

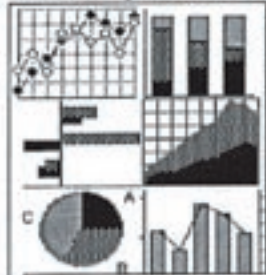
GRAPH data trends

Microsoft's *Chart* or *Excel* on the Macintosh allow you to plot statistical data in a wide variety of graph formats for maximum communications impact of trends and complex relationships.

Choose a Graph

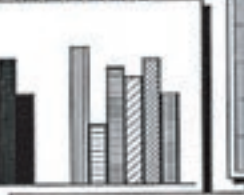
Consider the message that the data conveys—from the perspective of the sometimes unfamiliar audience—to determine the most appropriate type of graph to plot. Hybrids and combinations make effective comparisons.

Think of the initial impact of the graph and of the entire page. What will be understood by the scanning reader? What is the information value for those who study the data in detail? A very small thumbnail graph best shows a simple anecdotal trend.



Use Intuitive Symbols

Varying shades light to dark to represent less to more, and using different textures to represent totally distinct elements, allows for more intuitive understanding of the patterns of data. Arrows, shading, and other visual elements help tell the story.



Choose Scales Carefully

Generally a graph can be designed to fill the available space with a range of values that covers the existing data. Covering too wide a range will hide small values or differences. Interrupting the data with breaklines can be confusing. Insets can help to show detail as part of a larger scale overall trend.



Annotate with Text

A copy box with pointer to peaks and valleys, or to sharp ascents and declines, can draw a busy reader's attention to the crucial trends and can explain their causes—possibly drawing a scanning reader into the full text.



Pictures Help

Small icons or large background thematic images can help with information impact and visual attractiveness—but beware that cuteness and forced integration of image and data (such as bars in a graph made of cigarettes to represent statistics on smoking) can be distracting from the data.



under 5 years
5-12 yrs
12-18 yrs
18-35 yrs
35-65 yrs
over 65 yrs

Avoid Legends, If Possible

Labels directly on the graph elements are easier for the reader to recognize than having to look back and forth between the graph and a legend box.

Data plots create a visual pattern

Present the facts boldly and accurately. When plotting your own data, experiment with different graph types—automatically on the Mac software—to learn what looks good and communicates best. Better still contact Chuck Donohue at 951-2697 for help from our staff of graphic designers.

This flyer was produced on Apple's Macintosh microcomputer and LaserWriter printer, using Aldus PageMaker and with graphs generated automatically by Microsoft's Excel software—© 1985 Booz Allen & Hamilton.

a visual memo

—in the earliest days of desktop publishing—is one of a series of in-house flyers for a large management organization to encourage their consultants to use more graphics in their presentations and reports

and serving as a demonstrative example of a 'poster page'

where complex stories are **summarized visually** to attract the attention of viewers and draw them into more detail in a page of useful—and actionable—information