HOW TO...

DESIGN APPEALING VISUAL AIDS

Not all training session require visual aids. Whilst a few carefully selected slides can add value to a training session, too many will damage it, and turn it into a meeting/presentation, rather than an interactive learning workshop. Training should never EVER be driven by slides – slides should only ever play a supporting role.

It's also important to think beyond PowerPoint slides. Colourful posters, hand-drawn flipcharts are physical visual aids (such as models) can be very impactful. A picture paints 1000 words, so wherever possible use pictures, diagrams and graphs. They make a better visual impact and you can provide the detail verbally.

Mix up the style of your presentation and use other aids (apart from slides) to gain and retain the audience's attention. You may wish to try some of these ideas to create appealing visual aids:

- Use a photograph or quote to grab attention, introduce a topic, prompt you or reinforce a point
- Use SmartArt to present lists, relationships and simple processes in a more attractive way
- Build up a diagram or mindmap using animation
- Use a video or audio clip
- Try using different programs such as Prezi, Google Slides or Haiku Deck

If you decide that slides **are** important, here are some tips for their use.

1. Choose your background (try to use corporate ones to project professionalism) and look carefully – some are gimmicky and are animated, which can cause a break in the flow of your presentation when it is being delivered.

2. Include **only key information** on a slide, don't be tempted to put your 'script' on the slide and overcrowd it. Use the minimum number f words you can.

3. Stick to one message per slide.

4. Replace words with pictures wherever possible – slides should act a prompt for you OR to highlight a point.

5. If you want to discuss detailed/technical; information, put it in a handout – not on a slide.

6. Adopt a consistent style – constantly changing the font and size, and using too many colours, serve to detract, not enhance.

7. Use the Slide Master to set your style and maintain a consistent style.

8. Just because PowerPoint automatically bullet points things, doesn't mean that you need to. Use it how YOU want.

9. Use SmartArt and diagrams appropriately – either to replace a lot of words or illustrate a point.

10. Animation should be used with care – using it for the sake of it will just look cheap at best, or be distracting at worst.

11. Choose one or two styles of slide transition – more will be distracting to the audience and could confuse you.

12. Don't use sounds for slide animation or transition. Ever.

13. Don't 'build' every slide – it slows things down and is restrictive if you want to cover points in a different order or group them together.

14. Build in hyperlinks or even page numbers to jump between sections easily to allow you to be flexible and respond to group needs.

15. Check that your links work – whether they lead to other parts of the presentation or to external sites such as YouTube.