

VISUAL AIDS

Role of visuals

Visual Aids are an essential feature of effective communication. Why? Let us answer the question with an example:

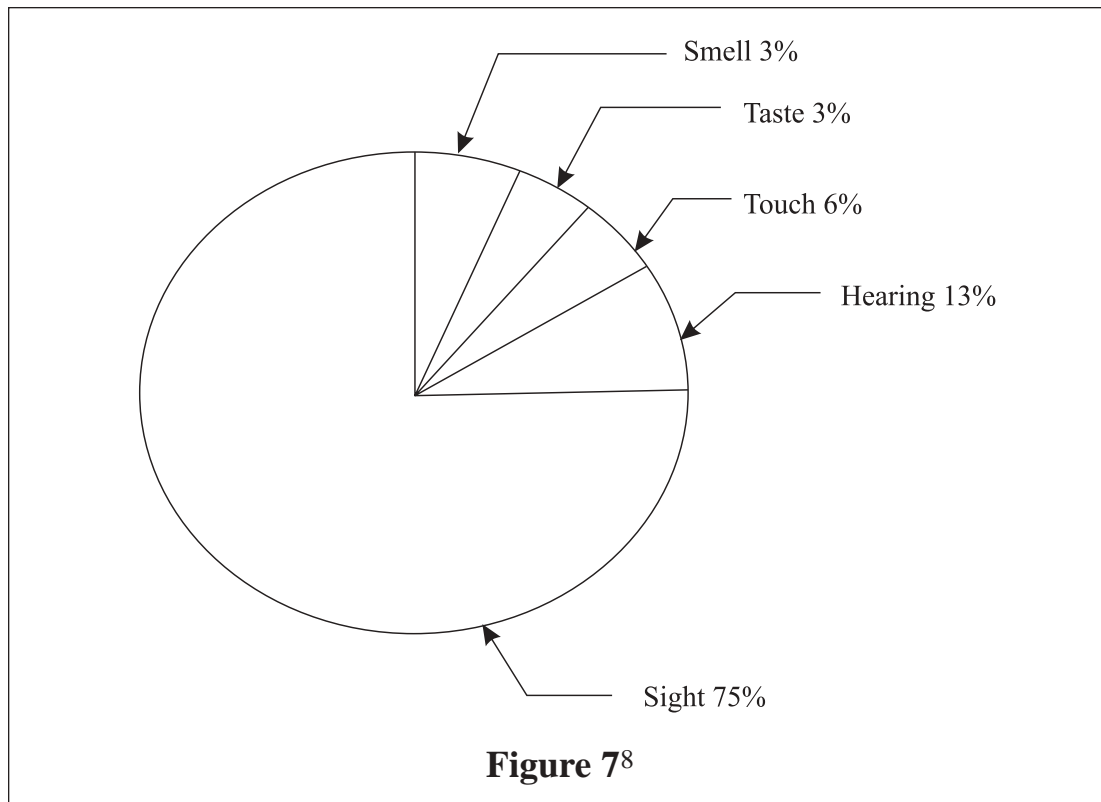


Figure 7 is a **visual aid** that explains, in nutshell, some facts about the contributions each of the senses make towards helping people learn. An alternative to this visual would have been to present the information in a narrative form. This would require learners to read or listen to a text carefully, assimilate the facts and develop a mental image of them to enable the facts to be remembered.

Which is the easier way for learners to learn? As suggested by Figure 7, it would appear that making use of the sense of sight through visual presentation makes learning easier, as it provides:

⁸ Adapted from the Readings on Direct Trainer's Skills Course of the Department of Personnel & Training [Training Division], Government of India.

- ◆ An appeal to a variety of senses
- ◆ A focus of attention
- ◆ A change of pace
- ◆ A simplified explanation to help understanding
- ◆ A more vivid and lasting impression
- ◆ A consolidation of learning
- ◆ Reference material for later use
- ◆ Help in relating or transferring learning to the real situation

Barriers to effective visual communication

Although visual aids help communication, there is also evidence to show that they can create barriers to effective communication. Usually we create these barriers when we give insufficient thought to the planning and use of the visual aids for promoting better communication and more effective learning.

How can we create visual aids that promote communication rather than impede it? The following points outline some important factors to be kept in mind.

Decide what we require of the visual aid

Aids should be used as an important and integral part of the learning process. They should be used to create interest; to help learners understand the information being given; to help them recall major points that they must remember; and to help them develop a mental perception of the information.

Plan the visual aid carefully

Good visual aids do not appear by chance - or rarely so. Usually a great deal of thought goes into their creation. It is advisable to prepare a rough sketch and ask the following questions:

- ◆ Is it what is really wanted?
- ◆ Is it as simple and bold as we can make it?
- ◆ Can they build the information step-by-step to control what the audience is looking at?
- ◆ Is it as interesting as we can make it?
- ◆ Is the visual neat in appearance?

Using a visual aid

If much effort has been used to produce good visual aids, then we should use them to their best advantage. The following points are well worth remembering:

- ◆ Do not obstruct the view of the audience.
- ◆ The visual must be well placed.
- ◆ Do not read a visual word by word to the audience.
- ◆ Do not wave a pointer in front of the visual.
- ◆ Do not talk to the visual.

Visibility

With all visual aids it is vital that everyone should see it. Adopting the Rule of Seven ensures this viz.,

- ◆ Not more than seven lines on an acetate sheet
- ◆ Not more than seven words in a line; and
- ◆ Size of letters 7 mm
- ◆ In addition, colour can be used to highlight various parts of the aid