Ten Practical Tips for Creating Effective Presentations

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DePaul University

Presented at the Association for Institutional Research Forum
Toronto, May 2011
“My presentation lacks power and it has no point. I assumed the software would take care of that!”
What We’ll Cover

• DePaul Background
• Challenges
• Data Visualization Resources
• Ten Practical Tips with Examples
• Questions
DePaul Background

• Founded in 1898 in Chicago, IL

• Largest Catholic and eighth largest private non-profit university in the nation.
  – Enrollment of over 25,000 students in Fall 2010
  – From 1990 to 2010, DePaul’s enrollment grew by 60%

• 9 colleges and 6 campuses in Chicagoland area

• Diverse student body
  – 36% first-generation freshmen, and 25% students of color
  – 25% of undergraduates are over the age of 24
Challenge

Synthesize your information and create clear graphics that provide quicker access to meaningful insights.
Data Visualization Resources

• Edward Tufte

• Stephen Few

• Stephen Kosslyn
Ten Practical Tips for Effective Presentations

1. Define the research question
2. Select the most effective chart type
3. Don’t make the audience work too hard
4. Remove chartjunk
5. Use color effectively
6. Create clear titles and legends
7. Use clear and consistent fonts
8. Develop easy to read tables
9. Look for additional ways to add insight
10. Test for understanding
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Create an outline for your presentation
Be specific and write it down!

Don’t
Profile of Incoming Freshmen

Do
How does the Fall 2011 incoming freshman class compare to last year on demographic and academic variables?

Undergraduate Students Overall

Freshman Overall

Demographics

Academics
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Pie charts are rarely the best option

Avoid 3-D pie charts

Looks larger!

Numbers used in this presentation are for illustration purposes only.

2011 AIR Forum – Ten Practical Presentation Tips
Line charts show trends and interactions

[Don’t]
Web Hits per Month

[Do]
Web Hits per Month
Use bar graphs when the scale is not continuous.

[Don’t] Web Hits by College

[Do] Web Hits by College
Horizontal bar charts work best for long labels

[Don’t]

Freshman HS Feeders by Enrollment
2009 & 2010

[Do]

Freshman HS Feeders by Enrollment
2009 & 2010

LANE TECHNICAL HS
Maine South HS
Whitney Young HS
Adlai E Stevenson HS
Niles Township West HS
Lyons Township North HS
Lake Park West HS
New Trier Township HS
Loyola Academy
Niles Township North HS

2010
2009
31
29
28
24
23
22
20
19
18
14
Tables are good for showing specific values

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
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</thead>
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<td>2,509</td>
<td>2,922</td>
<td>16%</td>
<td>1,923</td>
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<td>7%</td>
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</tr>
<tr>
<td>LA&amp;S</td>
<td>4,983</td>
<td>5,975</td>
<td>20%</td>
<td>3,753</td>
<td>4,101</td>
<td>9%</td>
<td>1,313</td>
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<td><strong>2,368</strong></td>
<td><strong>-1%</strong></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Maps clearly visualize regions or territories

[Don’t]
Freshman Applications by Region
Fall 2005-2009

[Do]
Freshman Applications by Zip Code
Fall 2005-2009

Maps clearly visualize regions or territories.

[Don’t]
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Fall 2005-2009

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Maps clearly visualize regions or territories.
Ten Practical Tips for Effective Presentations

1. Define the research question
2. Select the most effective chart type
3. Don’t make the audience work too hard
4. Remove chartjunk
5. Use color effectively
6. Create clear titles and legends
7. Use clear and consistent fonts
8. Develop easy to read tables
9. Look for additional ways to add insight
10. Test for understanding
Do the pre-work for the audience

- Focus only on the main points
- Organize slides to support main points
- Use only relevant information on slides
Remove irrelevant information

Which college has the highest proportion of women?

[Don’t]

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>College</th>
<th>% Women</th>
<th>% Men</th>
<th>% Unknown</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Commerce</td>
<td>31%</td>
<td>68%</td>
<td>1%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>CDM</td>
<td>17%</td>
<td>83%</td>
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</tr>
<tr>
<td>LA&amp;S</td>
<td>54%</td>
<td>44%</td>
<td>2%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Education</td>
<td>34%</td>
<td>65%</td>
<td>1%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Music</td>
<td>33%</td>
<td>67%</td>
<td>0%</td>
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[Do]

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
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Typical default chart in PowerPoint
Change background to white

- **Summer**: 45
- **Fall**: 225
- **Winter**: 105
- **Spring**: 85

Legend:
- **2008**
- **2009**
- **2010**
Set vertical axis to zero
Remove 3-D

- 2008
- 2009
- 2010
Tone down background gridlines and remove lines around bars.
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Select one color and use darker hue to highlight important information.

[Don’t]

[Do]
Different color schemes are distracting

[Don’t]

Main Campus

Campus # 2

Campus # 3

Campus # 4
Use the same color scheme throughout your presentation

Main Campus

[Do]

Campus # 2

Campus # 3

Campus # 4
Be careful not to mix colors with their standard associations.
Use color to group items

Transfer Application Proportion by Decision Type: 2009 & 2010

Accept  Not Accept  Incomplete  Pending  Cancelled  Deny

Admitted

52.4%  51.6%
8.1%  7.6%  15.6%  18.5%  17.4%  16.0%
3.5%  2.9%  2.8%  3.2%

Transfer Application Proportion by Decision Type: 2009 & 2010

Accept  Not Accept  Incomplete  Pending  Cancelled  Deny

Admitted

2009  2010
52.4%  51.59%
8.1%  7.57%  15.6%  18.5%  17.4%  16.0%
3.5%  2.94%  2.8%  3.22%
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What does this chart show?

DePaul Undergraduate Hispanic Enrollment by Year
Academic Year 2008 – 2010

- **Summer**
  - 2008: 50
  - 2009: 60
  - 2010: 70

- **Fall**
  - 2008: 150
  - 2009: 200
  - 2010: 250

- **Winter**
  - 2008: 100
  - 2009: 150
  - 2010: 200

- **Spring**
  - 2008: 75
  - 2009: 100
  - 2010: 125
Include clear and legible data labels

DePaul Undergraduate Hispanic Enrollment by Year
Academic Year 2008 – 2010
Put the legend as close to the data as possible

DePaul Undergraduate Hispanic Enrollment by Year
Academic Year 2008 – 2010
Place labels directly next to the lines.

[Don’t]

Top 5 IL Master's Institutions
Based on Education Enrollment in 2005

[Do]

Top 5 IL Master's Institutions
Based on Education Enrollment in 2005

National-Louis
Saint Xavier
Concordia
Northern
DePaul
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Guidelines for fonts

• DON’T USE ALL UPPERCASE or all italics or all bold

• Only change color for emphasis or to group words together

• Underlined text can be hard to read

• Don’t use fancy fonts

• Make sure font is large enough to read easily

Guidelines for fonts

Use either serif or sans serif fonts, but use consistently

- Bell MT
- Bodoni
- Courier New
- Garamond
- Georgia
- Goudy Old Style
- Arial
- Century Gothic
- Franklin Gothic
- Gill Sans
- Lucida Sans
- Tahoma
- Trebuchet
- Verdana

Don’t use busy backgrounds!
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### Scan across

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</table>
### Align headers and limit color

[Don’t]

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
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[Do]

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<th>Revenue</th>
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<td>Final Spring 2011 Enrollment Update Report</td>
<td></td>
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<th>2008 Final</th>
<th>2008 Final</th>
<th>2008 % of Final</th>
<th>2008 % of Budget</th>
<th>2009 Final</th>
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<td>97.56%</td>
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<td>2,200</td>
<td>100.0%</td>
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<td>300</td>
<td>6,000</td>
<td>95.0%</td>
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</tr>
<tr>
<td>CDM</td>
<td>ugrd</td>
<td>1,200</td>
<td>-150</td>
<td>1,250</td>
<td>96.0%</td>
<td>1,200</td>
<td>1,200</td>
<td>87.5%</td>
<td>1,200</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
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<td>100</td>
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<td>66.7%</td>
<td>150</td>
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<td>50.0%</td>
<td>100</td>
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</tbody>
</table>

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2011 AIR Forum – Ten Practical Presentation Tips

Slide 43
Ten Practical Tips for Effective Presentations

1. Define the research question
2. Don’t make the audience work too hard
3. Select the most effective chart type
4. Remove chartjunk
5. Use color effectively
6. Create clear titles and legends
7. Use clear and consistent fonts
8. Develop easy to read tables
9. Look for additional ways to add insight
10. Test for understanding
DePaul Fall Only Freshman & Transfer (includes SNL): 1985-2010

- Freshman
- Transfer
- Vision 2006
- VISION twenty12

2011 AIR Forum – Ten Practical Presentation Tips
[Don’t]

Percentage of Freshman Enrollments by Mission Student Factors
Fall 2009 & Fall 2010

- Pell Eligible: 35% (2009), 38% (2010)
- First Generation: 35% (2009), 36% (2010)
- Underrepresented Minority: 25% (2009), 25% (2010)
- Chicago: 20% (2009), 20% (2010)
8% met all criteria

First Generation
(36%)

Pell
(38%)

Underrepresented Minority
(25%)

Chicago
(20%)

Fall 2010 Freshman Enrollments
(n=2,241)

[Do]
Ten Practical Tips for Effective Presentations

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What are the main takeaways?

Are the slides clear and understandable?

Does the presentation tell the story effectively?
Ten Practical Tips for Effective Presentations

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For more information...

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