PREPARING A VISUAL AID

Visual aids can be powerful tools for effective communication. You are encouraged to use them whenever they might enhance a speech. Why use visuals? They have five important benefits:

1. They increase understanding:
   Most of what people learn is ingested through their eyes - not their ears. Visual aids help to convey messages clearly.
2. They save time:
   Information that is presented visually is received and processes faster than a verbal message.
3. They enhance retention
4. They promote attentiveness:
   People think faster than you speak... visuals help keep them focused on your message.
5. They help control nervousness:
   Displaying visual aids gives you purposeful physical activity that lets your body process nervous energy without distracting the audience

TYPES OF VISUAL AIDS

Visuals range from simple handheld objects to expensive multi-media extravaganzas. Your choice for a particular speech should depend on several factors including:

- The information you want to convey,
- The size of the audience,
- The physical environment of the room,
- The equipment available to you,
- The time available to prepare visual aids,
- The amount of money you can afford.

EXAMPLES:

- Physical objects, props and models
- White boards
- Charts and posters
- Flip charts
- Overhead transparencies
- Computer presentations, e.g. Powerpoint
- Movies (youtube / dvd)

EFFECTIVE USE OF VISUAL AIDS

1. Make sure they are visible to the entire audience
   * A good rule of thumb is one-half inch for each ten feet between the visual and the farthest audience member
   * Print neatly, bold and clear
   * Display them high enough so that all can see
   * Avoid standing in front of them.

2. Keep them simple and clear
   * Use a single visual to illustrate a point
   * Make diagrams and wording simple
     • Contrasting colors
     • Adequate spacing
     • Keep it NEAT!

   Don't give the audience TOO MUCH to look at.
           too many details = clutter!
           too many labels = clutter!

3. Make sure it is ACCURATE!

   • Contains no errors
   • Is up-to-date
   • Correctly spelled labels
   • Operates properly