What is important when presenting visuals? Which opinion(s) do you agree with?

Karen Hamilton, Marketing Manager

I think to be effective a good visual must focus on only a few points. It's important not to have too much information on one slide or transparency. Slide overload is bad because people will then spend time reading the slide rather than listening to the presenter. I normally use bullet points to structure information – I never write complete sentences. Headlines are important too.

Keith Sallis, Real Estate Manager

In my opinion the presenter is the focus of the presentation – not the visuals. The key purpose for using a visual aid is to help the audience understand the topic better. So the visuals should only be used to support the presenter's message. A process-flowchart slide, for example, helps people understand visually what you are describing verbally. If a visual distracts the audience's attention from what you're saying, it's useless.

Susan Liu, Export Manager

Above all, a slide or an overhead must be readable. If the audience can't read the slide, they will soon give up. That's why font size is very important. It should be as large as possible, I'd say at least 24. And sometimes it's also a good idea to use different colours to highlight some points. Using many different colours can be confusing though.

Barbara James, Market Researcher

What you say and what you show should always go together 100%. So when you're not talking about the slide, it shouldn't be visible. I always switch off the display when I'm talking about something that has nothing to do with the slide. If people are busy looking at the slide, they aren't listening to what you're saying. It's better to use the B-key to return to a black screen or replace the slide with some form of 'wallpaper' such as a company logo.

Javier Sanchez, Financial Analyst

For me it's very important that the presenter *speaks* to the audience and doesn't *read* to them! The speaker must make eye-contact and not watch the monitor or screen while he or she is talking. I think it's extremely boring when someone just reads slides word for word as if it were an essay or something.

Tony Benetti, Media Consultant

It's called 'Death by PowerPoint' when people use so many sound effects and animations that the audience's attention is completely taken away from the delivery of the message. I think PowerPoint is a fantastic tool, but just because it has so many effects you don't have to use them all. Overuse is overkill here.

OVER TO YOU

What kinds of tools and visuals do you normally use in your presentations?
What tips can you think of for using visuals effectively?