

A-V AND THE CONFERENCE LEADER

*how to use
audio-visual aids
for more
successful conferences*

Any conference leader, "worth his salt," is aware that verbalization alone will not produce the most meaningful conference situation; in an active sense, aids will provide a better link between concept and comprehension especially when reasons for their use in a conference are understood by the leader.

Four basic reasons exist for the use of aids in a conference. There may be more but certainly these reasons are sufficient for most conference leaders:

1. To clarify abstract concepts.
2. To illustrate statistical information.
3. To provoke thought, brainstorming and discussion.
4. To stress, emphasize, record and firm-up major concepts.

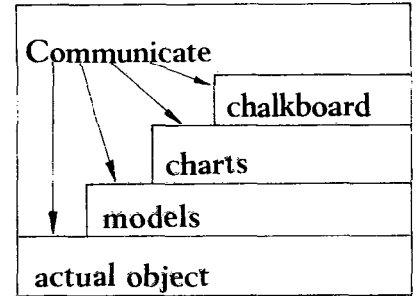
Let's examine the facets of each use and move on into the types of aids and their utilization.

1. TO CLARIFY ABSTRACT CONCEPTS

There are areas in any conference which may touch upon abstract concepts, some of which cannot be verbalized to the satisfaction of the conferees. In instances of this sort, a visual media will do more toward clarification than will the most fluent of speeches. You should be aware of "danger" spots in the conference topic and make provision for visual assistance in clarification. When you know that you're developing discussion in an ambiguous area, slant the discussion by calling attention to the special conference-aid. Once the discussion is back on the track, dispense with the aid unless you feel it will help adherence to the topic.

2. TO ILLUSTRATE STATISTICAL INFORMATION

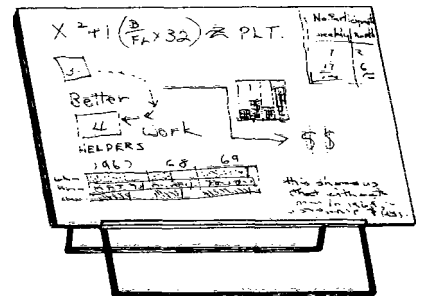
One of the major difficulties in establishing a smooth-running conference may be the need for statistical information. Statistics may impose a stultifying influence upon the free interchange of ideas mainly because the spoken statistic must be digested, compared, and evaluated on a mental level rather than upon the physical plane, which is where



Which one?

it should be placed.

When statistics are to play an important role in the discussion and when those statistics are vital in the interpretation of relationships, it is incumbent upon you, to prepare some means of visual presentation. Don't assume that any statistic may be glossed over in a cursory fashion and still remain an item of intrinsic value. You must provide the media which will assist in the development and retention of statistical concepts.



Keep it simple.

3. TO PROVOKE THOUGHT, BRAINSTORMING AND DISCUSSION

Because the participants become bored and listless concerning the subject, and because no attempt is made to stimulate their senses by any form of communication other than verbal, many conferences deteriorate into question and answer situations. Voices raised in the excitement of discussion, loud at times and at other moments falling off to a softly intense, rapid explanation, may be quite effective; however, there are

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times when the lull in the conference is indicative of the need for a new approach, a more exciting vista and a more realistic attempt to elicit new thought from the group. In preparing for the conference, arrange for conference aids to be used whenever the "well runs dry." Aids for this purpose should be simple yet provocative and challenging. The conferees' backgrounds should be a major factor in determining the visual media to be utilized.

4. TO STRESS, EMPHASIZE AND FIRM-UP MAJOR CONCEPTS

Your role as conference leader requires a rigid concentration upon certain responsibilities. Among the most important of these is the "firming-up" of the individual and group accomplishment.

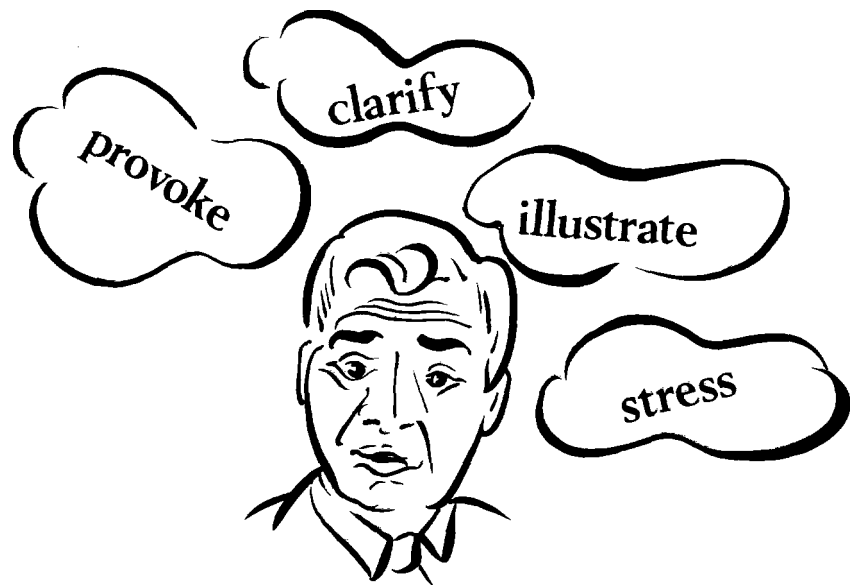
During the conference, moderate the flow of information and, at appropriate times, sum up what has been achieved, mentioning each contributor in turn, giving credit where credit is due. It is difficult to prepare aids in advance for this use; however, the ever-ready chalkboard is available and should be utilized. To this end, it is your responsibility to provide yourself with copious notes to which you should refer in your summation, while utilizing the chalkboard for the "firming-up" process.

In summing up this first area, the salient facts are these:

- a. Aids are important as stimulators, discriminators, stressors, and clarifiers.
- b. Aids are an integral part of the leader's equipment; preparation should be exacting and realistic.
- c. Rehearse the use of the media. Insure your success.

TYPES OF CONFERENCE AIDS

In general, conference aids are the same as training aids. Some training aids however, are not suitable for conferences because of the usual physical arrangement of conference leader and conferees, generally around a table facing in and toward each other.



Why use conference aids?

CHALKBOARD

This aid is readily available in almost every conference room or easily obtainable in portable form. The chalkboard provides a means for recording information of an immediate nature as well as presenting prepared materials. Effective utilization of the chalkboard depends upon the following factors:

1. Plan work for simplicity, neatness and with proper emphasis.
2. Make work large enough to be seen by all conferees and at all angles of viewing.
3. Intricate diagrams should be prepared in advance and then covered to prevent premature disclosure.
4. Make certain that a clean eraser is available. A messy board detracts from your presentation.
5. Use some sort of pointer which will allow you to stand away from the board. If you're too close, you'll block the view.
6. Use colors, but sparingly. A riot of color attracts attention but also creates confusion.
7. Last, but, not least, erase all unwanted information. Avoid the cluttered board.

CHARTS AND GRAPHS

Charts are another serious area of consideration. Statistics, figures, etc., are best shown on some sort of chart which reveals exact information as briefly as possible.

As with the chalkboard, charts should never become garishly distracting; color should be limited to areas of emphasis and contrast. Too little color is less distracting than an excess and taste should be exercised in lay-out and production.

Different types of charts are used with different types of information. A chart designed to provide one form of statistical information may not be suitable for other types. Below are some types of charts and general applications:

1. **Pie Chart:**
A familiar sight when the need arises to divide a total area into segments.
2. **Bar Graph:**
Commonly used to compare various elements to one another.
3. **Map Charts:**
Shows locale of activity; statistical information or types of local activity.

4. Pictorial Charts:

Here, figures representing the items being measured are used — pictographs of man, equipment, etc.

5. Curve-Angle Chart:

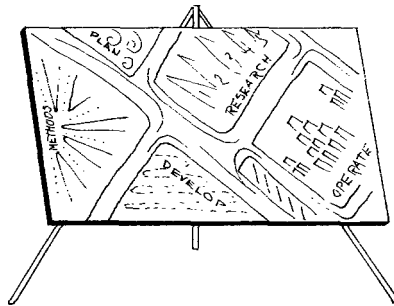
This chart makes use of single line curves and angles to illustrate rise and fall; peaks and valleys and input-output relationships.

When planning charts be aware of certain dangers concerning the layout of information:

1. Zig-zag lines in an improper relationship with each other result in "op art," which may make it interesting but not easily understood.
2. Don't try to include too many comparisons on one chart. Too many curves and angles result in confusion.
3. Be accurate in planning relative weights. Your audience will pull your chart apart if it lacks veracity.
4. Make certain that lettering is readable. Don't try for fanciness; stick to simple, unadorned block letters.

Examination of these tips on charts will probably bring to mind a great many more "dos and dont's," all of them common sense of communication without confusion.

The rules for using charts also apply to



A Picasso or a chart?

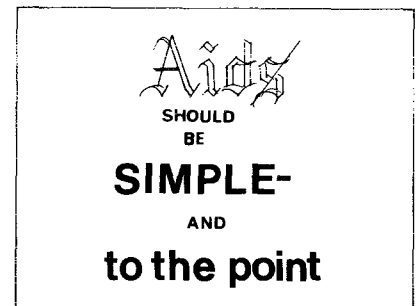
slides. Slide planning should incorporate the basic concepts of intelligent color utilization, accuracy of information and readability of data the same as when planning charts.

OTHER AIDS

Actual objects, models, posters, photographs and recorders, etc. are also of value to the conference leader providing that each one is utilized for a specific, objective purpose and not just to produce a plethora of aids to overwhelm, fascinate or beguile the conferees.

In essence, the successful utilization of aids within the verbal framework of the conference will depend upon the conference leader being thoroughly familiar with the purpose, design, and utilization of aids as devices of extreme value. If

misunderstood, they become stumbling blocks to effective communication. Practice in the use of aids is of paramount importance. The leader who fumbles and mumbles his way through the conference soon loses his image and woefully observes the conference sliding out of his grasp into the hinterland of "group-anarchy" and uncontrolled "talk." By knowing your aids and what they will do, you can be more than just a placid group moderator.



No decorative lettering, please.

In the final analysis, the intelligent application of A-V techniques will produce a more interesting, audience-involving and meaningful exchange of ideas resulting in a higher potential of success for your conferences.

MANAGEMENT TOOLS FOR SYSTEMATIZED ORGANIZATIONAL CAPABILITY

1. A shears to trim the ever growing cost of doing business.
2. Hip boots to wade through red tape.
3. A fan to clear the atmosphere.
4. A clamp to apply the pressure on your competition.
5. An anvil for use in hammering home a point.
6. A pair of pliers to get a firm grip on yourself.
7. A fire hose to help fight brush fires.
8. An air-conditioner to cool union-management contract negotiations.
9. A chisel to separate the men from the boys.
10. A key to permit entrance into the hallowed sanctum of the executive bathroom.
11. A coin for use in making the final important decisions.

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