



## Enhancing Presentations with Visual Aids

### Effective vs. Ineffective Visual Aids

#### Effective:

- Effective visual presentations will:
  - Have an appropriate design theme that allows for creativity with *easy to consume* fonts, colors, and graphics
    - Once you choose a theme, keep it consistent.
    - Keep in mind that whichever design theme you choose will set the *mood* for the overall presentation
  - Stay simple. Glitz and glamour serve only to distract the audience from the message
  - Contain visual aids which establish cues that direct your audience from point to point without losing focus
  - Be mindful of which colors evoke which emotions.
    - **Avoid red** at all costs; this color lessens clear thinking abilities
    - Black, Brown, Gray, and Beige are sophisticated, simple colors
    - Green, Blue, Purple, and Pink evoke a sense of calmness and safety, but should be used sparingly and consciously
    - Orange and Yellow can evoke energy or signify a warning
    - Whatever color scheme you choose, it should **not** resemble a rainbow!
      - Be purposeful and decisive with a few colors. Refer to the color wheel.
      - Remember that it is perfectly acceptable to leave white space, or empty space. This gives your project breathing room and a more professional outlook.
  - Respond appropriately to the audience
    - Putting a Spongebob Squarepants graphic in the presentation isn't going to resonate with business executives the same way it would elementary school students
    - Get to know your audience before implementing graphics
    - Use what they would already know
  - Utilize “screen friendly” fonts such as Times New Roman, Ariel, and Helvetica
  - Be highly contrasted and easily distinguishable
    - For example, center the image for easy viewing
    - If the background is dark, make the text and images lighter, and if the background is light, make the text and images darker

## Ineffective:

- Ineffective visual presentations will:
  - Be too cluttered with images, words, fonts, etc.
  - Not have enough white space or space in between words and images—this can lead to confusion and loss of focus.
  - Fail to connect the audience with the message
    - If the connection between the visual aid and the presentation’s message is not understood within 3 seconds, then it’s too complex and therefore not useful
    - If you are not fully prepared to speak about how your visual aid(s) enhances the audience’s understanding of the presentation, the visual presentation will fail
  - Fall victim to “death by PowerPoint”
    - This is when the presenter has not made sure the graphics, videos, audio, etc. work correctly within the limits of the technology, or the presenter has not taken the time to become familiar with the technology
    - Practice multiple times in the exact (or near exact) technological setting where the speech will be delivered so as to avoid this
      - For example: Will you be using a projector? A PowerPoint? A Prezi? How would sound and video work with these platforms?
        - The DMC/DACT is a great place to practice delivery with all kinds of technology

