

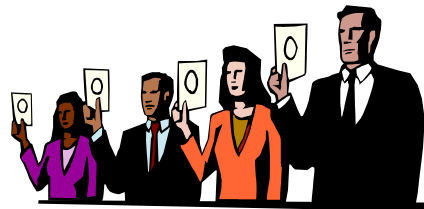
Making Persuasive Presentations

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Dept. of Technical Communication
Senior Design Lecture

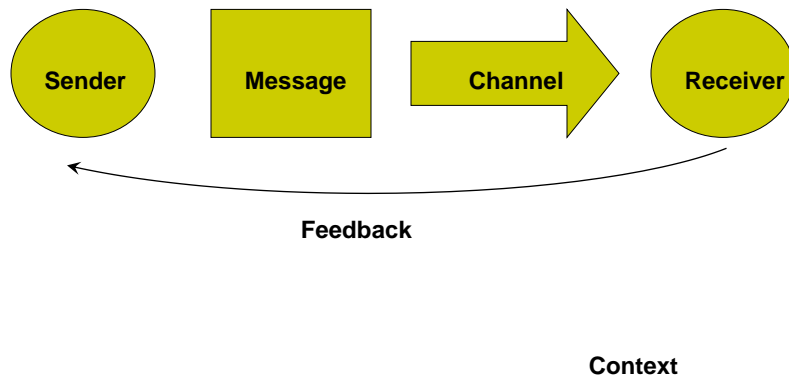


What We Will Discuss Today

- Understanding the communication process
- Preparing your presentation
- Designing the visuals



Understanding the Communication Process



As the sender, you must establish credibility

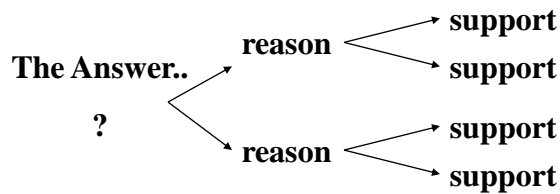


- Display knowledge of subject
- Display knowledge of audience
- Display professional manner



Consider the message itself

- Organization of content
 - Beginning
 - Middle
 - End
 - Transitions
- Validity of argument – use a logic tree



Messages are conveyed through channels

- Verbal
- Visual
- Written

Messages are delivered to an audience



- Know their agenda
- Know their preferences
- Know their feelings towards you

Pay attention to audience feedback



- Verbal and nonverbal reactions
- Clues to whether or not they understood you

Context is the situation in which your message is delivered



- Surrounding physical environment
- Corporate culture

Communication barriers can occur at each level



- Sender
- Message
- Channel
- Receiver
- Feedback
- Context

Use a checklist to help you prepare your speech



- Presentation
- Delivery
- Appearance
- Visual aids

Each visual should add value



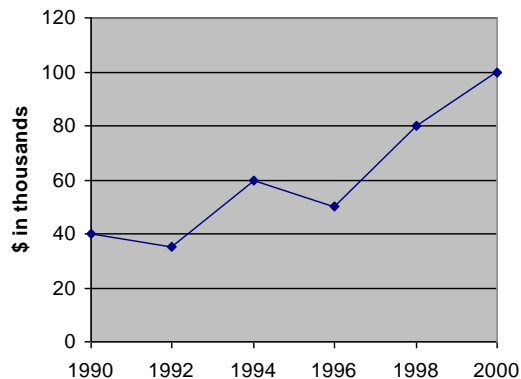
- Make the message the heading
- Follow simple rules for text visuals and graphics

Make the message the heading



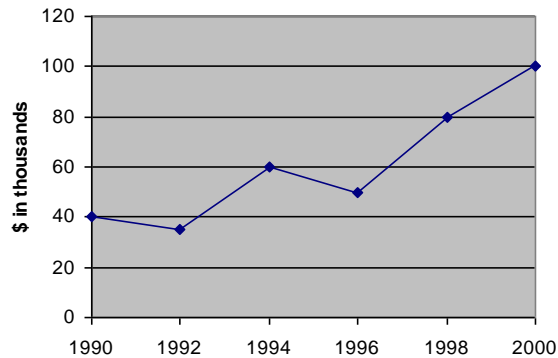
- People read top down
- Heading should convey significance of visual
 - What it means NOT what it is
- If can't come up with message, visual not needed
- Do not use punctuation in heading
- See examples

Sales 1990-2000



A topical heading says "what it is."

Sales have tripled in 10 years



A message heading says "what it means."

Agenda



- Overview
- Current market
- Competitors
- Opportunity
- Next steps

This visual only tells audience that presentation has 5 parts.
Provides no meaningful roadmap.



Our goals today are

- Define critical issues
 - New technology
 - New market demands
- Determine change in focus
- Agree on implementation steps

This visual sets stage for presentation by letting audience know what speaker hopes to achieve and order of topics.



What to know about designing the visuals

- Make the message the heading
- Follow simple rules for text visuals and graphics

Here are some guidelines for text visuals



- Use action or message phrases
- Keep lists parallel and in the order you intend to follow
- Use upper/lowercase type and simple typeface
- Highlight the most important message on the visual

Organizational structure has allowed these weakness to develop



- Key tasks are not being performed: market research, long-range planning, proposal writing
- The organization is overly dependent on key people: two individuals manage all aspect of program
- Work unevenly divided: several departments are overloaded, other are underutilized.
- Communication among departments is poor.
- The staff's involvement in the organization is artificially limited.

Text is too dense, visually unappealing, and too long.

We can gain a competitive advantage if we



- Provide major pricing advantage with new plants
- Reach the market ahead of the competition
- Service the entire region from central distribution

Phrases let speaker tell story. Verbs give sense of action.

We will build on the basics



- *Provide* superior financial products
- *Unequaled* client service
- *Strength* and value

A list that is not parallel in form is hard to read.



To build on the basics, we will

- *Provide* superior financial products
- *Offer* unequaled service to clients
- *Preserve* strength and value

Strong verbs make good lists.



Guidelines for any graphic

- Message determines form
- Convey one message per chart
- Make the chart easy to read
- Convey data honestly
- Eliminate all unnecessary design details

Message determines form



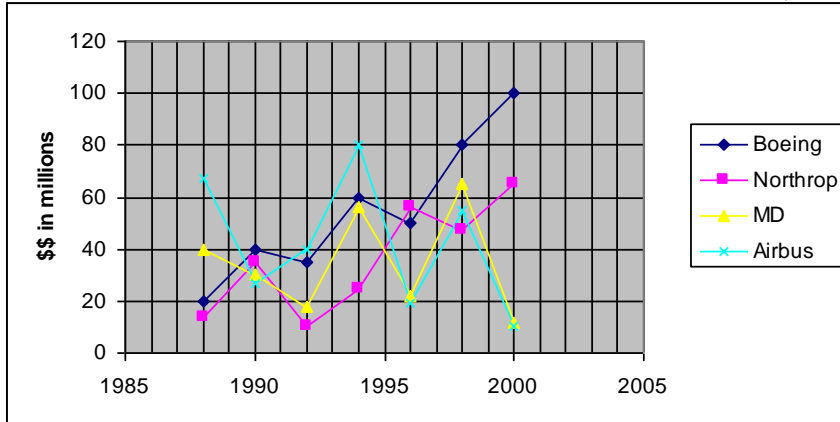
- Bar and column chart – compares or groups items
- Column and line chart – change in variables over time
- Pie chart – relation of part to other parts or whole
- Scatter diagram – relation of two or more variables

Guidelines for any graphic



- Message determines form
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Gross Revenues per Product



Important information not highlighted; too many visual distractions.

As a % of sales, manufacturing and G&A costs have remained steady

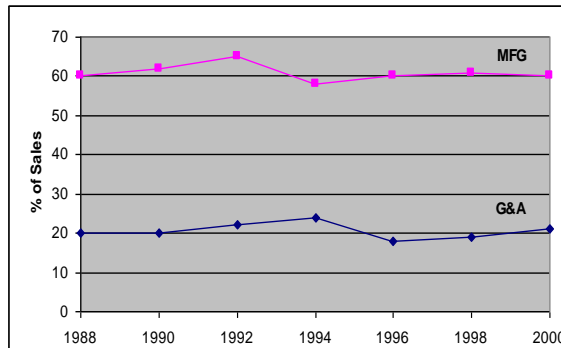


Chart clearly illustrates message in heading. Labels are clear.



Guidelines for any visual

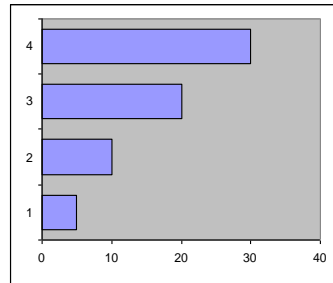
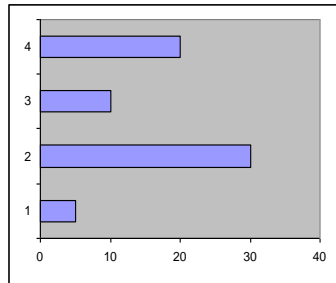
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Tips to convey data

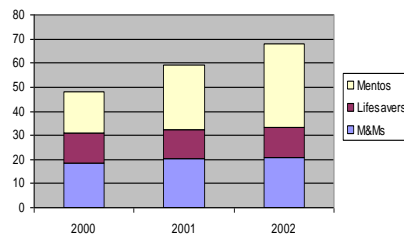
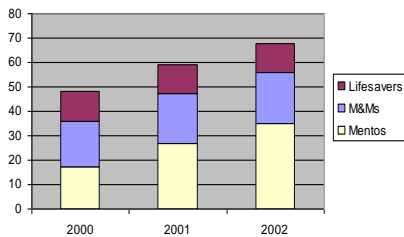
- Order variables for easy comparison
- Keep differences between quantities equal
- Start numerical axis at zero
- Use 3D charts sparingly – they give deceptive weight to the items in the “front”

Conveying data



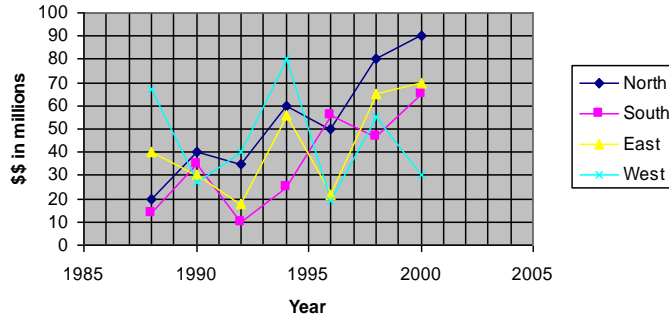
Ordering variables by size makes comparison easier.

Put the least varying bar of stacked bars on bottom



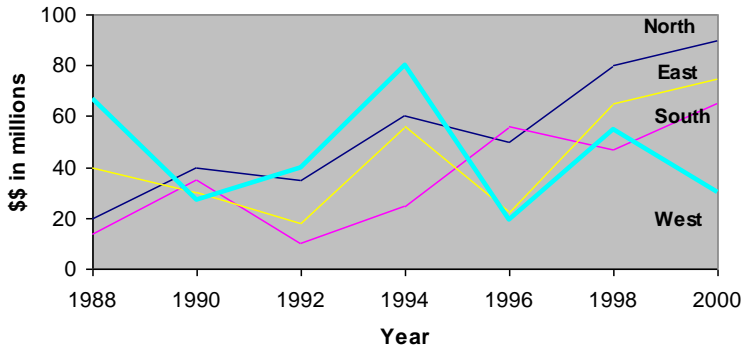
This chart is a more honest representation of the data..

Sales by Division



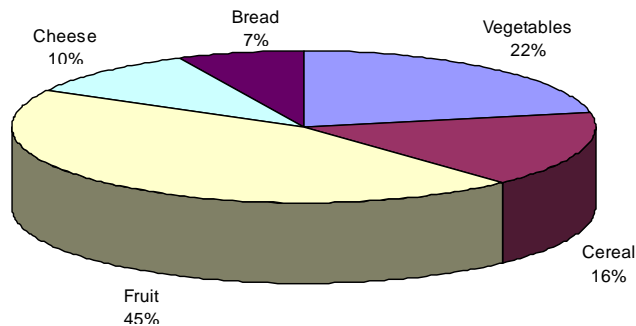
Start numerical axis at zero and eliminate unnecessary grid lines.

Sales have increased in all divisions except the West



Message is in heading, no gridlines, and trends are easy to follow.

Problems with 3D charts



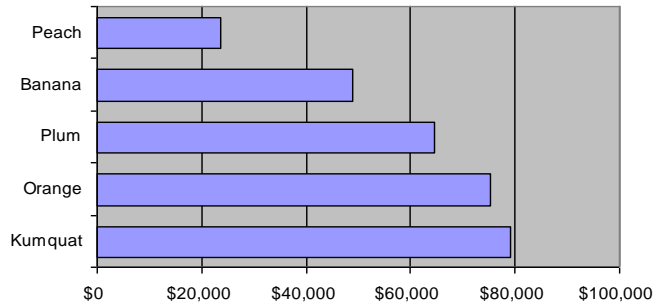
Pie sections in front of screen have distorted emphasis.

Guidelines specific to column and bar charts



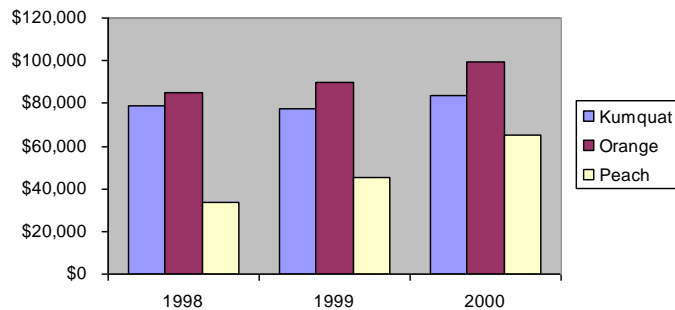
- Keep bar and columns wider than spaces between them to focus attention on message
- Label bars and columns when possible, instead of using legends and grids
- Group items for comparison

Peach sales are the lowest of software products



Effective for comparing one or several variables.

Peach sales continue to be the lowest of graphics packages



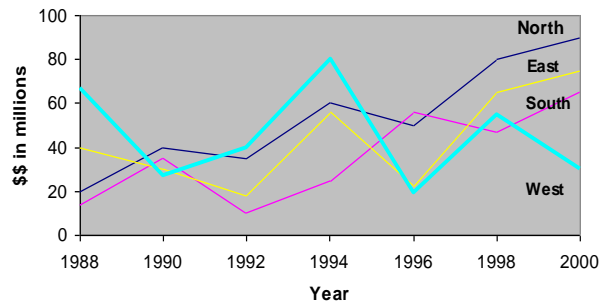
Effective for comparing one or several variables **over time**.

Guidelines specific to line charts



- Reserve the heaviest line for the most important variable or component
- Use a variety of broken lines for other variables
- Anchor data lines to the left axis
- Label the line on any combination line and bar chart

Line charts show changes in time of 1 or more variables



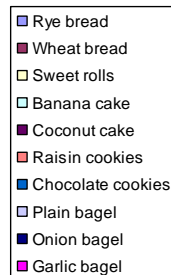
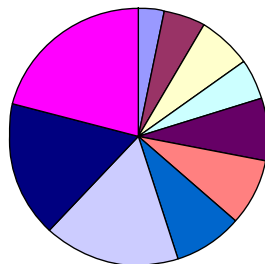
More effective than column charts when have more than 4-5 data points.

Guidelines specific to pie charts



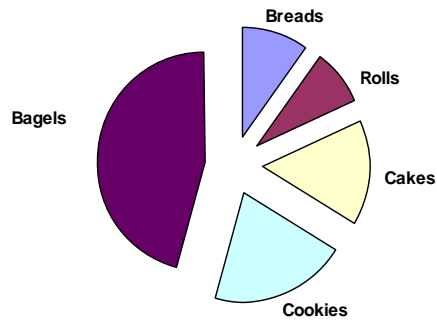
- Limit the number of components to five or fewer
- Highlight your message by exploding the most important segment
- Place the most important component at the 12 o'clock position and use darker shade to show emphasis

Bagels are our best sellers



Too much detail obscures main message.

Bagels are our best sellers



Based on the message, this visual is to the point.

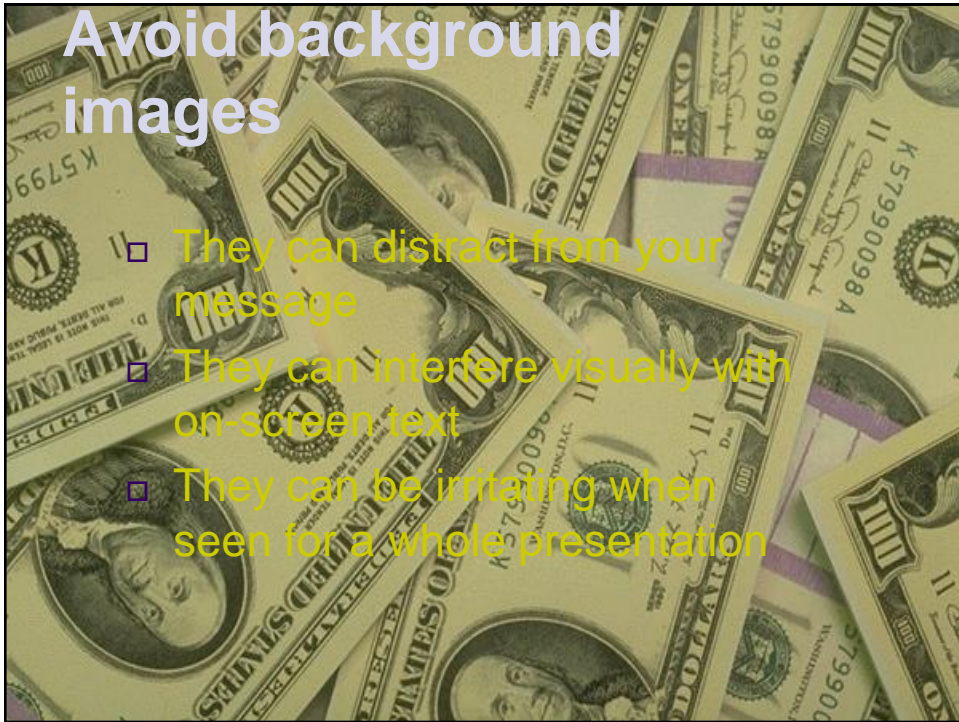
Precautions to take when presenting data



- Use visual effects sparingly
- Use color purposefully
- Use color consistently
- Be aware of color associations

Avoid background images

- They can distract from your message
- They can interfere visually with on-screen text
- They can be irritating when seen for a whole presentation



Use design elements with care

- *Too many colors may distract from your message*
- *Shadows behind text may make it harder to read*
- *Design elements may crowd text*
- *A line below a header signals the reader to “stop here”*



Is this an effective on-screen slide template?



- Background is simple
- Text shows up clearly
- Bullets are basic; do not distract

Logo

This is not an effective slide



- *Large areas of color are less likely to print evenly if you print transparencies*
- *Light colored backgrounds wash out when projected*
- *Colored text may be harder to read than black*

Visual support helps people remember your message



- Design visual that add to presentation
 - Keep visual simple
 - One point per visual
- Use the most appropriate form
 - Text visuals preview and summarize and provide transitions
 - Charts show relationships among data
- Keep the audience focused on your message, not on the design features

Questions?



Send your questions to hayhoe_g@mercer.edu.





Sources

- Holcombe & Stein, *Presentations for Decision Makers* (3rd ed., 1996, Wiley)
- Markel, *Technical Communication* (2004, Bedford/St. Martins)
- Morgan, Reichert, & Harrison, *From Numbers to Words* (2002, Allyn & Bacon)
- White, *Using Charts and Graphs* (1984, Bowker)