

The Do's of Using Visual Aids

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WHAT'S COVERED

In this lesson, you will learn further techniques for integrating visual aids into your presentation. Specifically, this lesson will cover:

1. The Do's of Using Visual Aids
 - a. Easily Seen or Heard by the Audience
 - b. Easily Handled
 - c. Aesthetically Pleasing
 - d. Easy to Understand the Key Point
 - e. Supplement, Don't Replace, the Presentation

1. The Do's of Using Visual Aids

Visual aids are essential to helping your audience better understand the key points of your presentation. Visual aids will also help to improve the attention span of audience members during the presentation. However, it is important that presenters use visual aids in a manner that does not distract from the overall presentation.

An effective visual aid will include the following attributes:

- Easily seen or heard by the audience
- Easily handled
- Aesthetically pleasing
- Easy to understand the key point
- Acts as a supplement to the speaker's message and not a replacement

1a. Easily Seen or Heard by the Audience

Presentation aids must be easily understood by the audience, even those sitting at the very back of the room.

Graphic elements in presentation aids must be large enough to be easily seen and/or read. Similarly, audio elements must be loud enough to hear.

1b. Easily Handled

Your presentation aids should be easy to transport. In addition, you should make sure you know how to use presentation equipment ahead of time.

You should seamlessly incorporate presentation aids into your speech. You don't want your audience to be distracted by these elements.

1c. Aesthetically Pleasing

Your visual aids should not detract from the content of your speech. Keep your presentation simple so people can focus on the content rather than the aesthetics.

The decisions you make when you design your visual aids should be very deliberate. If you add color to a visual aid, for example, use it for a clear purpose.



1d. Easy to Understand the Key Point

If your PowerPoint slides or handouts have too much **extraneous** information, then the audience may not be able to understand the takeaway message of the presentation.

A way to test if your visual aids are addressing the key point is to ask someone who is unfamiliar with your presentation if they can understand what the key point is.

If they cannot determine the key point, it may be a good idea to revise your visual aids to include less non-essential information.



TERM TO KNOW

Extraneous

Not essential or intrinsic.

1e. Supplement, Don't Replace, the Presentation

Visual aids are useful to help the audience better understand your topic if they are used as a supplement to, and not a replacement for, your presentation.

🔗 **EXAMPLE** A visual aid that replaces a presentation could be a PowerPoint that includes big blocks of text that the presenter reads **verbatim**.

While this will be an accurate presentation, it will likely bore the audience members who will not gain much from the presentation. However, if the visual aid acts as a supplement, it will enhance the audience member's understanding through diagrams, graphs, charts, and summaries.



TERM TO KNOW

Verbatim

A word-for-word report of a speech.



SUMMARY

In this lesson, you learned that **visual aids** must be **easily understood** by the audience. Graphic elements should be large enough to be **easily seen and/or read**. Your visual aids must also be easy to transport. In addition, you should make sure you know how to use presentation equipment ahead of time. The design of your presentation should not detract from the content of your speech, but it should still be **aesthetically pleasing**. Consider whether you can understand if each visual aid is addressing and furthering the **key point** of your presentation. Visual aids are useful to help the audience better understand your topic if they are used as a **supplement to your presentation**.

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