

4.7.15: Revising and Enhancing Visual Media for Impact

Learning Outcome

- Describe the process of revising and enhancing visual media to create impact



Figure 1. Simple and clear visuals can help you communicate complex ideas

During the development of a visual aid, the author will review, change, or amend the visual as a part of the revision process. The end product can benefit from the author's taking the time to pause to analyze whether the visual aid is aligned with the purpose of the message she is trying to convey. This includes the visual aid accommodating the audience's needs and characteristics and providing a persuasive conclusion. The revision process allows for the fine tuning of a draft (or completed project) that will enhance your visual media and ensure the message reaches the intended audience. When revisiting a visual aid, remember the four visual media standards we have explored in this module: Is it clear and simple? Is it consistent and uniform? Is it relevant and on brand? Is it persuasive?

The revision stage is a prime time to receive feedback from someone less familiar with what you have been working on to receive an outside viewpoint.

Feedback is an important and inevitable part of work, and it comes from the people around you: supervisors, peers, and customers. At some point in your communication career, someone is going to point out some image or graph you chose (or made) say: "I don't like this," "I don't understand this," or "This doesn't match our message."

Whether you are in the development phase or a visual aid has already been published, hearing feedback like this can be frustrating and feel dismissive after spending time and effort on creating a visual aid. If a colleague doesn't like your choice of image or graph, this doesn't mean your choice was wrong. Do not despair because this is an opportunity to make a better visual aid. Asking the right questions to clarify what is missing from your visual aid allows you to use this feedback to revise your visual and potentially communicate your message more successfully to your audience.

When feedback points to how a visual aid isn't working with the text, be curious, not defensive. It is tempting to become defensive or "explain away" the criticism, but resist this natural reflex. Do not debate or try to explain your behavior. Instead, let the other person finish completely and try to listen deeply. Then ask questions with the intent of inquiry:

- If you had to make two suggestions for improving my work, what would they be?
- Do the colors, alignment, or content of the image add or distract from the message or text?
- Is there something confusing or that could be done differently in this visual aid?
- How eye catching or engaging is the visual aid?
- Is it interactive, original, funny, or interesting?
- What is something that works well in this visual aid?
- Which parts of the visual aid are successful unsuccessful and why?

Request examples of what they think a good visual is. Stay curious until you can see how they reached their opinions—even if you don't completely agree. Later, you can decide what you agree or disagree with, but for now, your goal is simply to learn. Reflect thoughtfully on what you've heard.

Just as getting someone to read your writing can make your writing better, getting someone to look at your visual aids will help you create a better product. Asking someone to look over your slides, listen to your presentation, or watch a video you created can seem scary, but mistakes and feedback as *opportunities to grow*, rather than personal failures. Seeing feedback as an opportunity is

referred to as a **growth mindset**. Criticism is not an attack on you as a person. It is about something you did. You can't change who you are, but you *can* change what you do.

? Additional Resources

- [How to give and receive feedback in an agile organization](#)
- [Feedback for Teams](#)
- [Presenting with Sensory Enhancements](#)

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