

Graphic Organizers: Visual Elements

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Introduction

“Good design’s not about what medium you’re working in. It’s about thinking hard about what you want to do and what you have to work with before you start.”

Susan Kara

Effective communication balances visual (shown) elements with those spoken aspects. However, in oral presentations, the degree to which things are shown vary greatly in the level of detail, quality, and style. It becomes more important to support what is said with visual elements as the content grows in complexity and length. Eventually, the relationship of simple pieces convey meaning and so represent more than the sum of their parts. Thus a slide deck organizes the story of a presentation graphically to aid in the effective delivery of the message.

Design

The component of graphic and visual elements moves from an overall approach to the design known as style into the specific choice and arrangement of items in layout and composition. Finally, the concept of relationship describes how these elements are brought together in a way to add meaning and movement to ideas and concepts. Thus, relationships lead to visual organizers of the message. Within these general areas are the more specific components that build to the overall compositions and layout. These include:

- Text Objects
- Drawn Objects
- Images (Photography, Iconography, illustrations, etc.)
- Arrangement in space in time

Adding the relationships to these building blocks results in a variety of different types of organizers including amongst others:

- Diagrams
- Data visualization

These static visualizations become dynamic as the designers add elements of space and time.

Style, Layout, Composition, and Relationships

The particular components of design include Style, Layout, and Composition. Style represents the overall approach to the design with a creative flair and feels for what the presenter envisions holistically. Then the layout describes the arrangement of items in relation to one another. Finally, the composition represents those building blocks that are arranged to sum up the overall design style. As the design grows in complexity, the basic

components of design can work together to convey more by their appearance and placements leading to the concept of relationships. In this way, the components of design work together to convey meaning and the message effectively to serve as more than just repetition of what is spoken while they are shown.

Element – Description
Style – The holistic view of the design as it is implemented within the work generally to organize elements and bring them together for a larger theme or scheme to attain a goal effectively.
Layout – This is the structure and relationships of elements tied to the effective use of space and orientation relative to one another and backgrounds.
Composition – The inclusion of elements (text and drawn) with images that build objects that convey meaning and support the spoken aspects of the presentation.
Relationship – The added meaning and knowledge individual items have as a result of the combining of the components of style, layout, and composition.

Table of graphic design elements with descriptions.

Text and Drawn Elements

Text elements describe the use of text with the choices of font, size, effects, and their integration into the layout and design. Drawn elements include any relates to the use of drawn objects (bullets, lines, shapes) with the choices of type, style, size, effects, and their integration into the layout and design.

Images

Beyond the basic inclusion of points to build up text and drawn elements, images convey more than just a sense of geometric shapes or words. This relates to the higher level of integrated presentations that use pictures and photographs to convey meaning. Images have a range of types that vary in level of sophistication based on the way they are used in the design and integrated into the layout. The key distinction now becomes whether the image presented a view of reality (photo) or was created through various artistic and technological means (picture).

Organizers of Visual Elements to convey relationships

Graphic organizers result from a collection of visual elements arranged in a way that conveys added meaning through a relationship. Organizers leverage the components of design to generate understanding and convey a message more effectively. These organizers move from simple to more complex including lists, tables, diagrams, data visualizations, and concept/mind maps amongst others. These static organizers aid effective presentation by enhancing what is said with visual reinforcement as well as highlight relationships that exist between the elements. Finally, a slide deck designed to convey the overall message of a presentation serves as the overall graphic organizer through coordinated visual elements.

Dynamic Graphic Organizers and Visual Elements

With the advent of digital interfaces and big data, graphic organizers moved beyond static visual displays. Videos represent a commonly embedded form of visual elements within a larger presentation. Though videos often presented complete presentations in the past, today short clips or other animated pieces become inserted as aspects of more integrated

presentations. Beyond this, data displays allow for dynamic visualization of complex data sets. Also, real-time data displays allow for live interactive displays and lead to dashboards built up from the visual elements.

Conclusion

Static and dynamic graphic organizers bring all of these elements together. Ultimately, visual elements comprise graphic organizers that share complex concepts and relationships in a more understandable way. The combination of the layout with text, drawn elements, and images builds to meaning in visualizations, especially for data and processes. However, in the end, attaining a goal with the desired target in a given situation demands that the graphics support effective presentations by designing the correct integrated visual elements.

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