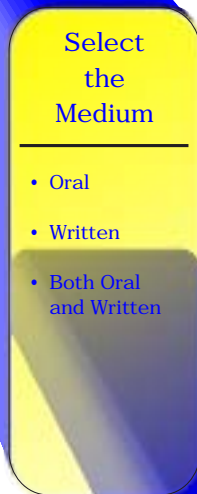
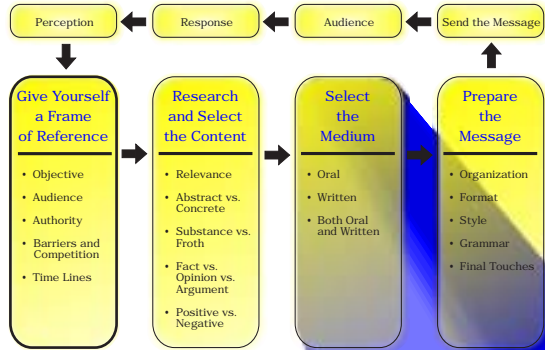


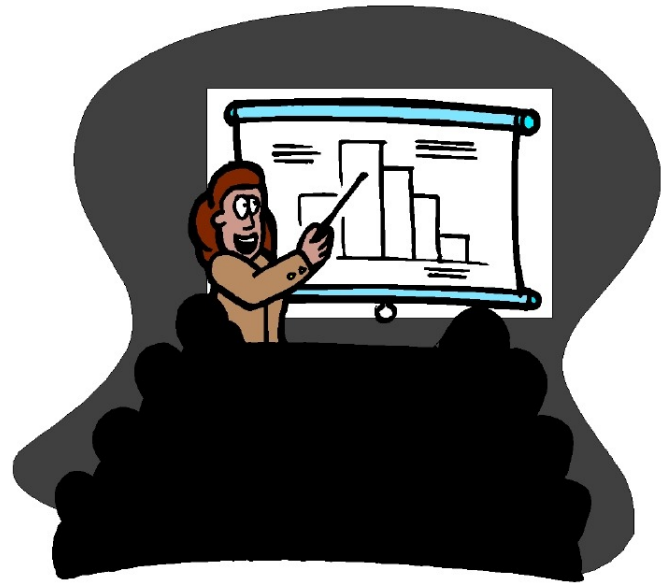
Writing for Results

A Step-by-Step Model for Executive Documents



Both Oral & Written

Combinations of Both Oral And Written Media



Oral and written media have their pros and cons. By combining the two, however, you can often get the best of both worlds. For example, in a meeting you could hand out a chart or diagram that helps to bring home a point that you are making. In advance of a telephone call, you could e-mail some text that you need to discuss. In a workshop, you could use a flip chart to write down key points from a presentation, and then tape the sheets to the wall.

Slide deck presentations have gained great popularity in recent years. That in itself has pros and cons. If used properly, a slide deck can be an excellent complement to a presentation. If used improperly, however, a slide deck can be little more than an irritant.

Slide decks have become a pet peeve of mine, so I am going to dwell on them for a few moments. I have sat through too many presentations where a slide deck has been used as a type of teleprompter for the text of a speech. That's to say the presenter writes out his or her presentation as a speech, and then creates slides out of the speech. The presenter then reads the slides verbatim off of the screen. That is an abuse of a slide deck.

Instead of carrying a speech verbatim, each slide should carry only three or four main points from a given part of the presentation. The presenter should then elaborate on those points orally. The slides serve as a guideline to help listeners keep track of where they are in the course of a presentation. After the presentation, the slides could be handed out to jog participants' memories about what was said. They might also be handed out beforehand so listeners can make notes on them during the presentation.

Another use of slides can be to present illustrations, charts or tables that cannot be presented orally. That is an excellent use of slides. However, copies of the slides should also be provided as handouts, either before or after the presentation.

A complement to a slide deck might be briefing material sent out in advance. That material could provide insight into concepts that must be understood in order to grasp the slide deck presentation.

That leaves four elements of a slide deck presentation, each of which has a distinct role:

- advance reading material;
- the slide deck presentation;
- the oral presentation;
- handouts of the slide deck, either before or after the presentation.

Keep those distinct roles in mind as you are preparing material, and aim to ensure that those roles do not overlap.