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Make Your Point Visually

Get your message across by creating a compelling visual story for your audience.

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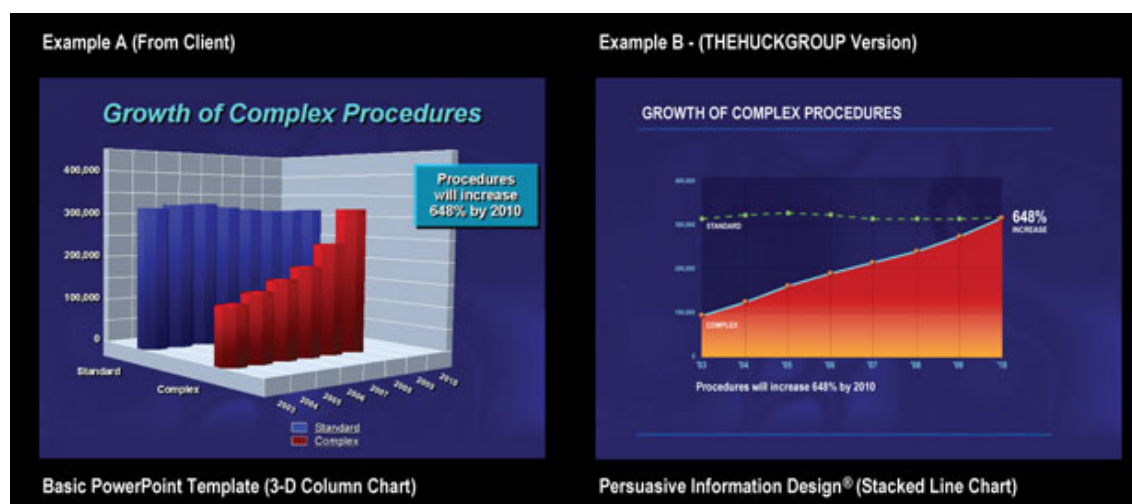
It's has been said that a picture is worth a thousand words. If you're trying to make a case to a potential client or possible investor, you need to deliver the message in a way that the audience will quickly understand it, believe in it and act upon it in the way you intended. It's important to illustrate your concept as a visual picture, which is one of the best persuasive techniques you can use. This method of communicating with your clients can be called "persuasive communications," and it is one of the most powerful and effective ways to move someone from point A to point B.

The first step in the "equation of persuasion" is making sure your listening audience retains the information you want them to walk away with. Studies show that retention rates are much higher when you combine the audio and visual components together as one unit. A case in point is "[Syntactic Theory of Visual Communication, Part One](#)," by Paul Martin Lester, Ph.D., Department of Communications, California State University, Fullerton.

Let's assume you're an entrepreneur making a presentation to a group of prospective capital investors. As an entrepreneur, you're a born risk-taker; don't take a risk, though, when you have a limited amount of time and attention with your prospective capital investors. Instead, take a calculated risk by preparing a compelling visual story that is simple but clear and, most of all, persuasive.

You must be confident and ready to lead them into a story they will never forget and will therefore have no doubts or hesitation about providing the capital backing you seek to pursue your dreams.

Being persuasive takes talent and creative forethought. It must involve complete integrity and respect toward the audience you're reaching out to as well as the factual information to which you're applying persuasive information design.



The chart above is intended to show that over a period of eight years, complex surgeries will increase significantly, whereas standard surgeries will continue to grow at an average pace. A client might conclude that adding complex procedures to its services will lead to a substantial growth in profit.

As an example, here are two visuals: Example A is a 3-D column chart created by our client. Example B is a stacked line chart, created by TheHuckGroup. Both charts contain the same information, but only the second one is persuasive at first glance.

Using these two examples, we can show the difference between an ordinary chart and a well-thought-out, persuasive chart that incorporates Persuasive Information Design.

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In Example A, the block of blue columns stands out against the light gray grid in the background. Because you see so much of those columns at first glance, they appear to represent a highly important piece of information. On the contrary, it's the red columns that represent the most important information. But in Example A, the audience notices the big blue mass of columns first and wastes precious time doing so.

Additional evidence of poor design in Example A is the fact that the blue columns look substantially larger when compared with the red columns, so the first impression is that the blue columns represent the more important information. Similarly, use of a column chart creates a massive blue shape that draws attention to itself. That counteracts the client's true intention for the piece--to highlight the massive growth of complex procedures in the red columns.

The color red is supposed to grab a person's attention first, right? Nevertheless, in Example A, this highly stimulating color does nothing but demonstrate red columns.

To understand why one chart works better than the other, you need to look closely at both. If the most important piece of information the client wants the audience to understand and believe is that complex procedures will grow 648 percent by 2010, Example A fails to do so because of the way the information was designed and laid out.

Viewers have to search the entire chart to find legend information that corresponds to the plotted columns. This wastes your audience's time and commitment. You want your audience to see the most important information first and not waste time searching for legends.

In Example B, your eyes are immediately attracted to the red gradient portion of the plotted points that lead up to the most important piece of information of the entire demonstrative, the figure "648 percent," then right to the title of the visual piece.

Bottom-line, in Example A, you spend more time trying to figure out how the parts and pieces fit together to inform you of something. In Example B, the opposite is true: You instantly you see the 648 percent and understand in seconds what it means.

This example is important because so many people are doing more than one thing at a time, and you have to make sure you get their attention from the get-go. Make sure you--or your graphic artist--understand the basics and color and design principles for your next presentation. Because all humans relate to the psychological

aspects of color, it might be easier next time you need a persuasive presentation.

Juliet Huck is the CEO and founder of [TheHuckGroup](#). The firm helps clients deliver persuasive messaging by combining audio and visual components in a process Huck calls Visually Persuasive Storytelling.

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