

5 tips for Using Visual Aids Effectively :

Use visual aids with purpose

Visual aids are a proven method for capturing and maintaining attention, enhancing understanding and retention of learning, and promoting taking action. To achieve the greatest impact, choose visual aids to meet specific goals. Each one should serve a purpose. Well-selected and carefully-designed visuals enhance communication. Choose them wisely.

Make visuals clear and uncluttered

You've heard the saying: "A picture is worth a thousand words." This statement is true for props, graphics, PowerPoint slides, and all types of visual aids – IF they are clearly conveyed and uncluttered. However, if they are busy and confusing, they will be distracting and ineffective – keep them simple! As you create visual aids, remember this wise advice... Less is more.

Illustrate and instruct

Visual aids can illustrate an idea or show a process more efficiently and effectively than a description alone. Imagine trying to explain digestion without an illustration of the digestive tract, or show how to determine stages of ripeness without pieces of fruit or photos? Adding visual to verbal promotes learning and retention in less time. Illustrate your instruction!

Practice with props

Props are an effective visual aid for many reasons: they can regain attention, illustrate key ideas, enhance understanding, and improve retention. Make sure your props are visible to everyone by using ones that are large enough and displaying them in clear view of your audience. Prior to use in a presentation, practice with your prop, especially if it is part of a demonstration. Avoid prop failure!

You are the main visual

A common error when using visual aids is putting the focus on the visual aids and not the presenter. When the focus is on your slides or props, you can lose your connection with the audience and reduce your impact. Keep in mind that YOU are the main visual aid in a presentation – be expressive and purposeful in your movement, gestures, and facial expressions to support your message.