

# Top Tips for Visual Aids

- Write your presentation first and then ask yourself – if and where it needs a visual aid
- Remember, visuals are not always necessary – more good presentations are ruined by inappropriate visuals than the other way round
- Don't use a visual as a prompt or a script – it should always be there for the audience, not the presenter
- Use visuals to present facts or stats in an immediate and communicative manner
- Try where possible to use pictures, graphs, charts, video. Avoid words where possible. A visual should communicate like a flash of lightning – the words are what you're there to provide
- Two rules to remember about designing visual aids:
  - don't put any words in your visuals
  - occasionally break the first rule
- When using verbal visuals, adhere to the 6x6 rule: maximum of 6 words across and 6 lines down
- It's an insult to any audience to project your script onto a screen and then read it to them. Ask yourself of each visual – does it do something words can't do equally well?
- Keep them simple – don't overload them or complicate with information – remember round figures are easier to understand, so £1 Million, not £1,065,385
- Tables of figures rarely work. They can be difficult to read and boring on the eye. Use charts or graphs instead
- Use big, bold typeface with colours that contrast. Use light text on dark background, or dark text on light background. Do not use too many colours on one frame
- At all times, you should be able to present without visuals. The truly professional presenter is in control and gives the impression that if the screen blew up and the notes went missing, they'd be able to continue
- Remember, when an audience see a screen and projector, they think of the cinema and expect the same level of performance – don't let them down!

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## Flip Charts

- Try to prepare them in advance, only write on every other page and take the time to write neatly and legibly (the temptation is to go for speed to look more fluent, but this can often look messy)
- Use a paper clip or fold over the corners of relevant pages for easy access
- Don't lean on the flipchart stand, and never write and speak at the same time, for two reasons: the audience can't read and listen at the same time; your voice will be muffled by the flipchart

## Overhead Projector

- The minute you introduce a visual aid on stage, you become a double act. Place the foil in silence, stand back and take it in yourself, then come back to the audience. Control their focus and never look at the screen again until it's time to place your next visual
- If you need to point to the visual, point on the foil and not the screen. Rest a pen on the OHP to avoid visible tremble
- Try and find a way of making your visuals pictorial and not verbal
- Don't switch the machine off and on in between foils (unless you have one at the beginning and another at the end)

## 35mm Slides

- Can look very professional. They're less flexible but can give a very smooth and polished presentation
- Always number your slides and notes accordingly
- Don't talk to the screen, talk to the audience
- Try to practise at least twice to ensure a fluid performance

## Video

- Familiarise yourself with any TV and VCR equipment in advance. It looks very unprofessional if you can't find the right channel or don't know where the play button is
- Cue the video tape to the right place beforehand so it starts where you need it to