Tips for Designing and Using Visual Aids

Text

- Make sure that your audience can read it.
  - Make the lettering, graph, or picture of the visual aid large enough to be seen by the back row. Use 18-24 (or larger) font size.
  - For posters, flip charts, chalkboards, and whiteboards:
    - Titles 3 inches high
    - Subtitles 2-3 inches high
    - Text 1 ½ inches high
- Employ the K.I.S.S.
  - Keep It Short and Simple.
- Include one idea per slide or page.
- Use a title to reinforce your point.
- Follow the Six-by-Six Rule
  - 6 lines per slide
  - 6 words per line
- Only use two different fonts per slide.
- Use upper and lowercase type because text in all capitals is difficult to read.

Visuals

- Label all parts of a graph.
- Use color, borders, pointers, and boxes to highlight important information.
- Limit clip art illustrations; overuse becomes distracting.
- Use contrast
  - Example: Blue background, white foreground, red accent.
• Use bright, solid colors rather than pastels.

Delivery
• Test all equipment beforehand.
  o Have a backup plan, especially if using computer equipment.
• Practice with the visual aid.
• Show the visual aid when ready to talk about it, not beforehand.
• Glance at the screen to be sure the correct slide is up, then look at the audience and begin speaking.
• Prepare the audience: “Let’s look at this chart which shows the trend…”
  o Pass out materials when you are ready for the audience to read them or pass them out at the end of the presentation.
• Explain the visual aid. Use words to interpret the visual representation.
  o Tell the audience your point; the visual aid does not substitute for your spoken words.
• Never speak to the aid. Speak to the audience.
• Stand so that all members of the audience can see the visual.
• Remove the aid when you have finished talking about it.