

Design Considerations for Jobs Aids

Why Use Job Aids?

Job aids provide information about when or how to perform a task, thus reducing the amount of recall needed and minimizing error while performers are doing a task. Job aids help reduce training time and support learning.

Common Job Aid Formats

Job aids can be developed for linear tasks, such as equipment assembly and filling out forms, and for complex tasks, such as medical diagnosis. These tasks are candidates for job aids:

- A task performed with relatively low frequency
- A highly complex task with numerous steps
- A task with a high consequence of error
- A task with a high probability of change in the future

Standard job aid designs include:

- Checklists
- Templates
- Step-by-step instructions
- User manuals
- Flowcharts
- Infographics
- List of tips



Tips for Creating Job Aids

A job aid may be one page or many volumes. When developing a job aid, consider the following guidelines to ensure that they are learner-centric.

Table 1: Tips for creating job aids

Tips	Details
One task at a time	One job aid equals one task. Don't provide information on how to complete more than one task on a job aid.
Keep it brief	- Avoid lengthy descriptions and stick to keywords. Job aids are not to educate people from scratch; instead, they serve as reminders of workplace tasks people have already learned. - It can be okay to use sentence fragments instead of carefully structured sentences that follow formal rules of written grammar. - Favor nouns over verbs and use concrete rather than abstract language.
Design for the learner	- Provide a brief heading and, if necessary, a short description of what task the job aid will help the learner perform to provide context. - Use language, terms, and examples that the learner will be familiar with. - Map the task to the job and organization the learner works in.

Tips	Details
Make it visual	• Use icons and charts to make information quicker to understand. • Ensure images are easily recognizable to learners. • Use lots of white space and follow visual design principles, such as information hierarchy, to guide readers.
Chunk the content	• Break the task into easy-to-follow blocks of information. Make sure they are visually separate, so readers can find the step they need quickly without having to read it from the beginning. • Use visual devices to guide learners to the key information, such as numbers in circles, arrows, or boxes.
Eliminate irrelevancies	• Ruthlessly delete any text or visual element that is not immediately relevant to the task. • If using images, remove backgrounds unless they are germane to the message.
Make it accessible	• If using colors, make them high contrast. • Rather than using color to highlight key points, employ shapes such as boxes or font features like bold or italic. • For digital job aids, use alt tags on images. • For video job aids, allow open captions and record audio descriptions.

Tips	Details
Merchandise	If using merchandise to support learning, such as a mouse mat, coffee mug, or signage: • Use materials that are close to the point of work, such as a mouse mat, or stickers that are located on factory equipment. • Test them with users to confirm they are helpful and the right support at the right place at the right time.
Pop-ups	If using on-screen pop-up windows, such as help menus: • Write in plain language. • Keep it ruthlessly short. • Use concrete language.
Digital	Think carefully about where the content will be viewed and design for that digital environment. For example: • Content accessed by a phone needs larger typefaces and less text to be easier to read on a small screen. • Videos viewed on a phone need to have less detail and, in most cases, cannot rely on audio to get the message across so will need captions and strong visuals.

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