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Southern African Association for Institutional Research

Institutional Research Institute
23-24 July 2015

Reporting of information in presentations
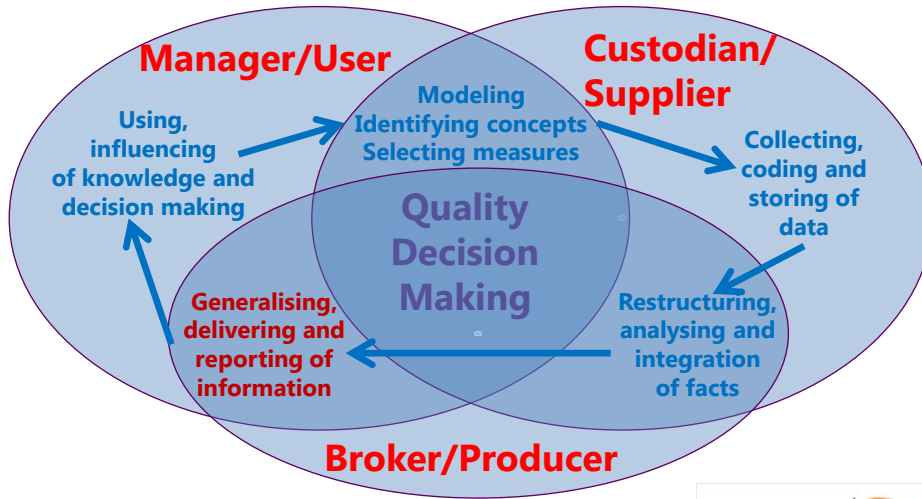
Herman Visser & Yuraisha Chetty

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Purpose of this session

The purpose of this session is to **share experiences about preparing a presentation using good design principles and presenting the presentation considering your audience**.

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Information support process

Manager/User

Custodian/Supplier

Using, influencing of knowledge and decision making

Modeling
Identifying concepts
Selecting measures

Collecting, coding and storing of data

Quality Decision Making

Generalising, delivering and reporting of information

Restructuring, analysing and integration of facts

Broker/Producer

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Its is important to remember that …

- Presentations should be **informative** and can even be can be fun for the audience and for the presenter
- Every report or **presentation implicitly conveys information about you, your office, and your institution**
- **You should therefore keep** your **standards consistently high**
- Your latest report or presentation is the one that is remembered and the next one will be the one remembered after that

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Some of the purposes of presentations are to …

- Highlight findings of research or analysis (briefing or report)
- Inform
- Persuade
- Inform and persuade
- Support planning or decision-making
- Assist with public relations
- Disseminate information

An effective presentation is …

- Pitched at the **appropriate level**
- **Clear**, direct and understandable to your audience
- **Logically structured**
- **Provides information needed or requested**
- **Depicts data accurately and appropriately**
- **Matches** the **style, sophistication and maturity of the intended audience**
- **Highlights important points**
- Includes a **summary**
- Prepared in a **timely** manner
- **Credible**

Types of audiences

- **Various committees**
- **Executives, e.g.** Vice-Chancellors and other senior administrators/managers
- **Council members**
- **Deans Directors of schools, Chairs of academic departments**
- Other **academic staff**
- **Lay people**, e.g. students, parents, legislators, the media
- **Administrative staff**/Technicians
  - Registrations, Examinations, Financial aid, Admin staff
- **Experts/scholars** in the field
- **Combinations** of these

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Importance of knowing your audience

- In most cases, researchers have a **limited time to make a presentation** to senior or executive management - important to respect the time allocated and aim for maximum impact
- In order to do this effectively, you need to **understand** your **audience** and the **content** that you are presenting
- Understanding your audience requires **contextual intelligence** (about the university and its systems, processes and people) which comes with experience
- The more you **keep abreast of the various discourses at high-level structures**, the better able you will be to **add value** to your reports and presentations

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Therefore, consider carefully …

- What is the **purpose** of your presentation?
- Who is the **audience**? What is their level of sophistication and maturity regarding the topic?
- Do you need **visual aids** to explain difficult points, reinforce or emphasize important points, appeal to different learning styles by showing information in different ways?
- What is the most **appropriate technology** - presentation programme such as PowerPoint, other technology or no technology?

Audience point of view

- **What do my audiences need to know** about this subject?
- **What do my audiences want to know** about his subject?
- **What do I want to tell them** about this subject?
- *How would they like to see it presented?*
- *What might frustrate them in terms of how it is presented?*

How can I add value for my audience?

- What is the story I want to tell?
- **Remove complexity** for the audience
- Can I **integrate** this **with other research** and/or **analyses** as part of triangulation or pulling together common threads?
- How can the presentation add to organisational learning?

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Engaging your audience

- *Coalface versus silos* – engage with clients (academics and professional staff) in their spaces. *Go to the client and be visible*. Make an effort to understand their environment and context. Help them to see the value of the data or research you are providing.
- *Simplify the complexities* in the data or research you are presenting – help them to distinguish between "noise" and "signals"
- *Demystify data* and how it can be used to add value particularly where clients are not confident in using data or do not have the required maturity or sophistication required to use MI, BI and IR.
- *Engage* them as part of trying to explain the variation in data or reasons for trends or shifts

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Use of presentation, also in other contexts

- What **decisions** will or might be based on this presentation?
- To what **other individuals** might my primary audience send this presentation? - context
- What **other audiences** might be interested in the same subject? - context
- Will they see my presentation, or other materials from which is it derived? – context important

Have a good presentation structure

- **Presentation should flow like a good story** (involve the audience)
- **Beginning section** (where you hook the audience)
- **Middle section** (contain the main detail of your presentation)
  - Key point slides
  - Sparkline
- **End section** (summarise the presentation and lead the audience to the next step)

Guide your audience

- Provide an **answer** to **"So what?" –** important for decision-making purposes
- Include recommendations with a focus on what is **actionable**
- Highlight the consequences or implications of the research for the university
- Identify possible limitations and how mitigated
- An executive **summary** should be included for all audiences, but typically for management who do not have time to engage with the detail
- Include future directions

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Kosslyn's maxims for effective design

- The mind is not a camera
  We actively develop schema that influence what we 'see'
- The mind judges a book by its cover
  Appearance is important – compatibility between the data and the way the message is conveyed
- The spirit is willing, but the mind is weak
  Most of us can retain only four conceptual groups in mind at once – so group into sets of four to help retain the message

Kosslyn, Stephen M. Elements of Graphic Design. New York: WH Freeman and Co., 1994.

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Overall design principles for a good presentation design

- **Empathy for your audience** – make it **easy** for your audience **to follow** the content and don't distract them with special effects
- Overall design should be **consistent**
- Have a **visual theme** but **don't use** the **standard template** themes in PowerPoint
- Use simple **backgrounds** – dark text on light background work best for large venues and light text on dark background for a dark venue
- **Use colour wisely**

Principles for a good slide design

- **Design elements purposefully –** signal not noise
- Use **descriptive slide titles**
- **Keep slides uncluttered**
  - **Information need emphasis** – should not require more than 3 seconds to process
  - **Don't have too many ideas on a slide**, for emphasis use one idea per slide
  - **Don't use PowerPoint as a teleprompter**
- **Keep fonts simple and easily readible**
- Make **effective use of figures and charts**
- Use **white space**

Use of images, graphics, animations and special effects

- **Use images and graphics wisely** to gain attention, explain ideas and show relationships
- **Don't use very complex diagrams and/or charts**
- Use **animations sparingly**
- **Use multimedia only when necessary**
- **Slide transitions** should be **simple and uniform**
- When appropriate, add **hyperlinks** and **action buttons** to make your presentation interactive
- Use of **logos or not**

Some elements of good slide design

- Don't use the themes that comes with PowerPoint
- Sufficient contrast between the background and text
- Avoid unnecessary clutter
- Choose your words carefully
- Keep fonts simple
- Design your slides to look distinctive an make key points stand out
- Use multimedia only when appropriate
- Keep animation to a minimum

Keep in mind how people learn

- 10% of what we read
- 20% of what we hear
- 30% of what we see
- 50% of what we see and hear
- 70% of what we discuss with others
- 80% of what we experience personally
- 95% of what we teach someone else

Rules for presenting information in tables

- Have a **clear purpose** for presenting the data
- Design the table to **make key points**
- The **use** of **color** and/or **shading to highlight** areas
- **Reduce duplication**
- **Summarise** to maximise information signal and reduce noice

Advantages of tables

- Allow **exact numerical values** to be communicated
- Permit multiple, localised comparisons to be made among sub-groups
- Relatively **easy to prepare**
- Familiar to most people
- **Maximum information in minimum space**
- Can present **qualitative relationships** quickly

Disadvantages of tables

- Do not draw attention to important points
- Difficult to highlight relationships or trends
- Relatively uninteresting or unappealing aesthetic qualities
- Often repetitious and boring
- Difficult for many people to interpret - may be incomprehensible to some audiences

Some tips for preparing tables with two or more variables

- Use columns for most important comparisons
- Order rows and columns to make sense
- Round numbers
- Provide summaries, such as means or totals
- Include counts on which percentages are based

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Tufte's key principles for effective presentation of data in graphics

- Above all else, **show the data**
- **Maximise ink devoted to data**, not to elements such as labels, frames, gridlines
- **Minimise ink that does not depict** the **data**
- **Minimise redundant presentations of data**
- **Revise and edit** to achieve the above principles

Tufte, Edward R. *The Visual Display of Quantitative Information*. Cheshire, CT: Graphics Press, 1983. *Envisioning Information*, 1990. *Visual Explanations*, 1997

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Basic rule for graphs (or charts)

- Keep charts simple
- Avoid being seduced by the glitz a computer can add
- Often these design elements interfere with a clear understanding of the main points
- Never accept the default values of MS Excel

Advantages of graphs

- Easy to draw attention to important points or highlights
- Show relationships and trends
- Relatively easy to understand (if well done)
- Have relatively interesting and appealing aesthetic qualities

Disadvantages of Graphs

- Do not generally communicate exact numerical values
- Lend themselves to only a few comparisons
- Communicate a limited amount of information
- Relatively difficult to prepare well

Some chart types

- Line Charts
  - Show change over time
- Pie Charts
  - Show proportional relationships
- Column charts
  - Show frequency, sums, averages
- Horizontal bar charts
  - Show proportional relationships, especially if there are more than 5 or 6 variable
  - Order by biggest or smallest

Chart Suggestions—A Thought-Starter

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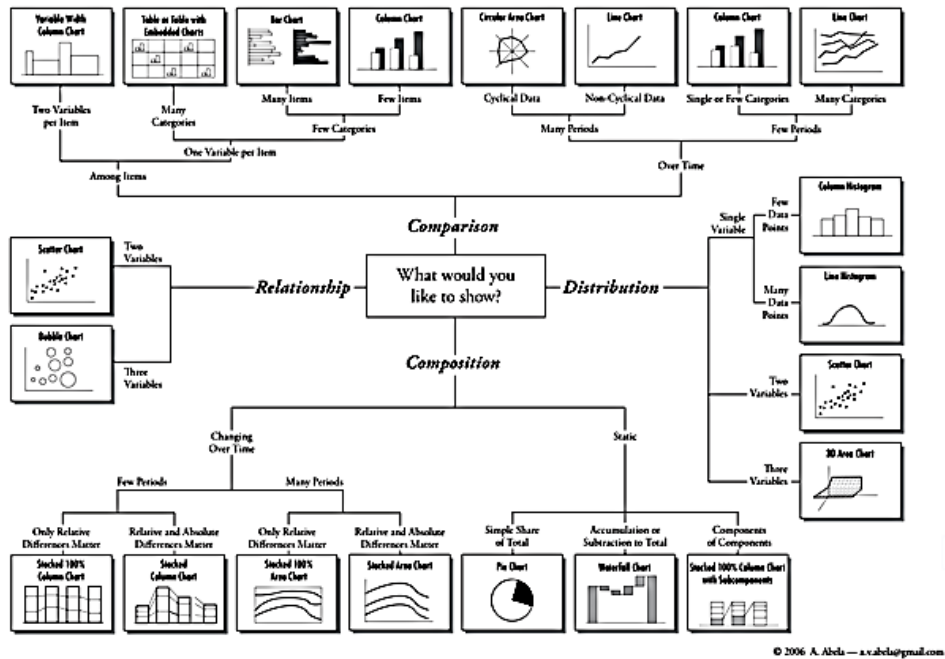
Use of logos in presentations?

- **Why should you use logos?**
  - Branding
  - Professionalism
- **How should we use a logo?**
  - No animation
  - Use logo as basis for colour scheme
  - Positioning of logo?
  - Size – big enough to be seen clearly not too large to distract
  - Don't distort logo
- **We don't always need to use a logo**

Preparing a presentation at the last minute

- Check the arrangements and time
- Start with **objectives** – what do you want to achieve with your presentation?
- **Consider the audience**
- Find **material to support your message** – use existing slides and information
- Use a template for creating new slides to ensure **uniform design**
- **Rehearse**
- Check your **timing**

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Edit your presentation …

- Make it **shorter**
- Make it **consistent**
- Make it **impactful – add value**

Ask yourself questions about design and content
- Check for mistakes – read aloud
- Are images and design elements consistent?
- Logical order overall and on each slide?
- Do all your points relate to the final conclusion?
- Are you repeating images or text?
- Are there any words (jargon) or images that your audience won't understand or can't relate to?
- Spend time in slide shorter (ensure logical flow)

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How to present successful

- **Dress appropriately**
- Appear **confident**
- Reinforce who you are
- Be **passionate about the topic**
- Provide answers to "**Why?**"
- Use appropriate **body language**
- Make **eye contact** with audience
- Build a **sense of truth** among the audience
- Don't hesitate to **repeat**
- **Share personal experiences**
- Address "**So what?**"

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Communicate with your audience

- Look at the audience
- Be enthusiastic
- Vary the tone of your voice
- Speak slowly and clearly
- Use appropriate body language
- Use humour where appropriate
- Be prepared for questions

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Questions and discussion

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Group activity:
Rules for engagement

- Everyone must participate

- Non-attribution of discussions

- No violence!

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Group activity:
Purpose and outcome

Purpose

- The purpose is to provide you with an opportunity to work through an activity that will cause you to reflect on the materials and topics presented
- In completing the activities, you will share your context and thoughts with your colleagues

Outcome

The outcome of the activity will be the following:

- A **one page briefing report** to your Executive management on the research output data provided
- a **5 minute presentation** by your group on the provided data
- **Feedback on your briefing report and presentation**

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