

Advancing the arts, sciences, and technology of new business acquisition and promoting the professionalism of those engaged in those pursuits.



The Art of Selling written by Colleen Jolly, PPF.APMP, The 24-Hour Company, www.24hrco.com

Common sense tells us that a picture is worth a thousand words. The dilemma then becomes choosing the right picture to represent the right words.

It is essential to capture your audience's attention immediately and continue to consistently (and professionally) elaborate on the viability and integrity of your solution. Correct application of visuals such as slide presentations, technical documentation, white papers, and general marketing materials can dramatically improve first impressions and aid in the comprehension of, or simple introduction to, difficult concepts.

Scientific studies analyzing the effects visual communications have on the viewer have shown that informative design improves retention of data and concepts eight times longer than text alone. Graphics also communicate, according to a study by 3M Corporation, 60,000 times faster than text alone—or practically instantaneous comprehension. Why write C-H-A-I-R when you can show a photo of one?

We often underestimate and under-appreciate the importance of visual communication, although we make simple and complicated choices everyday based almost solely on perceived aesthetic quality. We choose clothing, friends, cars, food, and successful bidders on contracts because they speak to a seemingly uncharacterized and inherent sense of visual appeal. Graphics, if done properly, can significantly increase the likelihood that your potential client will agree with you, leading to a decision to purchase your solution rather than that of your competitors. Graphics allow you to clearly articulate the features and benefits of your solution while highlighting key discriminators that may otherwise be lost in a sea of words.

Excellent, consistent design coupled with thoughtful organization of important data and concepts will improve your sales materials. Inaccurate, inconsistent, and visually unappealing materials will damage the enthusiasm and comprehension of your solution, message, or narrative and may cost you access to valuable opportunities. Formulate your message first; then use graphics to enhance audience understanding. The right graphics will enhance the right words but do not substitute the right words for illogical or unnecessary graphical fluff.

You do not need high-priced assistance to create your materials or presentations. Audit your current materials by comparing them to other companies in your market. Ask people outside of your industry if the reason to buy you is clearly articulated, if not, try using a graphic to highlight or explain portions that are unclear. Revamp your materials to be at *least* as professional looking as your competitors and then make them better.

Your goal is to create sales and marketing materials that accurately represent your organization and your ability to perform excellently in the most comprehensive, precise, and communicative way possible, by combining the most sensible and stimulating concepts with the most appealing visual representations.

Be professional, accessible, truthful, and beautiful, and your solution will sell itself.