

Suggestions for Using PowerPoint and Other Visual Aids

Possible visual aids include:

- The presenter: personal appearance, body language, gestures, voice, facial expressions;
- Maps;
- Graphs (Pie, Line, or Bar);
- Charts (Flow, Tree, Stream, Sequence, Pictograph, or Flip);
- Photographs and Pictures;
- Posters;
- Objects or Models;
- Overhead Projections, Slides, or PowerPoint;
- Handouts;
- Films, Videotapes, or Audio Tapes.

Planning your Visual Aids

1. Plan your talk first, **then** decide what visual aids you will need.
2. The visual aids are there to illustrate or emphasize what you say—they are **not** the main event.
3. Present **one** topic per visual aid.
4. Structuring your PowerPoint Slides:
 - ***Use a minimal amount of text, in a large clear font.***
 - Resist the temptation to use fancy/cool fonts!
 - Sans Serif fonts such as Helvetica or Ariel project most clearly
 - Use at least a 20 point font.
 - Font color should contrast sharply with background (yellow on very dark blue, black on white)
 - Be consistent with the background and avoid backgrounds that are difficult to read from.
 - Proof your slides for spelling, repeated words and grammatical mistakes. (If English is not your native language have a friend check your presentation).
5. Keep figures as simple as possible.

For each visual aid you have planned, ask these questions:

- a. Why is it there?
- b. What does it show?
- c. Does it show this clearly, even for people in the back row?
- d. Does it support the main point or key message?
- e. Is there anything there which doesn't need to be there?
- f. When will it be shown? When will it be removed?

Using your visual aid successfully:

- *Practice* to make sure visual aids are well-integrated into the speech.
- Plan placement of visual aids prior to the speech.
- Check to see that the electronics are running, and that you know how to operate them.
- Do not display the visual until the relevant moment. When finished remove it, or cover it.
- Do not stand directly in front of the visual, stand to the side and face the audience.
- When referring to the visual aid, point, don't leave your audience searching.
- Do not distribute materials during your speech. If you have prepared handouts, distribute them before or after you speak