS and SMALL CAPS.

Standardization

Use font types, sizes and styles consistently throughout the entire presentation (e.g, all main titles the same, all slide bodies the same). Inconsistency can be confusing to the audience and will make your presentation look like it was thrown together at the last minute.



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Presentation Aids

Attachment A

Selection Considerations for Presentation Aids



Presentation Aids

Aid	Audience Size	Room Size & Layout	Lighting	Pros	Cons
Projected Images	Small to large	Most sizes & layouts; visibility of screen may not be ideal for conference & individual group layouts		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - good for text & graphics - can be used for outline presentation - excellent for large theatre-type applications 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - temptation to overuse with respect to number & content
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • <i>Transparencies</i> 			<i>Medium to low</i>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - <i>relatively inexpensive & easy to prepare or modify</i> - <i>easy to transport & store</i> - <i>allows interaction & modification by presenter (e.g., use overlays, write on slides)</i> - <i>duplication into transparency or hardcopy easy & accessible</i> 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - <i>projection of photographs generally poor</i> - <i>printing of colour transparencies relatively expensive</i> - <i>quality of colour projections not ideal</i>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • <i>35mm slides</i> 			<i>Low to dark</i>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - <i>easy to transport & store</i> - <i>good for text, graphic or photograph projections</i> - <i>works well for colour</i> 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - <i>relatively expensive to prepare & requires specialized services</i> - <i>difficult & time consuming to modify</i> - <i>equipment not always readily available & risk of equipment failure</i> - <i>risk of mixing slides or placing in wrong orientation</i>



Presentation Aids

Aid	Audience Size	Room Size & Layout	Lighting	Pros	Cons
Projected Images (cont'd) <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • <i>Computer projection</i> 			<i>Low to dark</i>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - <i>easy to create & modify</i> - <i>can use animation & other special effects</i> - <i>can integrate photos & video clips into presentation</i> 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - <i>requires specialized equipment; may have difficulty moving equipment internationally</i> - <i>risk of equipment or software malfunction/ incompatibilities</i> - <i>inappropriate or overuse of special effects (e.g., animation, photos, videos) can be distracting</i>
Hardcopy (e.g., photos, books)	Small	Small room; Best for conference or group layouts	Normal bright	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - <i>easy to transport & store</i> - <i>relatively inexpensive to produce</i> 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - <i>the need to circulate photos can be distracting & not synchronous with presentation</i>
Handouts	All sizes	All sizes & layouts	Moderate to light (unless handouts not referred to during presentation)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - <i>handing out copies of slides allows audience to focus on what is being said rather than taking notes</i> - <i>handouts of references (e.g., journal articles, case studies) for information may be appreciated</i> 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - <i>audience may read handouts rather than pay attention to presentation</i> - <i>may require permissions if copyright restrictions in place</i> - <i>sometimes difficult to know how many copies to create (as a rule of thumb, make 10% more than expected attendance)</i> - <i>the process of handing out materials may be awkward or distracting</i>



Presentation Aids

Aid	Audience Size	Room Size & Layout	Lighting	Pros	Cons
Video					<ul style="list-style-type: none">- poor if note taking due to low light levels- presenter out of the picture; no control of pace, audience involvement
<ul style="list-style-type: none">• <i>Projected</i>	<i>Small to large</i>	<i>Most sizes; Best for theatre & classroom layouts</i>	<i>Very low to dark</i>	<i>- good if showing an entire video with little presenter involvement</i>	<ul style="list-style-type: none">- <i>difficult to use clips or start/stop for discussion</i>- <i>equipment not always readily available & risk of equipment failure</i>
<ul style="list-style-type: none">• <i>Television</i>	<i>Small</i>	<i>Small room; Good for conference or horseshoe layout if TV centrally located</i>	<i>Very low to dark</i>	<i>- good if showing an entire video with little presenter involvement</i>	<ul style="list-style-type: none">- <i>difficult to use clips or start/stop for discussion</i>- <i>equipment not always readily available & risk of equipment failure</i>



Presentation Aids

Aid	Audience Size	Room Size & Layout	Lighting	Pros	Cons
Video (cont'd) <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • <i>Computer projection</i> 	<i>Small to large</i>	<i>Most sizes;</i> <i>Most layouts depending on application</i>	<i>Very low to dark</i>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - <i>clips can be pre-set or integrated into other computer based presentations</i> - <i>video clips can add interest & insight that words or photos cannot accurately convey</i> - <i>specialized software may allow editing capability</i> 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - <i>requires powerful computer</i> - <i>requires specialized equipment; may have difficulty moving equipment internationally</i> - <i>risk of equipment or software malfunction/ incompatibilities</i>
Flip Charts	Small to medium	Small to medium rooms; Most layouts	Moderate to light	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - relatively inexpensive & portable - excellent for use with group activities - charts can be pre-prepared or created during presentation to illustrate points or record ideas - individual pages can be posted around room 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - not as compact & portable as other aids - if pre-prepared, may need to alternate with blank sheets to prevent seeing next page through current page - care needs to be exercised with respect to bleeding through of markers & tape/tacks on walls - need to ensure an adequate number of functioning markers - requires neatness & sufficient font size to ensure visibility - time consuming to duplicate



Presentation Aids

Aid	Audience Size	Room Size & Layout	Lighting	Pros	Cons
White Boards (Chalk Boards)	Small to medium	Small to medium rooms; Most layouts	Moderate to light	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - used during presentation to illustrate points or record ideas; good for brainstorming - allows for editing 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - not available in all presentation facilities & generally not portable - cannot be prepared in advance - need to ensure an adequate number of functioning markers - once board is full, must erase to continue - contents lost unless a printing white board is used - requires neatness & sufficient font size to ensure visibility
Prototypes/Models	Small	Small room; Best suited to layouts where audience can approach or interact with prototype	Moderate to light	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - provide “look & feel” - good for audience not concerned with internal workings & details - good for training purposes 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - difficult to see unless able to approach prototype - potentially distracting, especially if prototype is passed between audience members - difficult to see internal relationships & schematic organization - full-size prototypes may not be practical - may be misleading if not a realistic representation



Presentation Aids

Aid	Audience Size	Room Size & Layout	Lighting	Pros	Cons
Real Objects	Small	Small room; Best suited to layouts where audience can approach or interact with object	Moderate to light	<ul style="list-style-type: none">- can be useful to support the explanation of ideas (e.g., model of a knee when discussing knee surgery)- good for training purposes	<ul style="list-style-type: none">- potentially distracting, especially if objects are passed between audience members- size of objects may not be practical (e.g. sailboat)