



## [DR. SHIRLEY'S CAREER CORNER]

By: DR. SHIRLEY A. WHITE  
President  
Success Images

Reprinted from the August 2007 issue of BIC

# Making presentations with confidence, control — part 4

Many of us are familiar with the saying, "A picture is worth a thousand words." Visuals can vividly depict a fairly complex idea. In addition, visuals can arouse interest, encourage participation, persuade, focus attention, save time, reinforce ideas, add humor and enhance credibility.

There are a multitude of visual aids at your disposal, including lists and tables, pie charts, bar graphs and maps, schematics, models, cartoons and drawings. With the technology available today, we can also have animation, audio and video.

***Make your presentation people-centered, not media-centered.***

The media used to present these aids include PowerPoint presentations, overhead transparencies, flip charts, chalk or white boards, DVDs and models. The factors influencing your material and media selection should encompass your objective, the size and importance of the audience, the location, your budget and preparation time, and the complexity of the message.

### Using visual aids effectively

Visual aids are not crutches. Visuals should be a supplement to your talk, not a substitute. They are intended to complement your presentation, not carry it. So, keep in mind the following guidelines:

➤ When constructing visuals, employ the "KISS" principle, which is "keep it short and simple." Avoid overloading visuals with too much data.

➤ Use the "KILL" formula. This means, "keep it large and legible." When preparing visuals, they should be readable by your entire audience. With PowerPoint, font sizes smaller than 32-point are difficult to read even when projected. Also, avoid putting more than six or seven lines per slide.

➤ If using color, you need contrast. Light letters on a dark background and dark letters on a light background work well. A background that requires the lights to be dimmed takes away from you and your presentation.

➤ When using flip charts and white boards, avoid using a black marker. Blue and green are good for lettering while red is good for highlighting.

➤ Talk to the audience, not your visual aid. Do not read from the visual. Don't speak until you have eye contact with your audience. When you write on the flip chart or white board, stop talking because it will be difficult for the audience to hear you. As soon as you finish writing, continue your discussion.

➤ Learn to direct the audience's focus where you want it. To refocus their attention after using a visual, put it aside or black out the computer screen.

➤ When using a multimedia projector, an overhead projector or a flip chart, you should add, not subtract, from your presentation. One way this can be accomplished, especially with a portable screen, is to place it at a 45-degree angle and slightly to one side of the room. Your goal is to occupy the central position and more easily focus the audience's attention on you and on the explanation of the data. Of course, if the screen is automatic and comes down from the ceiling, then you stand

at a 45-degree angle to the screen.

➤ To reduce distraction when you are having a lengthy discussion about a point on a slide, as well as to prolong the life of your projector's bulb, black out the computer screen.

➤ Turn a flip chart page when you have finished referring to it. If the flip chart is prepared in advance, leave at least two blank pages between each sheet so your next page will not show until you are ready for it.

➤ Erase any writing on a board that has already been noted by the audience and is no longer needed for future reference.

➤ Practice using your visuals when you practice your presentation.

➤ Make sure you have all your equipment and supplies before going to the presentation location. It is a good idea to have a computer presentation both on your laptop's hard drive, and on a CD or flash drive for backup.

➤ Last, but so very critical, know how to operate the equipment, and know where to find the key operator should trouble arise.

➤ Make your presentation people-centered, not media-centered. While media can certainly help, it's your interaction and rapport with the audience that makes the difference between an effective and ineffective presentation.

Now that we have completed the series, I urge you to always remember that your presentation begins before you open your mouth. It begins the moment you walk out in front of your audience. So, be prepared, be confident, and be in control.

**To inquire about Dr. White's programs and publications, please contact her at (225) 769-2307 or visit [www.successimages.com](http://www.successimages.com). □**