

Visual aids

VIDEO SCRIPT

Mark

They say a picture paints a thousand words, but it seems a lot of presenters would rather put a thousand words on a slide than a single picture! Big mistake. 'Visual aid' means it should be visual or it's not an aid. Flash up a load of text on a slide and your audience will read it faster than you can talk. So they'll simply stop listening and, uh-oh, you've lost them! Watch what happens here ...

Presenter

OK, so now let's take a look at the global market prospects for 3D eyewear. As you know, 3D movies have traditionally been shown mainly in iMax cinemas and theme parks. But with blockbusters such as *Kung Fu Panda* back in 2008, we saw a shift to mainstream cinemas. And the CGI sensation *Avatar* the following year has totally redefined the market. New technology has given us linear polarised glasses which radically improve viewing quality and, as you can see, the global market for 3D eyewear is now conservatively estimated to be two hundred million dollars.

Mark

Did you find yourself reading ahead as you watched? The information was not badly presented, but the speaker was unable to compete with her visual. True, this particular slide might have been more effective if the bullet points had been revealed one by one. But here's how the presenter could have done a much better job ...

Presenter

Two hundred million. That's the estimated value in dollars of the global market for 3D eyewear. Two hundred million. Unbelievable. Now, let me just talk you through some of the main reasons for such huge market potential ...

Mark

See the difference? This time the presenter gets straight to the point, starting with the headline '200 million', followed by further context and supporting data. But here's the clever part – the visual only tells *half* the story. It leaves us wanting to know what this '200 million' refers to, which, of course, is precisely what the presenter is now going to tell us. The visual is also very *visual*. But that's not always enough. Take a look at this ...

Presenter

Did you know that seventy percent of businesses in India are family businesses?

Mark

Well, yes we did, thanks – we've just read it! Pretty picture, though. Let's try that again ...

Presenter

Did you know that seventy percent of businesses in India are family businesses?

Mark

Much better! There's even a bit of humour in the image chosen this time. Of course, another way to make visual aids visual is to use graphs and charts. But, remember, a well-designed graph is supposed to save you the job of describing the situation in words. Ideally, it should be self-explanatory. If you have to explain it, it's not a good visual. What the presenter *does* often need to do is to explain the *significance* of the information displayed.

See how the following presenter does this...

Presenter

We all know there is enormous interest around the world in developing renewable energy sources. But are we headed for a greener or greyer future? Have a look at this.

Here are our projected estimates of global electricity production to the year 2030. So, let me just talk you through some of these. As you can see, we are indeed forecasting increased levels of investment in renewables to around 23% of total production, mostly in response to the current population explosion and rising fossil fuel prices. But let's just put that into perspective – it's only up 5% from what it was back in 2006. So we're not exactly talking a green revolution here! Now, the good news is that, though our reliance on oil is likely to grow in the immediate future, longer term it should decline significantly. And, as far as nuclear energy is concerned, the figures speak for themselves. We'll certainly be using less by 2030. But what does that mean in terms of the environment? After all, nuclear energy is at least clean. Coal, on the other hand, is the dirtiest fossil fuel. By 2030, electricity production will have almost doubled and nearly half of that will be derived from coal. So the real question is: what happened to our more sustainable future?

Mark

A good use there of a graphic slide to present the facts, leaving the presenter free to fill in the background and explore the implications. So always try to work *with* your visuals, and not *against* them.