



Tips for Innovative Meetings and Events (T.I.M.E.)  
Topic: Visual Aids - Help for Handouts & PowerPoint Presentations  
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Written and Published by Sue Tinnish, 847.394.9857, stinnish@ameritech.net  
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## Welcome

The signs of spring are everywhere. The birds and budding trees and flowers are visual signs that the season has arrived.

Visual aids can add impact and interest to a meeting. They enable a presenter to appeal to more than one sense at the same time, thus increasing the audience's understanding and retention level.

Visual aids also involve your audience and require a change from one activity to another - from hearing to seeing.

- This month, I take a look at PowerPoint (the ever present presentation tool) and handouts. Later in an upcoming issue, I will address some additional aspects of visual aids. -

So be ready to Power Up handouts and presentation slides. You can use this newsletter for:

- Your own presentations
- Speakers who prepare their own presentations
- Ideas on look, feel and characteristics for an upcoming presentation

And watch for next month's issue (a bit earlier in the month). It will be my 5th year anniversary of writing and publishing Tips for Innovative Meetings and Events.

Sue  
[Sue Tinnish](#)

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### If a "A picture is worth a thousand words."

Why use visuals? The old adage says "A picture is worth a thousand words." There are many advantages to using visual aids. They can:

1. Provide a change for the audience from just listening
2. Stimulate interest more easily than words
3. Offer the audience a different way to absorb information
4. Promote attentiveness - people think 4 times faster than anyone can speak. Visuals offer the audience something else to focus on.
5. Enhance understanding of a complicated idea or process
6. Aid memory - it is far easier to remember a visual explanation than a series of words
7. Save time - information that is presented visually is received and processed faster than a verbal message
8. Be entertaining
9. Break the presentation up
10. Keep the audience focused
11. Add variety

In addition visual aids help:

- Explain a concept
- Reinforce key points
- Clarify complex data, working relationships or procedures
- Define a situation
- Prove a point
- Generate a mood to make the audience more receptive to a particular idea
- Add authenticity
- Limit note taking
- Keep the audience aligned with the speaker

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### A Good Look

Criteria for Good Visual Aids

- Visibility
- Clarity
- Simplicity
- Logistics support the visuals - size of group, room, equipment

Design issues are paramount in creating effective visual aids. While there are many important things to remember (more on that in a future issue of T.I.M.E.), there are 4 important design concepts that will help insure the end products will be effective:

1. Make it BIG - Visual aids must be visible to be effective. Keep your images and fonts as large as practical.
2. Keep it Simple - Visual aids should be simple and quickly readable.
3. Make it Clear - Less is better—a simple, well designed visual aid is more effective and memorable than a busy visual aid with a lot of data and information.
4. Be Consistent - The design should carry over from visual to visual.

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### The Many Looks of Visual Aids

Visual aids range beyond just slide presentations and handouts. While this issue of Tips for Innovative Meetings and Events will only deal with those two types of visuals, consider the many options available: (And stay tuned for future issues of T.I.M.E. when I will focus more on this topic.)

- Computer slide presentation
- Handouts
- Flipchart
- Slides
- Film/video clips
- Video and audio presentations
- Book marks or wallet cards
- Charts
- Demonstrations
- Displays/exhibits
- Graphs
- Maps
- Newsletters
- Objects or models
- Photographs
- Posters
- Sketches
- Storyboards
- Tip sheets
- Word charts
- Whiteboards
- Workbooks
- Combinations such as a word chart with a sketch or map

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### A Better Build Handout

Handouts offer important advantages:

- Can introduce the speaker in more depth than an introduction warrants
- They can be the perfect audience "leveler" helping to provide information to the "newbies" in the crowd. Such background information helps bring various levels of the audience to the same level.
- Provide more detail or additional resources.

When designing a handout, here are some considerations:

1. Includes plenty of white space for notes and to enhance readability: use wide margins and leave substantial gaps between paragraphs or topics
2. Identify the structure of the topic using headings and sub-headings
3. Organized the information in a logical order
4. Number the pages for easy reference and discussion
5. Include relevant graphics particularly if they are used in the actual presentation
6. Should not be too long – people may not read them
7. Be subdivided or include a table of contents if lengthy
8. Use simple, clear language throughout
9. Explain any trade or technical terms
10. Include copyright permission
11. Omit colored or shaded backgrounds
12. Replace grays with hatch marks in charts/graphs
13. Print text in solid black
14. Include borders around visuals to defines their edges
15. Table or figure legends should be legible

Some information derived from A Handbook for Medical Teachers, 4th Edition, 2001

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### Who Doesn't Love a Handout?

Rather than distributing handouts that mirror the presentation information, I favor handouts which cause the participants to do more than listen. This can appeal to a variety of learning styles and further involve the audience.

Examples of handouts and their purposes:

Slides+ Handout: The top half of each page in this handout is the reproduced slide that will appear on screen. The area below details the ideas that are being explained verbally when the slide is presented. The explanation can be written in complete sentences rather than bullet points, so that the ideas are clearly and fully-described with no ambiguity.

Gapped Handouts: This sets up the organization and main points of the session. The handout will list the headings and then leave sufficient space for the notes the

participants are expected to make. The gaps may include the appropriate number of bullets or numbers for the points to be written in that space.

This format guides participants on the most pertinent information. Participants note and work with information in an active way.

Interactive Handouts: These handouts include tasks for participants to do (individually or in groups) during the meeting, with space for them to write down their ideas. When people have put some of themselves into a handout, they may value it more than a document simply distributed to them. Here are additional ideas on creating interaction between the speaker and the audience within a handout:

- **Understanding Checks**  
These handouts cue participants to stop and process information by posing questions based on the information shared. There are many ways to construct such understanding checks, but typically they include a question with a space to include a short answer.
- **Questions**  
In this handout participants come up with a question of their own. In this way, participants are encouraged to process the material at a higher level.
- **Opening Questions**  
The opening slide simply states an "Opening Question," – some idea that you want people to ponder to prepare for the presentation or next section. Participants can write about the question or think quietly. Alternatively, everyone can engage in "think-pair-share" in which first they think for a few moments about the question, pair up with a partner to discuss the question briefly, and then come back to share their thoughts with the larger group. This also helps assess people's knowledge of the particular topic and might help focus the presentation.
- **Brainstorming**  
People work in pairs and view a slide that presents a question or statement. As a pair, they will think of as many things as they can that relate to this particular topic. They will write down their results, either as lists, concept maps, or in a narrative format.
- **"Stump Your Partner"**  
Ask participants to write down a question in their handout that they feel is difficult. Then they can turn to a neighbor and pose the question with the goal of stumping their partner. A presenter can then collect some of these questions verbally. This gives people a greater investment in absorbing the content. And it's also fun.
- **"Check Up"**  
This can occur during the middle of a presentation or at the end. Again, introduce the activity through a PowerPoint slide and handout. Ask participants to turn to a partner and compare notes, focusing specifically on the most important points and what they are most confused about. The partner can work to clarify the point on which their partner is confused. A presenter can collect this information verbally and also respond to clear up any confusion.

- Focused listening  
Simply create a slide with a focal concept and brief instructions, setting aside a minute or so for participants to construct their lists. “Write down as many.....” A presenter may ask participants question about the content of their lists as a way getting immediate feedback.
- Two Minute Summary  
The two minute summary is most appropriate for use at the end of a session, where it allows participants to assess what they have learned and internalize the information.

There are many variations on this technique. Some questions that presenters may ask for the two minute summary include:

- What was the most important (significant, crucial) thing you learned in today’s presentation?
- What question(s) do you have about the information covered ?
- List the key concepts
- What examples did I use today that helped you the most? The least?
- What is the main application for you of the material we discussed today?
- What did you learn today that you will use or apply after this meeting?

To implement this activity, plan at least two or three minutes. Have the PowerPoint slide with the instructions and the question people should address. The presenter can elect to have participants write their responses in their handout or collect the responses on a 3” x 5” note card or separate sheet of paper.

- Muddiest Point developed by Harvard Professor Mosteller  
This activity is best used at the end of a topic—before moving to new topic. The activity asks participants to write down one thing that they simply don’t understand. By collecting the “muddiest points”, presenters are able to revisit information and also improve their content to increase comprehension.

Some of these ideas are adapted from Classroom Assessment Techniques: A Handbook for College Teachers by Thomas Angelo & K. Patricia Cross, (1993) San Francisco: Jossey-Bass Publishers

Handouts can also include:

- Reading/Resource lists
- Primary sources: Brief excerpts or quotations from authors to be discussed, pictures or sets of figures. This allows you to share additional detailed information; be sensitive to copyright regulations.

Take PowerPoint beyond the mundane and usual. Here are some options:

**Wise Animation.** Animation can be an over-used feature. However, animation can be used effectively beyond making objects whoosh in. For a complex diagram, animation is a great tool to demonstrate a step-by-step process with each item in the diagram dissolving in and entering the slide on a mouse click. (Great article on the subject in March 2004 Presentations magazine.)

**Lose the Clip Art.** Clip art looks dated and is boring. Opt for photography or purchased images.

**Use Images to Reinforce Numeric Data.** Don't just display information in a table. Rather turn the data into a graphical image to show the impact. For example, make larger numbers actually a larger font. Dr. Joseph Sommerville coined the word infographics. Infographics are a special kind of visual representation. For example, if you wanted to talk about the difference in domestic oil production between 1992 and 2002, you might use a barrel symbol to represent X million barrels of oil. This easily recognizable symbol adds visual reinforcement to the message. 200 million barrels of oil can be shown as a larger graphic than 100 million barrels of oil.

**Turn Text Information into Charts.** Delineate information by displaying it in a 3-D pie chart

**Transparency Tool.** PowerPoint 2002 and 2003 versions offer more control, flexibility and creativity when working with text boxes. Using these features you can create layers to your presentations. For example, a text box can be a transparent color over a background. You can also animate transparent shapes or create soft edges to your text boxes.

The resulting effects of blended colors and a feeling of depth add interest and fullness to a presentation. This Power Tip also gets away from the stock PowerPoint template feel.

**Use Arrows to Highlight Direction and Action.** Arrows can take a static looking slide and create more attention. Animating the arrows also allows a presenter to move at their own pace during a presentation and focus the audience on the point being discussed.

**Change Bullets to Graphics.** Instead of listing text in bullets, create a graphic for each piece of text and place the text with the graphic. This will add overall impact.

**Use Large Graphics.** Don't be afraid to make the graphics the story. Replace bullets with pictures. Let the presenter tell the story behind the graphics. Experiment with full-frame photographs.

**Pose Questions to Organize your Message.** Creating slides that asks a question gives the audience an opportunity to express their interest, opinions or feelings. In smaller groups, a presenter can actually take feedback from the audience. In larger groups where that may be impractical, posing a question keeps the audience's point of view in focus during the presentation.

**Break and Simplify.** Break big charts into more than one slide. Simplify graphics for



Use these free sound files to add variety to your presentations at [www.webplaces.com/html/sounds.htm](http://www.webplaces.com/html/sounds.htm)

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### Freebies: Humor

#### Freebies

Buzz Word of the Day

EYE CHART: An information-laden PowerPoint slide with small type. Often introduced with: "I know this slide is tough to see, but..." Nominated by David Kingsley

To see the full Buzzword Compliant Dictionary, go to <http://www.buzzwhack.com>.

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**More Freebies:** Create a self-running PowerPoint slideshow. Email me and I will send you instructions. I like to use this to create a Countdown for breaks. [Sue Tinnish](#)

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### Future T.I.M.E.

Next month is my 5 year anniversary of writing Tips for Innovative Meetings and Events. It is a month full of major events including two family birthdays (husband and daughter) and my son graduating from college (University of Arizona). He and I are celebrating his success by going parachute jumping. I will have the next issue published before my big jump on May 15.

And I am involved in organizing [AmaZing Meetings - Discover the Magic](#) for the International Association of Conference Centers. If you want to hold AmaZing Meetings, you will want to attend this one day event on [Thursday, May 26, 2005 at the Eaglewood Conference Resort & Spa](#). Registration is now open on the web at: [https://programs.regweb.com/iacc/IACCLearningN\\_0526](https://programs.regweb.com/iacc/IACCLearningN_0526)

I love to see familiar faces in the audience. Please come and see Bob Higa, Magician and Master of Ceremonies ([Bob Higa](#)), and me talk about AmaZing Meetings!

Finally, my subscriber base only grows through word of mouth of my subscribers. I would really appreciate it if you would forward T.I.M.E. onto your colleagues, associates, and clients. Just press the forward button at the end of the newsletter.

[Register for AmaZing Meetings](#)

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### T.I.M.E. Gone By

Many thanks to [Haley Powers](#) and her other associates of the [Southern California MPI Chapter](#) for their hospitality. I received a first class tour and welcome when speaking to the chapter on the Return on Investment methodology.

If you are interested in past issues, please e-mail us with the month and topic and we will send you a copy of that newsletter. Here's what is included in past issues [Back Issue Request](#):

May 2000: [Teambuilding](#) and (Freebie) New York Times Reprint On Teambuilding

June 2000: [Green Meetings](#) and (Freebie) Resource List Of Exercises

July 2000: [Values](#) and (Freebie) Meeting Analysis

August 2000: [Minimum/Minimal Meetings](#) and (Freebie) Web Winners

October 2000: [Evaluations](#) and (Freebie) Sample Evaluation Questions

November 2000: [Politics](#)

December 2000: [Toys](#) and (Freebie) Brainstorming Ideas

January 2001: [Sales, Award Presentations](#) and (Freebie) Sales Tips

February 2001: [Change](#) and Communicating Change and (Freebie) Change Bombs

March 2001: [Open Space Technology](#)

April 2001: [Adult Learning Styles](#) and (Freebie) Learning Style Questionnaire

May 2001: [Trade Shows](#) and (Freebie) Trade Show Timeline

June 2001: [Em otional Intelligence](#) and (Freebie) EI Quiz

July 2001: [Presentation Tips](#) and (Freebie) Speaker Introductions

August 2001: [Ice Breakers](#) and (Freebie) Resource List

September 2001: [Facilitation](#) and (Freebie) Problem Personalities In A Meeting

October 2001: [Humor](#) and (Freebie) The Benefits Of Laughter

November 2001: [Customer Care](#) and (Freebie) Complaints

December 2001: [Slack](#) and (Freebie) Quiet Time

January 2002: [Teambuilding Options](#) and (Freebie)

February 2002: [Promotional Products](#) and (Freebie) Case Study

March 2002: [Multicultural Communication](#) and (Freebie) Multicultural Meeting Tips

April 2002: [Outdoor Learning](#) and (Freebie) Justification Checklist

May 2002: [Budgets, June, June, and ROK](#) and (Freebie) Budgeting Beyond Excel

June 2002: [Creativity](#) and (Freebie) Building the Case for Creativity

July 2002: [High Touch Technology](#) and (Freebie) Personal Technology Tools

August 2002: [Economic and Business Cycles](#) and (Freebie) Investment Strategies for meetings

September 2002: [Successful Environmental Factors/Conference Centers](#) and (Freebie) Learning Environments

October 2002: [Return on Investment](#) and (Freebie) Balanced Scorecard

November 2002: [Incentive Meetings](#) and (Freebie) Forum Synopsis

December 2002: [Resource Recap](#) and (Freebie) Resource Lists

January 2003: [Everyday Meetings](#) and (Freebie) Meeting Quiz

February 2003: [Diversity](#) and (Freebie) Survey Results

March 2003: [Problem Solving](#) and (Freebie) Techniques Illustrated

April 2003: [Marketing: Pre- and Post- Event](#) and (Freebie) Blogs

May 2003: [Entertainment](#) and (Freebie) Storytelling

June 2003: [Balance in Meetings and child caret](#) with (Freebie) Child Care at Meetings Tips

July 2003: [Mobile Events](#) with (Freebie) Sponsorship

August 2003: [Last Minute Ideas](#) with (Freebie) Audience Participation  
September 2003: [Training Meetings](#) with (Freebie) Kirkpatrick Challenge  
October 2003: [Unique Venues](#) with (Freebie) Experiential Checklist  
November 2003: [Data, Information and Number Crunching](#) with (Freebie) European Privacy  
December 2003: [Deja View](#)

January 2004: [Branding](#) with (Freebie) Identity vs. Brand  
February 2004: [Audio Visuals](#) with (Freebie) Speaker Guidelines  
March 2004: [Networking](#) with (Freebie) Networking Ideas  
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May 2004: [Sensory Meetings](#) with (Freebie) Music's Impact  
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January 2005: [New Year's Resolutions](#) with (Freebie) Best Business Books  
February 2005: [Brainy Side of F&B](#) with (Freebie) Cooking Metaphors for Meetings  
March 2005: [Sarbanes-Oxley and Meetings](#)

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