

Principles of Professional Communication 1

Lecture 12
Graphics & Visuals – a picture paints a thousand words

Familiar icons & symbols – what do they represent?



Familiar signs



Why is the study of visual communication important?

- Our culture places much emphasis on the visual – *seeing is believing*
- Visual communication is faster and more easily processed
- Visuals and graphics add another layer of meaning and another way of communicating
- Visuals actively engage the brain in interpretation, making it more likely that readers will remember the information



Principles of Professional Communication 1

4

Elements of visual literacy

- Graphic principles highlight the relationships between
 - elements of text
 - text and images
 - different representations of data
- These principles include:
 - Size
 - Colour
 - Proximity
 - Arrangement
 - Context
 - Repetition
 - Contrast
 - Alignment

Principles of Professional Communication 1

5

Proximity

- Group related items together (physically close to one another) to enhance their cohesion and give the reader a clear idea of the organization and content of the page
- This is how white space "works" **I2**
- Don't put too much space between headings and the information they introduce **A B C**
- Unrelated items should be moved farther away and grouped by some unifying device eg colour, text box etc **I4**

Principles of Professional Communication 1

6

Alignment

- Nothing should be placed on a page (or screen) arbitrarily. Every item should be visually connected to something else on the page
- Proximity shows the relationship of parts to one another; alignment shows that the parts all contribute to the whole
- Centered alignments are relatively sedate; flush right/ left strengthen the overall sense of design
- Once everything is aligned, then you can break the rule to focus attention (visuals bleeding through their frame)

Principles of Professional Communication 1

7

Repetition

- Repeat some element of the design throughout the whole piece – a bold font, thick line, bullet, etc
- Repetition of headings and boldface type gives readers a sense of internal consistency
- Repetition of design elements between related pieces supports corporate identity

Principles of Professional Communication 1

8

Contrast

- Contrast adds excitement to design, forces the reader to pay attention, and indicates hierarchies and oppositions within the page
- If two items are not really the same, make them really different! – Otherwise you have confusion, not contrast
- Contrasts must be strong
"Don't be a wimp!"

Principles of Professional Communication 1

9

How do graphics & visuals enhance & supplement a report?

- Make points vivid and help readers “see” data
- Present information more compactly than words
- Convey/ simplify complex data
- Demonstrate contrasts/ comparisons
- Suggest movements/ trends over time
- Emphasise physical appearance

Principles of Professional Communication 1

10

How do graphics & visuals enhance & supplement a report?

- Analyse concepts/ processes/ abstract relationships
- Should not replace text
- Should be properly incorporated and referenced eg ‘... *as shown in figure 1* ...’
- Different graphics serve different purposes – choose the right visual for the story and the data
- Ensure each visual is accurate and ethical

Principles of Professional Communication 1

11

All visuals share certain conventions

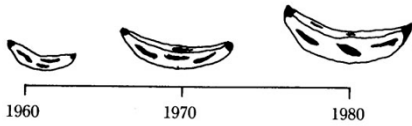
- Identify an analytic perspective for the data with an interpretative *title*
- Clearly describe the *type of data* (survey or projection)
- Label the *units* (e.g. slices in a pie chart)
- Label the *axes* and use a *legend*
- List the *source of the data* or acknowledge the *source of the visual* (if copied)
- Integrate into text with *table/ figure numbers*

Principles of Professional Communication 1

12

What's wrong with this graphic?

Source: Sadler & Tucker, 1981, 116

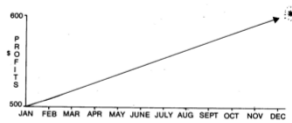


- Has there been a growth in the *number* of bananas between 1960 and 1980?
- Or have the bananas grown increased in *size*?

Principles of Professional Communication 1

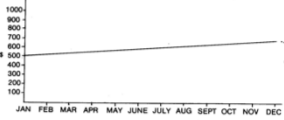
13

Line graphs



✓ Indicate movements over time, compare frequency, identify correlations

A very persuasive effort! On the other hand, with a wider time scale and a greater dollar range, there appears to be only a miserable advance in profits. A poor effort!



✗ Inappropriate labels and scales can make them difficult to interpret

Q Q: What is the difference between these two graphs?

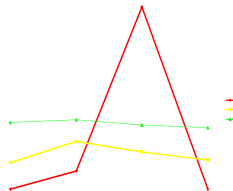
Source: Sadler & Tucker, 1981, 116

Principles of Professional Communication 1

14

Line graphs

- Put time on the horizontal axis
- Avoid more than 3 or 4 lines
- Use only 2 lines if they cross a lot
- Use different colours and a legend
- Label the axes
- Avoid perspective



Source: Gould

Principles of Professional Communication 1

15

Poor example



Source: Gould

Principles of Professional Communication 1

16

Column or vertical bar graph

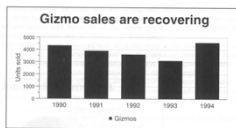


Figure 5.16: Bar graph

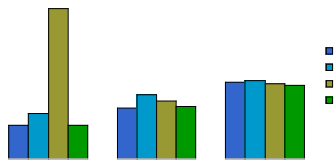
Source: Eanson, 1995, 79

- ✓ Compare items, show distributions or highlight correlations
- ✓ Different bar charts for different purposes
 - Grouped (compare aspects of each item across time)
 - Segmented, subdivided or stacked (helps compare totals but cannot compare segments)
 - Deviation (identify opposites)
 - Paired (show correlation between two items)
- ✗ Difficult for the eye to interpret size and proportions

Principles of Professional Communication 1

17

Grouped bar charts allow comparison

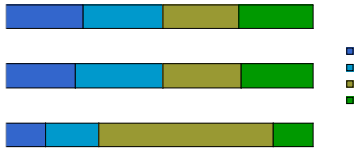


Source: Gould

Principles of Professional Communication 1

18

Segmented, subdivided, stacked bar charts show different relationships

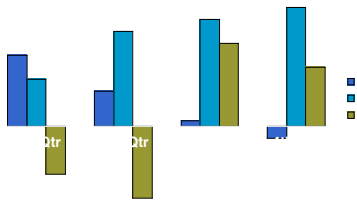


Source: Gould

Principles of Professional Communication 1

19

Deviation bar charts show exceptions



Source: Gould

Principles of Professional Communication 1

20

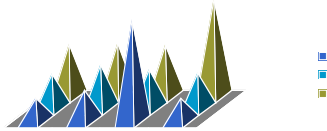
Bar chart design

- Use a logical order
 - Chronological
 - By region
- Put bars close enough for comparison
- Label both axes and make increments consistent
- Make all bars the same width
- Use colours for coding (not just “to look good”)
- Avoid “chart junk” – especially 3D views

Principles of Professional Communication 1

21

Chart junk



Source: Gould

Principles of Professional Communication 1

22

Pie charts

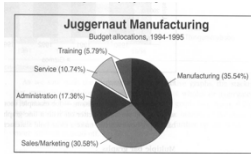


Figure 8.18: Exploded pie graph

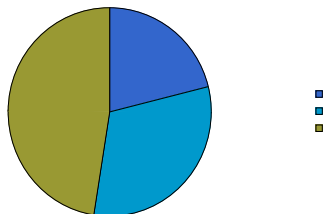
Source: Eunson, 1995, 78

Principles of Professional Communication 1

23

- ✓ Show relative proportions and the importance of each part to the whole
- ✓ Label segments and proportions outside the pie
- ✓ Limit segments to 5-7
- ✗ Can be difficult to judge area and size differences therefore should not be used to exactly compare segments

Good example

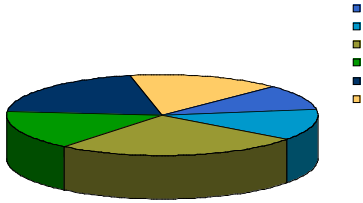


Source:

Principles of Professional Communication 1

24

Poor example



Source: Gould

Principles of Professional Communication 1

25

Tables

- ✓ Offer clear comprehensive detail
- ✓ Allow comparison between large amounts of data
- ✓ Make readers focus on the raw data not your interpretation of the data
- ✓ How you set out the table can affect interpretation
- ✗ Difficult to read quickly
- ✗ Hard to recognise relationships

Principles of Professional Communication 1

26

Even tables can tell different stories – compare ...

	Florida	Alaska	New York City
Spring	23 m	2 m	10 m
Summer	10 m	13 m	12.5 m
Fall	13.3 m	3 m	12.5 m
Winter	49 m	2 m	15.5 m
Total	95.3 m	20 m	50.5 m

	Spring	Summer	Fall	Winter
Florida	25%	10%	15%	50%
Alaska	10%	65%	15%	10%
New York City	20%	25%	25%	30%

Source: Gould

Principles of Professional Communication 1

27

Summary of charts

- Use charts to simplify data
- Pick an appropriate style – bar charts are most common for business audiences
- Provide an interpretative title – you want your readers to understand the data in a way that supports your arguments, not theirs
- Avoid “chart junk”

Principles of Professional Communication 1

28

Diagrams

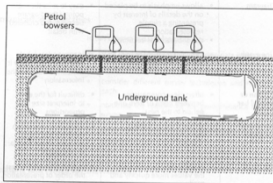


Figure 17.8 A diagram showing the underground storage tank of a petrol station

Principles of Professional Communication 1

29

- ✓ Allow emphasis to be placed on the details of interest by presenting a simple representation
- ✓ Can show a cross section and allow views that are not available in photos
- ✗ Easy to miss the main point if the diagram becomes too cluttered

Photographs

- Shows subject as it appears, has an immediate impact
- Creates perception of authenticity
- Can be difficult to see the point because of detail – may need to be cropped so that key point is not lost
- Can be easily manipulated or set up
- Can be misinterpreted when taken out of context

Principles of Professional Communication 1

30

The camera never lies ... or does it?



Source: Heitman, 2001, www.kheitman.com

Humorous or serious?



Source: www.vincepinto.com

Potential for world conflict



Source: www.smh.com.au

Cartoons can be fun ...



"Well, thank God we all made it out in time ..."
"Course, now we're equally screwed."

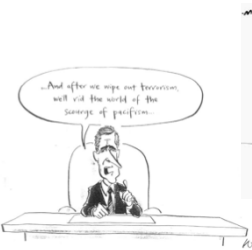


"I'm leaving you, Frank, because you're a shiftless, low-down, good-for-nothing imbecile ... and, might I finally add, you have the head of a chicken."

Principles of Professional Communication 1

34

Or have a serious message ...



ity the Iraqis, victims of 'liberation'



Source: www.smh.com

Principles of Professional Communication 1

35

Why is layout important? Hints for sharp layout

- Layout is the "non verbal" aspect of written communication
- Headings, subheadings and numbering act as *signposts* to guide your reader
- Body text should be between 10 and 12 point. Headings can be larger
- Use the same typeface, type size and leading (line spacing) for *all* your body copy
- Use enough leading to make the text easy to read – usually 1 or 2 points more than your text

Principles of Professional Communication 1

36

Hints for sharp layout

- Make paragraph beginnings clear – paragraph space is preferable to indentation
- Ragged right margins make text look more visually interesting
- Leave more space above headlines and subheads than below them. Use subheads liberally to help readers find what they are looking for
- White space used skilfully can be used to show readers where to start and where to stop. It can isolate important messages

Principles of Professional Communication 1

37

Hints for a sharp layout

- If you choose a design device use it throughout the document to establish a recognisable pattern. For example
 - Signals used (arrows or numbers)
 - Words or terms used for captions
 - Format of questions or headings
 - Use of screened backgrounds
 - Typeface and type size used for text, headings and captions

Principles of Professional Communication 1

38

Line spacing

Text is difficult to read when the lines are positioned too close together

Too much space between lines make the thought seem disconnected

Text is most legible when the line separation is about 1 1/2 times the letter height

Principles of Professional Communication 1

39

Did you know that ... ?

OF THE PEOPLE WHO PICK UP A NEWSLETTER

100% will read	HEADLINES	
	KICKERS	
	PHOTO CAPTIONS (and look at the photos)	
70% will read	SUBHEADS	UNDERLINED ITEMS
	BULLETS	BOLDFACED ITEMS
	QUOTES	ILLUSTRATION CAPTIONS
5% - 30% will read	TEXT	

Principles of Professional Communication 1

40

Fonts & formatting

Don't use too many fonts, in terms of **typeface** and in size. The general feeling is to limit yourself to 3 different **type settings**. Also variable width fonts such as Times New Roman are easier to read than fixed width fonts such as courier. STUDIES SHOW THAT TEXT IN ALL CAPS SLOWS READING BY 12% SO YOU SHOULD MIX CASE.

The same goes for justified text, so that is something of which to be aware. Also short justified lines are to be avoided, but that should be common sense.

Principles of Professional Communication 1

41

Can you read this?

Is this line visible?
IF IT'S ALL CAPS DOES IT HELP?

Do you find this typestyle easy to read?

This is readable type, but the color is wrong.

Remember 5% of the male population is colour blind; don't put important information in red text

Does it help to underline a whole sentence or a paragraph of type?

IF IT'S ALL CAPS DOES IT HELP?

HOW ABOUT SCRIPT IN ALL CAPS?

This is a san serif type, this is serif

Principles of Professional Communication 1

42

Type size

This is 12 point type
This is 18 point type
This is 24 point type
This is 30 point type
This is 36 point type
This is 48 point type
This is 60 point type

Principles of Professional Communication 1

43

Choose an appropriate typeface

Typeface styles have inherent meanings

<i>You are invited to an Event of Pomp & Ceremony</i>	Visit Treasure Island
You are invited to an Event of Pomp & Ceremony	Hello Gorgeous
Financial Management	<i>Hello Gorgeous</i>
Financial Management	Bed & Breakfast
	Bed & Breakfast

So choose one that suits the style and audience of your message

Principles of Professional Communication 1

44

Or the consequences can be disastrous ...

They Should Have Used Another Font



Source: www.vincepinto.com

Principles of Professional Communication 1

45

Finally ... for fans of "Burgo's Catchphrase" here is an IQ test

Going	death	MIND
cccccc	Life	MATTER

o	R E A D I N G			R
M.D.	No	No	No	ROAD
B.A.		Punch		S
Ph.D.	No	No	No	A
		No		D
				S
