

LESSON-22

ENHANCING YOUR PRESENTATION SKILLS: USING PRESENTATION AIDS

Seeing. . . most of all the senses, makes us know and brings to light many differences between things. - Aristotle

The Visual Aids

Whether soliciting funds or outlining a company's strategy, Brady Keys uses visual aids to create interest and to clarify his ideas. From a purely practical standpoint, visuals are a convenience for the speaker, who can use them as a tool for remembering the details of the message (no small feat in a lengthy presentation); novice speakers also like visual aids because they draw audience attention away from the speaker. More important, visual aids dramatically increase the audience's ability to absorb and remember information.

Using presentation aids is not new either to the field of public speaking or even to beginning speakers. Although Columbus did not have access to slides or videos, you can be fairly certain that he spread out a few maps or charts before Queen Isabella to convince her to fund his explorations. Similarly, the first "public speech" you ever gave probably involved the use of a visual aid for "show and tell." You may have brought an object that you were going to talk about - a new toy, something you made, the family pet. The visual aid helped you explain or describe your subject. Presentation aids in later speech situations may go beyond "show and tell" in sophistication, but still serve much the same purpose.

In our world of accelerating technology till' ways of generating and using presentation aids are multiplying rapidly. When we wrote the first and second editions of this book, most presentation aids were visual aids, so we concentrated on teaching students how to prepare charts, graphs, maps, and posters. By the third edition we were talking about the possibility of generating such materials with a personal computer. Although the ability to produce and use such traditional visual aids still remains important, technological advances are moving presentation aids into the realm of multimedia. A September 1994 article in *Sales and Marketing Management* suggests that we are at the "beginning of a complete transformation in the way we communicate information on a one-to-one and one-to-many basis."¹ In this chapter we describe the kinds of presentation aids that can be used in speeches, identify the ways in which they can be presented, offer suggestions for preparing them, and present guidelines for their use.

“Visual, is not just visible verbal?”

Remember Words are not visuals. We sat at presentations many times and seen slide after slide portraying nothing except abstract nouns: OBJECTIVES, OPERATIONS: PREPARATION, PLANNING, PRODUCTIVITY, PROGRESS: RECONNAISSANCE, RECOGNITION, REPORTING: and so on in an endless and utterly unmemorable series.

Words are what the presenter is there for; he is provided with the complex and ingenious equipment of tongue, lips, teeth, pharynx, larynx and lungs in order to utter them. It is not possible to make a rule banning all words from visual aids, because they are sometimes necessary to help the audience identify pictures, and just occasionally an expert finds ways of using them effectively and dramatically; otherwise it would be an excellent rule.

Designing and Presenting Visual Aids

Two types of visual aids are used to supplement speeches and presentations. Text visuals consist of words and help the audience follow the flow of ideas. Because text visuals are simplified outlines of your presentation, you can use them to summarize and preview the message and to signal major shifts in thought. On the other hand, graphic visual aids illustrate the main points. They help the audience grasp numerical data and other information that would be hard to follow if presented orally.

Simplicity is the key to effectiveness when designing both types of visual aids. Because people can't read and listen at the same time, the visual aids have to be simple enough for the audience to understand within a moment or two. As a rule, text visuals are most effective when they consist of no more than six lines, with a maximum of six words on each line. Produce them in large, clear type, using uppercase and lowercase letters, with extra white space between lines of text. Make sure the type is large enough to be seen from any place in the room. Phrase list items in parallel grammatical form. Use telegraphic wording. («Compensation Soars;» for example) without being cryptic (««Compensation»»); including - both a noun and a verb in each item is a good rule of thumb.

You can use any of the graphic visuals you might show in a formal report, including line, pie, and bar charts, as well as flowcharts, organization charts, diagrams, maps, drawings, and tables. However, graphic visuals used in oral presentations are simplified versions of those that appear in written documents. Eliminate anything that is not absolutely essential to the message. To help the audience focus immediately on the point of each graphic visual, use headings that state the message in one clear phrase or sentence: «Earnings have increased by 15 percent.»

When you present visual aids, you want people to have the chance to read what's there, but you also want them to listen to your explanation:

- Be sure that all members of the audience can see the visual aids.
- Allow the audience time to read a visual aid before you begin your explanation.
- Limit each visual aid to one idea.
- Illustrate only the main points, not the entire presentation.
- Avoid visual aids that conflict with your verbal message.
- Paraphrase the text of your visual aid; don't read it word for word.
- When you've finished discussing the point illustrated by the visual aid, remove it from the audience's view.

The visual aids are there to supplement your words-not the other way around.

KINDS OF PRESENTATION AIDS

The number and kinds of presentation aids are limited only by your imagination. We shall examine some of the more frequently used types and the speech situations in which they are most helpful and most relevant.

Thus a visual must be necessary, and it must be visual.

People

Is there a way to *show* your audience exactly what you are talking about? If so, work it into your presentation. For example, if you are explaining how to operate a piece of equipment, demonstrate its operation for your audience if you can. If the equipment cannot be moved to where you are speaking, consider videotaping someone operating the equipment and show that tape during your presentation. In doing so, you give the audience the benefit of hearing about a procedure and then seeing that procedure “live.”

Consider also that your demonstrations can involve the audience. For example, why not try role-playing a customer service approach? Audience participation makes an impact on listeners and often adds to the interest level of your talk.

Thus people can function as presentation aids. As the speaker, you cannot avoid being a presentation aid for your own speech. Your body, grooming, actions, gestures, voice, facial expressions, and demeanor always provide an added dimension to your speech. Use these factors to help convey your message.

What you wear can function as a presentation aid. If you will be talking about camping and wilderness adventures, blue jeans, a flannel shirt, and hiking boots might be appropriate attire for your speech. What you wear, however, should not be more interesting than what you say. Here, as in all other cases, presentation aids should enhance, not overshadow, your verbal message. We discuss personal appearance in more detail in Chapter 11.

You can also use other people as presentation aids. Neomal Abyskera used two of his classmates to illustrate the line-up positions in the game of rigger as played in his native Sri Lanka. At the appropriate time, Neomal said, "Peter and Jeffrey will show you how the opposing team members line up." While his classmates demonstrated the arm-locked shoulder grip position, Neomal briefly explained when and why the position was assumed. This demonstration was more understandable than if he had tried to describe the position verbally or drawn it on poster board with stick figures.

If you plan to have classmates act as a presentation aid, be sure that they really want to help you and that they will not distract attention from your speech. Rehearse your presentation with them until all goes smoothly. When you give your speech, have them sit in the front row so that as quickly as possible they can come forward and then sit down again when their part is completed.

Handouts. Even in a presentation, you may choose to distribute sheets of paper bearing an agenda, an outline of the program, an abstract, a written report, or supplementary material such as tables, charts, and graphs. Listeners can keep the handout to remind them of the subject and the main ideas of your presentation. In addition, they can refer to

it while you're speaking. Handouts work especially well in informal situations in which the audience takes an active role; they often make their own notes on the handouts.

Handouts are materials that the speaker distributes to the audience. The nature of the materials will vary depending on the topic, the technical level of the information, the audience, and the speaker's purpose. Handouts may be professionally developed brochures, pamphlets, or manuals provided by your company. They may be copies of visuals you show during your presentation or notes highlighting your key points. They may be copies of related articles. Or they may simply be an outline of your presentation. Generally, handouts help your listeners understand the presentation, provide additional information, or both. They are a means of affecting listeners long after your presentation is over. However, handouts can be distracting because people are inclined to read the material rather than listen to you, so many speakers distribute handouts after the presentation.

Tips for Using Handouts

- **Present any Important Information orally.** Do not rely on people to read your handouts to get key information.
- **Keep handouts as short as possible.** Most people will not read a large amount of material.
- **Plan when and how you will use them.** Planning how you will use your handouts within your presentation will help you know when your audience must have them. If listeners need the handout during the presentation, you may pass it out before you begin. If, however, you fear the handout will distract listeners from your presentation, you may pass it out only when listeners need it. In this case, have a plan for distributing materials quickly and unobtrusively, and do not continue your presentation or your discussion of the handout until everyone has a copy and is ready to begin. If listeners do not need the handout during the presentation, you may wait until you finish.
- **Make sure you have a copy for everyone.** If for some reason you end up not having enough for every person in attendance, offer to mail the handout at your cost.
- **Use handouts that enhance your professional image.** This means planning and preparing handouts so they appear professionally done.

Blackboard

(i) White chalk doesn't show up as well as yellow.

(ii) Dry duster nothing like so efficient as damp duster or sponge.

(iii) Good straight lines, circles, etc. can be achieved by drawing them on the board in pencil before the presentation, then chalking over the pencil line. Audience can't see pencil line

(iv) If you are right handed, board should be on your left as you face the audience, so you obscure much less of it when drawing. If you have room, start drawing one third of the way across, using only the far two thirds, and you obscure less still,

(v) .When pointing at the board, stay on the same side and point with your left hand, so that

you stay facing the audience.

(vi) If using a pointer, don't let the point wander vaguely- round the board. Point at what you

want, leave it there motionless, then take it away.

(vii) If using a pointer, suppress all impulses to use it as a swagger stick, conductor's baton,

backscratcher or toothpick.

(viii) If you have to talk while drawing, remember that by turning round you have suddenly made it twice as hard for the audience to hear you. Better to avoid doing so, or at least avoid confiding in the blackboard.

(ix) Corollary of (viii): try and plan your use of the blackboard so that you are never drawing for more than a few seconds at a stretch. Even if you only break off for a sentence or two, it's a great deal better.

(x) Clear the board as soon as you have finished with what is on it. It's a distraction if you

leave up old drawings when you've moved on. Put a spare piece of chalk in your pocket.

(xi) Check the blackboard in advance for stability of legs and pegs (I would be ashamed to mention anything this elementary if I had not witnessed the consequence of a failure to do so.)

Large White Paper Pad and Felt Pen

Much like the blackboard in principle, and most of the same rules apply. Chief differences

(i) Colors are much more effective on white than on black.

(ii) Because you can't erase, you have to get rid of the previous sheet each time. **Flip**

Charts

A useful aid and not used enough.

(i) Chief fault is drawing too small for audience to see detail. Must be bold and simple.

(ii) Fold over problem. Ring hinges are the answer.

(iii) Very good (and not sufficiently used) for cartoon illustrations of abstract concepts like 'ease of maintenance, 'maneuverability" etc.

(iv) Like the others, it can be distracting if a picture is left up after it has served its purpose, but if you fold back to the cover each time you may have a job finding your place. The answer is to have a neutral interleaf after every picture or picture sequence (it doesn't have to be blank-it can be a symbol or picture that is relevant to your whole presentation).

Build-Up Visuals

This includes all those visual aids like magnetic boards, slot boards, pin boards, etc., where you build up a picture by adding to a basic design as you go along. The simplest and cheapest, used by the army, is cards backed with sandpaper placed on a blanket stretched over a blackboard. It works surprisingly well.

The snag is confusion over pieces to be added. If you are adding on six different types of visual design, and you have ten of each, you spend most of the presentation

hunting through sixty assorted objects for the one you want. The rule must be either a very limited number or a very limited range.

The alternative (which gets over this problem) is the revelation board, which starts blank or with a simple framework and is progressively revealed by removing blank cards (it is of course the same basic piece of equipment, but used for subtraction instead of addition). The snag here is revealing too slowly in the early stages, so that boredom sets in because the audience can see how much further there is to go. You must use the stripper's technique of removing the first coverings fairly quickly: as interest rises you can afford to slow down a little and draw out the suspense.

Objects and Models

Nothing beats being able to point *to* exactly what you are talking about. But some objects - those that are extremely large or very small, or those that are exceptionally valuable - simply do not lend themselves for use as present, flotation aids in speeches. In such cases, reduced or enlarged models may be a better option.

In the search for helpful or memorable visuals, it is all too easy to forget the value of a small

object fished out of the pocket, or a larger one from under the desk. It is worth making a special note to think if there is any object, or part of an object, which could be interesting and reasonably relevant to display. Because the presenters are familiar with printed circuits or the inside of film cassettes or computer storage discs, they forget that their audience has quite possibly never seen one. Simply producing one and holding it up turns an abstract idea into a physical object, causes virtually no delay, and substitutes a memorable picture for a forgettable word. If you have enough to pass round the audience better still.

One of the most memorable uses of solid objects in this way was demonstrated in England just after transistors had been developed. British engineers and physicists were desperately and fruitlessly trying to get hold of them for examination and experiment when an American came over to address a learned society about them. At one stage he said "Anybody want to take one home?" and to a disbelieving gasp he fished in his pocket and brought out a great handful of transistors, and just threw them into the audience. The effect was like throwing a handful of rice to a mob of starving refugees. Distinguished professors groveled and fought on their hands and knees, there was pushing and clawing and stamping on fingers and cries of accusation and pain, and it was minutes before the flushed and flustered gathering returned to their seats clutching their booty. Only then did the lecturer say "It's all right, they're all duds".

If you are speaking about something that can be carried easily to class and that listeners in the back of the room can see without straining, you may decide to use the object itself as a presentation aid. Ideally, it should also be small enough to be kept out of sight until you are ready to use it. If you display the object through but your speech, YDU may be upstaged by it. If it is unusual, your listeners may find their attention diverted to it rather than to what you are saying:

One of our students brought six different objects to class to illustrate an informative speech on the Montessori method of preschool education. When it was her turn to speak, she lined-up the objects in front of the lectern. They were, such a distraction that a student in the front row actually scooted his chair closer to the desk and picked up one of the objects to examine it. She then had to stop and ask him to put it back. She could have handled this situation more effectively by concealing the objects and bringing them forth one at a time.

Inanimate objects make better presentation aids than living things, which you cannot always control. We once had a student bring a six-week-old puppy to use in a speech on caring for young animals. At the beginning of her speech, she removed the lectern from the speaker's table, spread some newspapers on it, and placed the puppy on the table. We are sure you have already guessed what happened. The first thing the puppy did was wet on the papers (including her note cards, which she had put down on the table while trying to control the puppy). The first thing the audience did was giggle. From there it was all downhill. The puppy squirmed and tried to jump on the speaker while yipping and barking throughout the speech. The speaker was totally upstaged by her presentation aid. When this fiasco was over, we asked her why she had brought the puppy to class. She said she thought that because she was talking about young {animals, it would be nice to bring one along."

Another problem arises when using dangerous, illegal, or potentially offensive objects as presentation aids. Such objects might include guns, drugs, or pornography. One of our students used a realistic-looking model of a semiautomatic weapon, which he pulled from beneath the lectern, -during the introduction of a speech on gun control. The effect was both dramatic and frightening. Several audience members became quite upset and found it hard to concentrate on his message. Never create these kinds of problems for yourself with a presentation aid_ If you have any questions about the appropriateness of an object, check with your instructor.

Objects are frequently used in "how-to" speeches. Indeed, such speeches often cannot succeed without presentation aids. An engaging example of this type of use occurred near Halloween as part of a speech on jack-o'-lanterns, both how to make them and the folklore behind them. The speaker demonstrated how to draw the face on a pumpkin with a magic marker and how to make a beveled cut around the stem so that the top wouldn't fall in. As she was showing her listeners how to do these things, she was also telling stories of the ancient myths surrounding jack o'-lanterns. Her presentation aid and her words helped each other: the demonstration enlivened her speech, and the stories gave the demonstration depth and meaning. As she came to her closing remarks, she reached inside the lectern and produced a finished jack-o'-lantern, complete with a lighted candle. The effect was memorable.

Models. When an object is too large to carry, too small to be easily seen, very rare, expensive, fragile, or simply unavailable, a model, or scale-sized replica of the object, can serve as a presentation aid. One advantage of a model is that you can provide a cross section or cutaway of the object to show its interior.

George Stacey brought a slightly smaller than life-size model of a person to demonstrate cardiopulmonary resuscitation {CPR). The model folded into a suitcase, so that it could be kept out of sight when not in use. When

Visual aids

No matter how strong the message or dynamic the speaker, the power of the image speaks volumes.

- a. The Basics of File Compression
- b. Capturing Bitmaps at the Correct Resolution for Projection
- c. Choosing the Right Colors for Your Next Presentation
- d. Fonts and PowerPoint: True Type vs. Postscript
- e. Graphic Types and Electronic Presentations
- f. Hierarchy and Contrast: The Basis of Good Design
- g. If You Think All Sans Serif Fonts Are the Same
- h. Mastering the Art of Scanning
- i. Multimedia Vocabulary 101
- j. The Numbers on Why You Need Visuals
- k. PowerPoint Slide Show Cheat Sheet (Shortcut Controls)
- l. Quick Info on Projector Screens
- m. Quick Reference for Multimedia Projector Placement
- n. Quick Tips for Effective Visuals
- o. Size Does Matter!
- p. Tips for Converting Multimedia Presentations to HTML
- q. Tips for Text Heavy Slides
- r. Using Color in Multimedia Presentations
- s. Using Different Backgrounds Within a Single Presentation
- t. Using Flipcharts Well

Working Models

The successful use of a working model is usually the high point of a presentation - ask any science master. If it fails to work, it is almost always a major disaster. This however is not an argument against the use of working demonstrations, only a plea for the most extreme care in preparation and rehearsal, and also (where possible) a standby equally well tested and prepared. Those who are to participate in the demonstration should practice and practise until boredom sets in, and for this almost more than anything else the actual location for the presentation should be checked for power supply, ventilation, fire regulations or anything else that could throw everything out at the last minute.

Overhead Projector

They take too much of the presenter's mind away from his audience. He has to worry about getting his plates in the right order, about getting them the right way up and the right way round, he has to keep checking the screen behind him, and the effect is too often cumbersome, didactic and slow. To be successful, they need a lot of care in rehearsal and restraint in use; they should not be required to do as much as they technically can. It also helps the smoothness of their operation if the light is not switched on until the slide is in position, and then switched off before the slide is moved away. The presenter must become so familiar with the equipment that he can use it casually.

Slides

Of all the available visual aids, none are used more frequently or more ineptly than slides. They are very valuable but they can be great destroyers of presentations. Give slide projectors the care and respect you would give a loaded pistol. The faults are of two kinds, conceptual and operational, but of course they can compound each other and all too often they do.

By conceptual faults is meant inadequate thought from the point of view of the audience.

The seven chief conceptual errors are:

. *Too verbal*: I have mentioned this fault earlier in the chapter, but it is worth mentioning again here because it seems to be slides that are the chosen vehicle for those who think words are pictures.. Discipline yourself to ask "What will this slide show?" and never "What will this slide say?"

. *Too comprehensive*: Technical people are especially prone to the vice of insisting that every nut and bolt be included in the slide. Remember that a slide is only a part of what you are asking the audience to take in - you supply the other part with what you say over it. You can always say "This of course is only a broad outline of the system", "This is an extreme simplification - the full plan is in your folder" and so on. Indeed the best slides are not sufficient on their own; they need the presenter's words to make them properly intelligible. If they don't, the audience is liable to stop listening to him and start working out the information on the slide.

. *Too complex*: Many slides are such a mass of boxes and arrows and feedback control loops that you might as well put up a maze from a comic (how can teddy get back to his home without crossing any lines?). This, even more than the slide that is too comprehensive, distracts the audience from anything you have to say unless you work through it laboriously - and even then you will be too quick for some and too slow for others, or both. The solution is usually to break it down into a sequence of successive slides - indeed this simple dodge on its own would have redeemed something like a third of the communication failures I have witnessed in slide presentations.

. *Too crowded*: Jamming too much on to a slide, even if reasonably simple, makes it impossible for the back half of the audience to see important detail. If in any doubt, get someone who has never seen the slide before to sit at the furthest audience distance and be honest. If you try it yourself an insidious optimism provides false reassurance. Again the solution is almost a sequence of slides instead of just one.

. *Too colorless*: Far too many black lines on clear slides. Apart from the pleasant variation that colors give, once you start thinking in terms of a color range you begin to find ways in which color keys and codes can be used to help the audience's comprehension by giving additional information.

. *Held too long*: Once a slide has made its point it should be removed unless there is a positive reason for keeping it there. Otherwise it becomes a distraction.

. *Not explained*: Often a presenter puts up a slide-usually an extremely complex and comprehensive slide - and continues talking with only the faintest reference to it, leaving the audience with two or three minutes of quite hard work puzzling it out before they are free to start listening to him again. It is because the slide is so familiar to him by then that he assumes it is familiar to the audience too; or else it is some strange ritual homage to

the vampire-goddess Video. It seems blindingly obvious to urge presenters to work through their slides with the audience if they have any elucidatory or corroborative purpose at all; but from my experience it is important advice.

All of these are barriers to communication. The operational faults however provoke something much more damaging -ridicule. When the third slide comes on upside down, even the most polite audience starts to laugh.

Most of the problems center on either the projector or the projectionist.

The projector

You must assume the projector is going to go wrong. It is not disastrous if you are prepared for it (standby projector, vital pictures also on flip chart, contingency plans thought out) but if you have assumed the projector will not go wrong and also hinged your presentation on it, you deserve all you get. And always tryout all the slides in advance on the projector you will actually be using, if possible in the place where you will be using it. Your slides may be the wrong size, the heat may burn them - you never know till you try.

The projectionist

You may have one of those projectors which you operate yourself by pressing a button. They have a great advantage, which is unified control. You yourself load the slides, you yourself project them. For small audiences they are the safest, but usually their throw is too short to give a large enough picture for a big presentation. Then you are up against the projectionist problem, the problem of divided control.

If you think slide projectionist is just another technical job like house electrician, I have to assume that you have never given a presentation that included a slide sequence. Technical proficiency is only a very small part of the job. It chiefly requires intellect, initiative, coolness of head and presence of mind. The projectionist must have a thorough knowledge of, and familiarity with, the script. He must be alert for every accidental change of order, and be ready to rearrange his slides accordingly. He must be incapable of confusing the signal 'next slide' with the signal 'remove this slide'. And of course he must never put a slide inside out or upside down. and never knock the next tray load onto the floor as he is about to reload.

Cassette Film Projectors

A fairly new development and an extremely valuable one, especially those which have synchronous sound. But they are only suitable for quite small numbers. On the other hand they are much easier to stop and start than a proper film projector. .

Film: A good synchronous sound film is the surest and most complete presentation in itself. However a film made for a different purpose but included in your presentation needs special care.

(i) Se careful not to run any section for too long. After a while it 5tarts to take over and become the presentation, diminishing the importance and impact of everything else.

(ii) Resist the temptation of using a good bit of film just because it's good. Discipline yourself to reject it unless you can make it relevant. People remember good film, and you don't want their vividest memory to be of something irrelevant.

- (iii) Remember that film is for moving pictures; it is to show things that move. Don't commission film when still pictures would do the job better as well as cheaper.
- (iv) Space your film carefully throughout the presentation for maximum effect.
- (v) Be very careful of commenting live over silent film. Have plenty of rehearsal with the picture and get to know it well with special attention to the points at which the picture is about to change to something else: otherwise you find yourself talking about a picture that is not there; and failing to explain the one that is.

Factors to consider when selecting a visual medium.

With all visual aids, the crucial factor is how you use them. Properly integrated into an oral presentation, they can save time, create interest, add variety, make an impression, and illustrate points that are difficult to explain in words alone.

USES AND ADVANTAGES OF PRESENTATION AIDS

Presentation aids give your audience direct sensory contact with your speech. They are useful because words are essentially abstract. Words represent objects and ideas, but they are not the objects and ideas they represent. To understand words, listeners must translate them into mental images, a process that is sometimes difficult and confusing. Imagine how hard it would be to describe through words alone the carburetor system of a car. If described in charts or diagrams, it would still be difficult for many of us to comprehend. It requires both words *and* presentation aids to explain some topics. Presentation aids can help speeches in the following ways:

These are the "tools of the trade" that you should not overlook when assembling your talk. **Visual aids**, **handouts**, and **demonstrations** can help you make your point and can add variety and interest to your presentation. Their use can have a big impact on how well a message is received.

How Visual Aids Help

1. *Presentation aids enhance understanding.* Sometimes presentation aids work better than words to convey meaning. It is easier to give directions when you can trace the route on a map as you describe it. Similarly, if you are comparing the qualities of cassette tapes and CDs, it is more effective to let audiences actually *hear* the differences.
2. *presentation aids add authenticity.* When you show listeners what you are talking about, you do more than just clarify your message. You authenticate it. You demonstrate that it does indeed exist. This type of support is useful in both informative and persuasive speeches. Research confirms that presentational materials enhance both learning and attitude change.² When you can show your audience some aspect of the problem you are talking about, listeners are more likely to accept your solution.
3. *Presentation aids add variety.* Too much of a good thing, even a well designed fabric of words, can get tiresome. The use of presentation aids at critical points in a speech provides variety. This helps sustain audience interest and attention.
4. *Presentation aids may improve your delivery skills.* Presentation aids force you to move about as you give your speech. It gets you away from the "stand behind the lectern/talking head" mode of presentation that audiences often find boring. Movement energizes your speech. Moreover, if you have problems with "stage fright, II purposeful

movement such as pointing out the important features of a model gives you a constructive way to use excess energy and redirects your attention from yourself to objects outside yourself.

5. *Presentation aids help your speech have lasting impact.* Presentation aids are easier to remember than words because they are more concrete. The face of a hungry child shown in a photograph may stick in your mind and make you more likely to contribute to a charitable organization. Or you may remember the bright red flags on a map that pinpoint dangerous places better than just the place names.

6. *A neat, attractively designed presentation aid enhances your credibility.* It tells the audience that you put extra effort into preparing your speech. Speakers who use presentation aids are judged more professional, better prepared, clearer, more credible, more interesting, more concise, and more persuasive than speakers who do not use aids.⁴

Presentation aids are almost mandatory in imaginal settings.⁴ A wide array of organizations use them in public relations presentations, budget meetings, training and development, and employee orientation programs. They can be seen on the floors of the House and Senate and in the courtrooms of America's Even when meetings are called on short notice, presentation aids such as handouts or transparencies are frequently used.⁷ In such business and professional settings, audiences expect presentation aids as a matter of course. If you don't have them, you risk disappointing your listeners.

The Numbers on Why You Need Visuals

1. Seeing makes the most sense. Studies show that sight is the most used human sense. A whopping 75% of all environmental stimuli is received through visual reception (Doug Malouf). So, the best presenters use visuals to maximize the impact of their presentation!

Environmental Stimuli Reception

2. Visuals are the best way to teach your audience. According to a recent University of California at Los Angeles study, 55% percent of what an audience learns comes directly from the visual messages seen during a presentation - compared to 38% from audio messages. By combining audio and visual presentation messages, presenters can ensure their objectives are met.

Impact of Communication

3. Visuals increase the retention of messages. A Wharton Research Center study has shown that the retention rate of verbal only presentations is approximately 10%. However, when you combine visual messages with verbal communication, you increase the retention rate to nearly 50%. A 400% increase! Why not use visual aids to help you audience remember your message?

Message Retention

4. Visuals help you meet your audience objectives. When presenters use visual aids in their presentations, they are twice as likely (67% vs. 33%) to achieve their audience objectives, than speakers who don't use visual aids. (Decker Communications). By incorporating effective visuals in your presentation, you increase your ability to communicate your message to your audience.

Achieving Objectives

5. Reduce the length of your meeting. A recent study from the University of Minnesota found that the average length of meetings in which visuals were used were 26.8% shorter (26.7 minutes vs. 18.6 minutes) than meetings in which no visuals were used. With executive salaries at several hundred dollars an hour, visuals can save corporate executives a lot of time and money!

Meeting Length

An Application

During your summer vacations you run a small landscaping business. Most of your work has come from neighbors who just want you to mow their grass and carry off trash. This summer you want to expand your operations. You posted notices on community bulletin boards to attract new business. Today you got a call from a small company inviting you to develop a landscape plan for its property_ and to present it next week a to the company's office. This is your org chance to do somethi'19 you can be proud of and possibly to make enough money to pay your tuition and buy books next fall. You know you will be competing with other, better established landscaping companies.

If you want to have a shot at winning the contract, you will need some well designed presentation, aids as you introduce your plan. You could use a mod_1 of the property that shows the building and the proposed landscaping. If that isn't feasible, you could use large pictures that demonstrate your landscaping -plan for the property. You might Volant to have these made into slides that you can show as you speak. Or, if you, nave access to the proper equipment both for preparing and presenting your visual aids, you may wish to ranker a computer-_assisted presentation. Regardless of the method you choose, "without presentation aids you won't be able to hold your own against the competition.

Here are some tips for using visual aids during a presentation:

1. **Use only visual aids that help you pass on or emphasize the information you are presenting.** Visuals that add unnecessary complexity, that overemphasize unimportant points, or that do not relate will only confuse listeners.
2. **Explain to listeners the purpose of each visual aid.** For example, say “The graph you see here shows that. . .” or “As you can see from this graph. . .” Don’t leave listeners wondering what they are looking at or why.
3. **Use visual aids that everyone can see clearly.** The bigger the audience, the bigger the visual aid must be to project to people in the back of the room.
4. **Use visual aids that enhance your professional image.** This means *planning and preparing* visual aids so they appear professionally done.
5. **Practice your use of visual aids so that you incorporate them smoothly as you go along.** If you are not familiar with the equipment, find someone who can help you before you start your talk.
6. **Allow time to check all equipment before your presentation to ensure that it works properly.** Even if the equipment works, you may have to make adjustments, such as moving an overhead projector further from the screen to increase the size of the image or moving the podium so it does not block the

screen. If the equipment does not work properly, you will have to arrange to replace it or reorganize your presentation without the benefit of the visual aids. So be sure to give yourself enough time to troubleshoot *before* the audience arrives.

Quick Tips for Effective Visuals

1. The Most Important Rule: Keep It Simple!
2. Test Your Visuals. Are they easy to read? Simple to follow? Do they illustrate your point? Get rid of anything extra - make sure every visual aid has a purpose.
3. Use Color Sparingly. A good rule of thumb is to use two colors in presentation graphics. More than three can make visuals too busy.
4. Bullet Points Only. Sentences are too long and too busy for visual displays.
5. 20 Words or Less. Use no more than 20 words of text per graphic/slide.
6. Use Graphics. Limit the amount of numbers/figures on slides. Use charts and graphs to illustrate important trends.
7. Use the Real Thing. Talking about a product? If possible have one there for your audience to touch, feel, and try out! Even if they can't get their hands on the product, seeing something tangible is worth a lot!

GUIDELINES FOR SELECTING VISUALS

Name of the Visual

Optimal Audience Size

Degree of Formality

Design Complexity

Equipment and Room Requirements

Production Time

Cost

1. Handouts, Fewer than 11, Informal, Simple, Typed text and photocopying machine, Typing or drawing time; photo copying time, Inexpensive
2. Boards and flip charts, Fewer than 20, Informal, Simple, Chalkboard or whiteboard or easel and 'chart, with writing implements, Drawing time only, Inexpensive
3. Overheads, About 100, Formal or informal, Simple, Text, copy machine, plastic sheets, and projector screen, Drawing or typing time; photo copping time, Inexpensive unless designed or typeset professionally
4. Slides, Several hundred, Formal, Anything that can be photographed, Slides, projector, and screen; dim lighting, Design and photographing time; at least 24 hours' production time, More expensive

USE YOUR JUDGMENT

Discuss the kinds of visual aids and handouts the speakers in the following situations might plan to use to help their audiences.

- a. Poa Xiong, a county department of transportation official, must speak to the state transportation board for approximately 30 minutes. His purpose is to pass on information about the number of people in his county who take driver's tests (both first tests and retakes) and who renew licenses each month. He must compare this information to similar information for the past ten years and project the information for the next five years. Poa knows the state board wants this information because it is considering widening several of the county's highways.
- b. Lorraine Guterrez, sales manager for the local branch of a large warehouse grocery outlet, has noticed a huge increase in customers over the past several months. She has also noticed that the store's layout is causing bottlenecks in a few key places because of the increased traffic. Lorraine believes the solution is to change the store's layout, but to do this, she must have the approval of the chain's vice president. She has scheduled a one-hour meeting to persuade the vice president to approve this change.
- c. Warren Roll, information systems specialist for a small company, must train the company's other 20 employees to use the newly installed local area network. He can get all 20 people together for the first two hours (without computers) to introduce the network's capabilities and basic operations; after that, he must work with each person as needed at individual work stations.