

The Don'ts of Using Sensory Enhancements

Using visuals in presentations is a good way to make sure people remember them, but it is important to do so in the proper manner.

KEY POINTS

- According to research carried out at UCLA, a visual presentation is five times more likely to be remembered after three days than a presentation using [bullet points](#).
- When using objects in a presentation, set aside time for the [audience](#) to examine the [object](#) so it doesn't detract from the speech.
- If using audio to enhance a speech, make sure it is loud enough to be heard without distracting the audience.
- Be careful with scents in a presentation, so as not to offend or distract the audience.
- A presentation with sensory enhancements should be practiced, so you can make sure that any problems are rectified ahead of time.

TERMS

- [acoustics](#)
The physical quality of a space for performing music.
- [clip art](#)
A set of images, distributed as files with other software, that may be copied and pasted into documents or other files.

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Don'ts of Using Sensory Enhancements

If sensory enhancements aren't used properly, they can detract or distract from a presentation.

Visual Missteps

The famous psychologist Albert Mehrabian showed that the way people take [information](#) during a presentation is 55% visual, compared to 38% vocal and only 7% through text. Yet simply adding a few visuals into a presentation may not be the solution. There are a number of traps that people fall into.

1. **Using Bullet Points:** According to research carried out at UCLA, a visual presentation is five times more likely to be remembered after three days than a presentation using bullet points.
2. **Corny Images:** These often have actors showing emotions such as surprise or happiness. The difficulty is that they can look very corny. Additionally, if the photos are a few years old, the fashions can look very dated.
3. **Using [Clip Art](#):** An idea behind its time. Clip Art used to be a great way of making a presentation visual—particularly when computers were less powerful and every presentation had to be small enough to fit onto a floppy disk. The problem now is that clip art looks very dated compared to a color photograph.
4. **Grainy Pictures:** Generally these images are taken from a web page and increased in size. The problem is that, since they were saved as small files to make them load quickly, they do not enlarge well.
5. **Copyright Theft:** It's easy and tempting to just lift an image off the web, but you must obtain the permission of the copyright owner before you can use any image.
6. **Images Purely for Decoration:** A picture is worth a thousand words. So why would you slap down any old image just to fill up a bit of space? Instead of an image showing how their products could suit a wide range of businesses, their graphic [design](#) agency had added a picture of a horse! Relevance is everything.
7. **Long Video Clips:** It can be helpful to add a video clip into a visual presentation, but be aware that an audience's attention will dwindle if the clip is too long.

Audio Missteps

If you are going to use sound in a presentation, make sure that it is appropriate to the setting and subject matter. Don't have the audio so loud that people can't hear the speech properly or that it distracts the audience from your speech. You should also make sure that it isn't so soft that it can't be heard properly by everyone in the room.

Touch Missteps

If you bring objects for the audience to touch and examine during the presentation, you will want to bring more than one item so that you can have the objects pass around the venue quickly. You'll also want to schedule a period of time during your speech for the examination, otherwise people will be paying more attention to the object and miss important elements of the speech.

Sense Missteps

Some people are sensitive to smells, so if you are including this aspect into your presentation, make sure the scent isn't too strong or cloying. You want to be able to enhance your speech without distracting or offending your audience.

The Important of Preparation

Preparation is the most important part of sensory enhancements. Make sure that you practice your presentation in the same room in which it will be delivered. Check acoustics, visibility, and the ability to deliver objects and scents in the room without distraction. Have people listen and experience your presentation beforehand, so you can adjust any mistakes before the final presentation and ensure that your speech goes as smoothly as possible.