

Creating Effective Graphics

Creating bar charts and line graphs

- Make sure that the chart or graph is necessary. If it duplicates any text information, is that duplication desirable to reinforce a point?
- Label the horizontal (X axis) and vertical (Y axis) axes. Use grid lines or scales at regular intervals along the vertical axis (Y axis).
- Use as few bars and lines as needed.
- Contrast the data shown by changing the color or texture of adjacent bars. However, make sure that the color or texture of each bar contrasts sharply with the bars on either side of it.
- Avoid labeling the bars with figures or words beyond the ends of the bars—this creates the illusion that the bars are higher and makes it harder to compare the bars. Actual figures could be shown inside the bars.
- On line graphs, label the lines or use a different color for each line.



Creating pie charts

- Make sure that the pie chart is necessary. If it duplicates any text information, is that duplication desirable to reinforce a point?
- Use six or fewer “slices.”
- If possible, arrange the slices by size, starting the largest slice at the “12 o’clock” position and adding progressively smaller slices in a clockwise direction.
- Contrast the data shown by changing the color or texture of adjacent slices. However, make sure that the color or texture of each slice contrasts sharply with the slices on either side of it.
- Label each slice by placing labels outside the circle.
- If needed, emphasize one piece of the pie by moving its slice out from the circle. Do not emphasize more than one slice at a time.

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Creating illustrations

- Make sure that the illustration is necessary. If it duplicates any text information, is that duplication desirable to reinforce a point?
- Make sure that each illustration is easy to understand (and not subject to misinterpretation). If an illustration requires a lot of explanation, a different type of graphic may be more appropriate.
- Include a title with each illustration and position it in the same place (such as above the illustration).

Taking photographs

- Get permission in advance from the client to take photographs at the client's business. If any persons will be shown in a photograph, get permission from each person before using the photograph in any publication.
- Decide in advance what photographs would be useful.
- Include a title with each photograph and position it in the same place (such as above the photograph).



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