

STEFANO FERRANTI



# Graphics AND MARKETING



*How to make your presentations effective (and beautiful)*



Here an example of what graphics are for  
from [www.typographyforlawyers.com](http://www.typographyforlawyers.com)



The title is perfect now,  
please make it twice as big and red

*Anonymous*



One day Carmen, a friend I work with, calls me: "Stefano, this thing sucks, can you please fix it?"

It was a Powerpoint presentation and actually needed a makeover...

While working on it I realized how much graphics, content and meaning are connected to each other. Within a few hours, the document became more readable, better organized, pleasant to look at and, above all, effective.

And the presentation? Was perfect!

This book is aimed particularly at those who create daily presentations and documents, such as marketing managers, but also assistants or small business owners, those who are committed to communicate with the purpose of selling, or at least to make themselves understood. It's not a technical book, nor for technicians and is almost always based on practical examples.

Good luck and have fun :)





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Last update: 11/02/13

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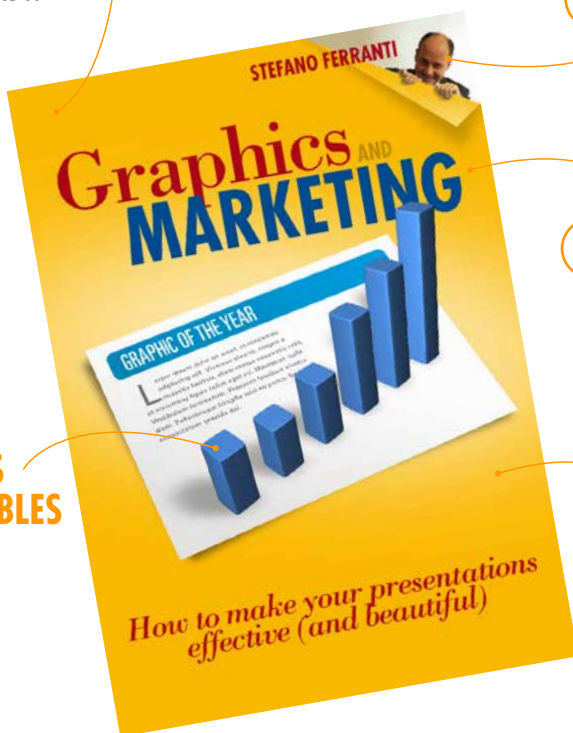
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Don't look for  
page numbers, I don't like  
so I didn't put them ;)

Good graphics are always effective, and the rules  
to get there are accurate and precise.  
Beauty, instead,  
is subjective and is a second step.

# 1: EFFECTIVENESS



## 2: Beauty



## Graphics

Graphics are like the dress you choose to wear for a meeting (or a job interview, or a dinner date): it is important make understand who you are and what you want, but not all the clothes are good in all situations.

How to learn 'dressing' your communication? With a few rules, a bit of good taste, simplicity, highlighting the strengths, hiding the flaws and adding a touch of personality.

What is good graphics? A vehicle for concepts, reducing the stress of increasing reading comprehension, transfer ideas and emotions and draw attention away from unwanted details. It is also a strategic element to support your career or your profession.

Why avoid bad graphics? And then, what's bad graphics? It is the inability to express in a clear and convincing way, showing confused and contradictory.

So learn to dress well.

# Psychology and graphics

Modern man reacts to a myriad of stimuli that are anything but modern, in fact they are atavisms.

Imagine how you should live hundreds of thousands of years ago: a particular color -too lively- posed a danger, was it insects or snakes; and the confusion of the forest was less assuring confronted to the clearing of an open valley, where you were sure of the absence of predators; the symmetry represented a form of healthy living and well developed; bright colors representing fresh food and not degraded, the light always came from above and with it, brightness and high contrast.

These elements all still have an enormous hold on our psyche.

# Basic principles

## Justifiability

Whatever graphic element you may use must have a *raison d'être*: if there's no logical explanation for a presence, how it is constructed and positioned -and the only reason is 'I like it'- it is probably wrong.

## Coherence

All elements must be consistent with each other: the style of the images, the choice of colors and shapes, the tone of voice. If you use pastel shades for the whole document, avoid a page of bright colors, if you mostly use photographs, avoid placing a clipart alone.

## Readability

The elements must always be legible, in the sense that should be understandable and interpretable at a glance. Contrast is also important, which increases readability and makes the concepts more effective.

## Repetition and recognition

The style of a document must be recognizable in every single page and, in turn, the visual connection between your documents must be immediate, because your style is your business card.

## Proximity and aggregation

The elements should not be randomly distributed, they must aggregate by meaning and function, and in turn for hierarchical importance and meaning.

## Simplification

Delete all the elements that are inconsistent, or represent unnecessary noise, starting from the line edges in Excel graphs to the phrases that are not useful, lengthy or redundant.

# Practical advices

## Check your tools

A bad tool leads to a bad result: anyone said Powerpoint? Ever wondered if Excel charts are fine as they are? Learn to go beyond the programs' limits and, if necessary, seek for better tools. On the web you will find tons of examples of presentations, fonts, images and editing programs, often for free.

## Consider the recipient

Always think about the recipient of your communication while working on the document: getting into their shoes, you'll know what you'd expect to see. Always consider where it will be read, if the recipient has deficits in vision, for instance – or has the attention span of a goldfish (in which case it's best to make a two slides presentation).

## Consider the environment

What do you know about where your document will be seen? Will it be printed on paper or projected, or an iPad? In case of projection, will it be in a large room, brightly lit? Then pay attention to the size of the fonts, the colors and contrast. And so on.

## Consider your objectives

Always remember what you want to achieve from your presentation: do you want to convince your boss? Do you want a budget increase, or more resources? Trying to highlight the pros and cons of a project? Reread each page and verify if graphics and contents are in line with your goal.

## Be simple

Simplicity always wins: avoid unnecessarily complex graphics, shadows, backgrounds, doodles placed as a filler. Focus your attention on what you mean. Above all, remember: a concept per page.

## Be original?

Been original for its own sake doesn't work: putting the titles upside down is not a sign of creativity, simply makes them unreadable. In general, human brain requires recognizable structures and patterns, and is comforted by the repetitiveness and the known.

### **Remove anything you can**

Each time I open a document, I seek for something to delete: a phrase, a picture, a line – when getting into this state of mind, you'll find a lot of useless materials.

### **Graphics come from the contents**

The appearance of your document may vary in function of many aspects, but it's basically driven by the content. When talking about a market in recession, it makes no sense to use bright colors and graphics like a discount store's.

### **Graphics won't save bad contents**

If you are faced with a document that is chaotic in structure and contents, wordy or disorganized, graphics won't fix it. Shorten wordy texts, refocus the contents and review every single step starting from the basic concepts, redistributing them in a more balanced way.

### **Plan the structure**

When it comes to creating a document from scratch, pen and paper are still the best. Begins writing on a piece of paper objectives, highlights, terms of use and sketch a first structure. Don't be afraid to start over, or making main corrections when needed.

### **Checks and controls**

Test your entire document reading to someone, check whether the speech is coherent and consequential – thus meaning that the document's structure is well done. Once finished, leave your document alone at least for 24 hours and then read it again. With a fresh mind, your eyes may catch something wrong that you missed before, while too used to it.

### **Are you small? Be loud!**

Quoting Paul Arden (former creative director for Saatchi and Saatchi who wrote 'Whatever You Think, Think The Opposite'): 'If you are not yet a big company, dare! Impress everybody with strong images and texts, personality and unconventional ideas... on the other hand, what you got to lose?'

# Before-and-after

Let's see how it's possible to improve readability and appealing of any presentation.

## Our Values

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## OUR VALUES

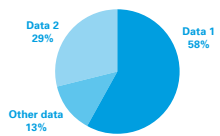
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- ODOLOBORE MAGNA AUTETUM
- VOLORTIE FACCUMSAN ET LA FEUM ENIT DIONSEQ



Graphics can create a 'wow effect' that will help keeping concepts in mind (even in case a jigsaw piece ;)

## Health sector

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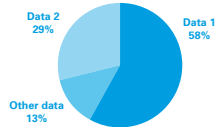
## Health sector Approach



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- Volortie faccumsan et la feum ing enit dionseq

Too many concepts in a page?  
Try breaking them down for  
improved readability

## Health sector Numbers



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- Rilit wisi tin ut acipsumsan velit alisi erat, si
- Alisse dolore faccum vulputpatem nisis esent

## Medical sector

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The background makes the text  
-way too long- unreadable

## Medical sector

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**massa venenatis velit, at nonummy ligula tellus eget.**

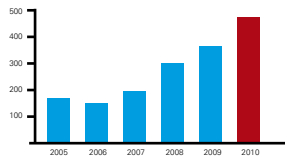
**Maecenas nulla, vestibus**

**fermentum praesent.**



Short text, bright background  
and humanization – now it works

## Current year analysis



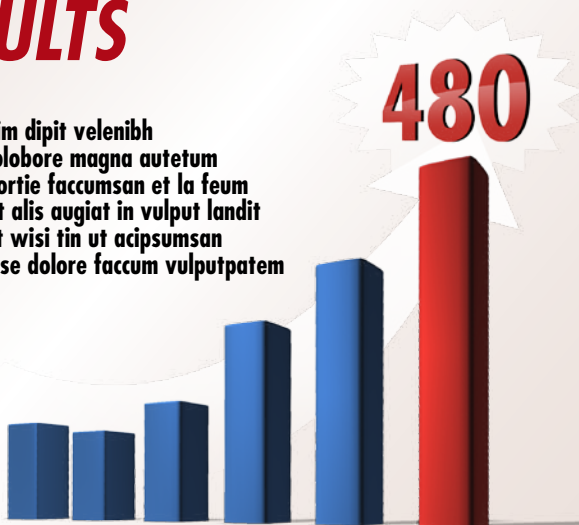
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Trivial graphics, wordy texts,  
boring graphic

## RESULTS

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- **Odolobore magna autetum**
- **Volortie faccumsan et la feum**
- **Gait alis augiat in vulput landit**
- **Rilit wisi tin ut acipsumsan**
- **Alisse dolore faccum vulputpatem**



Attractive graphics, short texts  
and focus on the data

**Our customers include organizations such as:**

- **BAE**
- **Basf**
- **Bayer**
- **BMW**
- **Carrefour**
- **Credit Suisse**
- **Daimler**
- **Dompé**
- **General Electric**
- **GUNA**
- **KPMG**
- **Lukoil**
- **Nestlé**
- **Panasonic**
- **Pepsi**



A boring list of names

**Our customers include organizations such as:**



...becomes a strong impact image

# The page

## This is a title

Maybe with a subtitle

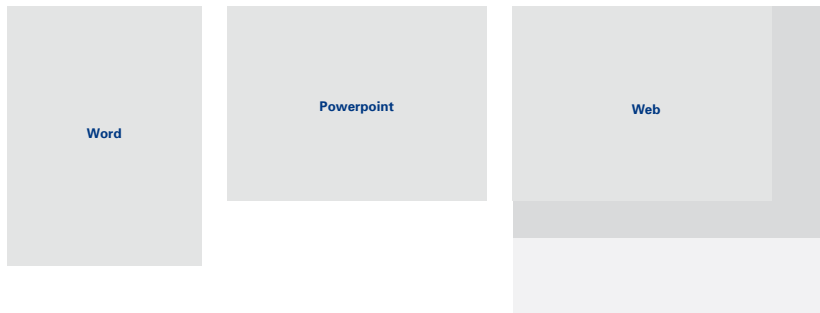
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COMPASS

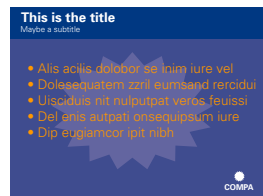
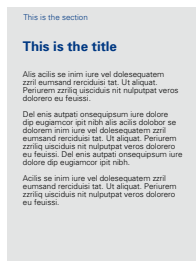
# The page, your playground

Let's start comparing the traditional paper page -vertical- with the horizontal one, typical of Powerpoint presentation. More suitable for complex communications the first, use the latter for communicating synthetic points. The very sense of an horizontal sheet is its duplicability on a computer screen. There is also a 'virtual' space, that is the web page: scrollable and navigable, virtually exceeds the limits imposed by the screen estate.



## Editorial layout vs. slides

A printed page is very far from the one aimed for screen presentation, and transforming one into another may mean changing the contents altogether.



**Important title, associated with the text**

**White or light background**

**Body of the text often in black 100% – for the sake of readability**

**Content usually long-winded**

**Read by one recipient at a time**

**The logo appears only on the cover and on the back**

**More variable structure, in order to fit changing contents**

**Title often placed in a band**

**Colored or image backgrounds – when presenting on screen only, even dark colors**

**Text often in color, bright on dark**

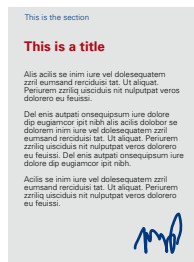
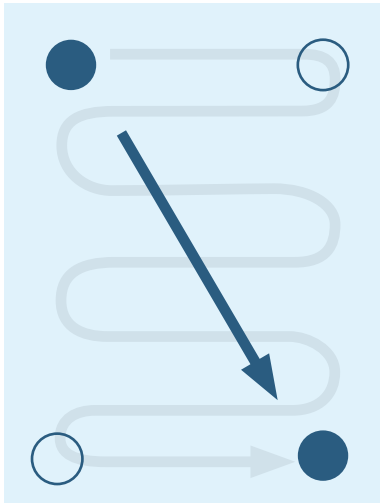
**Essential content, by bullet points**

**The logo appears on every page**

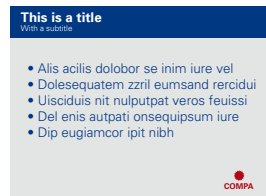
**More 'template' structure**

## The way we read

According to the 'Gutenberg's rule', our brain reads pages starting from the upper left towards the lower right corner. This is why we often position titles at top, body text in the middle and signatures -as a closure- at the bottom right of the page.



Be the page vertical or horizontal, arrangement of the key elements doesn't change



This picture is the result of a study on eye movement, which helped understanding how human brain interprets the structure of the page (warmer colors represent areas of higher attention)



# Building the document

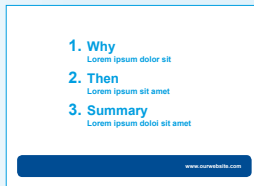
Building a new document from scratch is often a complex task. My favorite method (that I used for this book) is starting from a simple paper sheet writing down the history behind the document, as if I was telling someone. After this, I start to separate individual sentences, which will later become chapters. This method gives a strong coherence to the document.

First questions are: will it be on paper or on screen? Will I show it myself in front of a meeting room, or will somebody read it alone, on his iPad? And what kind of person will read it?

Psychological studies say that attention lasts up to ten, fifteen minutes at maximum – but we can ‘reset’ this countdown with strong emotional images and sudden changes of pace.



Cover



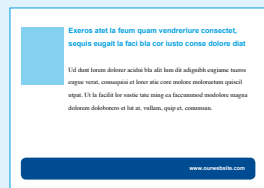
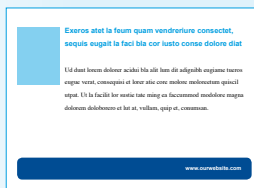
Summary: in case of lengthy documents numbered points will help showing the time left for the presentation to the end, that sometimes is a good thing ;)



Image introductory section: breaks the rhythm, turns the attention on and highlights the change of topic




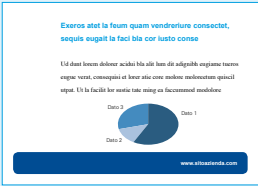
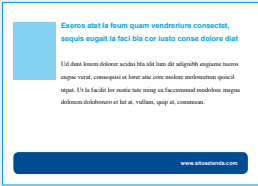
Another picture, a different introductory section that ‘cuts’ the document



After 72 hours from a presentation, spoken or textual information has a 'memorization' percentage of 10. **The same information, associated with an image, has a 65 percent of memorizing.** Still, it's important that the image has a real relationship with the subject, and possibly an emotional impact to further strengthen the memory. The association of more senses (auditory, tactile and olfactory in particular) further increases the degree of 'storage': try to imagine how you could integrate them within your presentation.


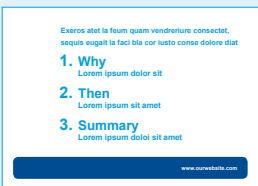
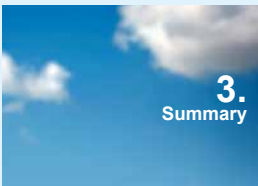
The key issue is the **rhythm of the document**, which must have continuity, a prologue, and a final moment of 'pathos'. This is the only way to build a truly immersive and compelling communication.

**Try your the presentation several times**, always checking timing and pace: you are in control of the presentation, not the opposite – as when you see presenters who read, like they don't remember their arguments.



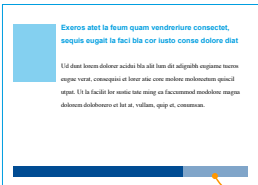
The first page of the section is generally cleaner

Data and texts pages: show a concept per slide



Summary and a short proposal, most important in longer documents

Company logo, contacts and greetings



And what about creating a 'progress bar' on a long document?

# **‘Philosophy’ of the page**

Before even reading the contents of the page, your brain scans it, trying to interpret what he sees in about 0.45 seconds. In this fraction of time your brain decides how the page is organized, if it is consistent and legible, if the contents are of interest. It is therefore important that the layout helps the brain understanding purposes and arrangements of contents with simplicity and immediacy.

Cognitive limitations of the human brain drive to basic rules: for instance, we can recognize a maximum of seven items within a glance, and it must be homologous elements. When presenting concepts, we cannot submit more than one page, or a maximum of three in case of job steps.

Most important elements are:

- words associated with images have a greater persistence in memory, especially when submitted simultaneously
- it is important, therefore, the spatial contiguity: images and words must be close by meaning and space
- equally important is the avoidance of non-coherent and unnecessary items and concepts, distracting the reader that will lose the continuity given by the consistency of a construct of history
- animation and speech are closely associated: memorizing is greater when video associated with written text, instead of the two alone
- a little white space please: white space gives relief and visibility to other elements, and enables the human eye (which moves at the impressive speed of 20 milliseconds from one point to another one the page) to rest for approximately a quarter of a second, then starting reworking the elements just seen.

In the following pages we'll see examples of these indications.

Too many elements on a page generate confusion, as well as too many hierarchical levels. If you really need to show way too many items, try to organize them first.

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[www.ourwebsite.com](#)

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## Exeros quam vendreriuere

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- **eugiamе tueros eugue verat, consequisi**  
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- **moloreetum quiscil utpat la facilit lor sustie tate ming**

[www.ourwebsite.com](#)

Disclaimer: Ud dunt lorem dolorer acidui bla alit lum dit adignibh eugiamе tueros eugue verat, consequisi et lorer atie core molore moloreetum quiscil utpat la facilit lor sustie tate ming ea faccummod

9

An habit in presentations is using bullet points, more than two levels is far too long. Transform the bullet into text to make it more readable. And keep in mind that, during presentations, these are key points, and not the whole spoken message: do not write if you're about to say them.

One of the secrets in building a good presentation is **showing one concept per page** alone: attention falls quickly and people tend to recognize only what interests them, so learn to focus.

# Elements of the page

Consistency is important in graphics, gives a sense of reliability and consistency and it's most important that you recognize it through the entire document. Titles, for example, must show the same character, color and size in every page, same as for the body text of the page.

Prepare a sketch of the texts, identify the 'worst situations' (the longest title or text) and start from them to create the standard sizes of the document.

Be the differences between titles too strong, you can create two styles – for example, long titles 36 points, short titles 24 points – and keep unchanged the other features. Never change the size or style in every page, it delivers an impression of disorder to the document.

The diagram shows a slide layout with the following elements and annotations:

- Title:** Points to the title "Exeros atet la feum quam vendreriure".
- Main elements, colors, ornaments:** Points to the blue header bar.
- Main text area:** Points to the bulleted list of text.
- Graphics (Photos, charts graphic elements):** Points to a pie chart.
- Company logo, name, website:** Points to the footer bar containing "www.companyurl.com".
- Copyright is always soooooo engaging... can you avoid it?** Points to a small disclaimer text in the footer.
- Page number is used as an habit, do you really need it in a few slides' document?** Points to the page number "8".

**Slide Content:**

**Title:** Exeros atet la feum quam vendreriure

- Ud dunt lorem dolorer acidui bla alit lum dit adignibh
- eugiame tueros eugue verat, consequi et lorer atie core molore
- moloreetum quiscil utpat la facilit lor sustie tate ming ea faccummod

**Graphics (Pie Chart):**

Dato	Percentage
Dato 1	58%
Dato 2	29%
Altro dato	13%

**Footer:**

www.companyurl.com

Disclaimer: Ud dunt lorem dolorer acidui bla alit lum dit adignibh eugiame tueros eugue verat, consequi et lorer atie core moloreetum quiscil utpat la facilit lorisustie tate ming ea faccummod

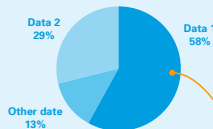
8

Titles, like texts, have always the same distance from the edge of the page

## Exeros atet la feum quam vendreriure

The title has always the same color, font, style (uppercase, lowercase) and size

- Ud dunt lorem dolorer acidui bla alit lum dit adignibh
- eugiamt tueros eugue verat, consequisi et lorer atie core molore
- moloretum quisail utpat la facilit lor sustie tate ming ea faccummod



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Disclaimer: Ud dunt lorem dolorer acidui bla alit lum dit adignibh eugiamt tueros eugue verat, consequisi et lorer atie core molore moloretum quisail utpat la facilit forsustie tate ming ea faccummod

8

Graphic elements should always be similar to each other: if using bright colors and rounded corners, apply the same style to other elements

## Exeros quam vendreriure

- Ud dunt lorem dolorer acidui bla alit lum dit adignibh
- eugiamt tueros eugue verat, consequisi et lorer atie core molore
- moloretum quisail utpat la facilit lor sustie tate ming ea faccummod
- eugiamt tueros eugue verat, consequisi et lorer atie core molore



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Disclaimer: Ud dunt lorem dolorer acidui bla alit lum dit adignibh eugiamt tueros eugue verat, consequisi et lorer atie core molore moloretum quisail utpat la facilit forsustie tate ming ea faccummod

9

Despite of having different contents, all pages look alike – thus making more acceptable for the final reader

**TIP:** create a style that you will use in all your documents. The recognition of your publications will help you communicate better, and this will make you recognizable, both in and outside the company

## Cover

The first page of a document is as important as the first impression on a date. Sure enough, the most beautiful covers are those made with an image full bleed, but there may be restrictions (printing, image quality, company standards). Simplicity pays, and always consider the media on which will be presented, be it screen or paper.



**Maximum simplicity for the  
maximum of impact**


## Executive summary – at the beginning or the end?

A major American manager, expert in international communication, pointed me out how much Italians are different from Americans – we Italians argue for long time and then come to conclusions, Americans start from premises and develop them in the length of the document (in the first case it seems that Steve Jobs was used to dismiss the presenter ;). Always verify your interlocutor's cultural assets. I recommend a 'drill-in' organization, so first comes the executive summary, then arguments, insights and eventually supporting data – in short, it begins with the operational conclusions and leaves the chat support for those who want to read.

**Agenda (or summary)**

Useful with long documents with very different areas of discussion. In some cases, you can number the points: helps us understanding when the end will come.

Let your audience know which will be the structure of your presentation

 CUMPA

1. Exeros atet la feum
2. quam vendrerriure consectet
3. sequis eugait la faci iusto conse dolore diat
4. asxeros atet la feum
5. quam vendrerriure consectet

In lengthy documents, you can show agenda at each main point, and highlight it

- Exeros atet la feum
- quam vendrerriure consectet
- sequis eugait la faci iusto conse dolore diat
- asxeros atet la feum
- quam vendrerriure consectet


[www.ourwebsite.com](http://www.ourwebsite.com)

A new section's image: help people 'feel' the change of subject



Pages examples

When a page is consistent, you can tell the theme of the content and general tone at a glance.



- Exercice 1: la forme que vous recherchez connectez, respectez l'alignement à la fois à la fois que vous recherchez de la.
- Exercice 2: la forme que vous recherchez connectez, respectez l'alignement à la fois à la fois que vous recherchez de la.
- Exercice 3: la forme que vous recherchez connectez, respectez l'alignement à la fois à la fois que vous recherchez de la.

Highlighted logo, few main points

Exercice 1: la forme que vous recherchez connectez, respectez l'alignement à la fois à la fois que vous recherchez de la.

Exercice 2: la forme que vous recherchez connectez, respectez l'alignement à la fois à la fois que vous recherchez de la.

Exercice 3: la forme que vous recherchez connectez, respectez l'alignement à la fois à la fois que vous recherchez de la.

Wide margins and ample line spacing: a fiction book

Exercice 1: la forme que vous recherchez connectez, respectez l'alignement à la fois à la fois que vous recherchez de la.

Exercice 2: la forme que vous recherchez connectez, respectez l'alignement à la fois à la fois que vous recherchez de la.

Exercice 3: la forme que vous recherchez connectez, respectez l'alignement à la fois à la fois que vous recherchez de la.

Dense text and data, still tidy and readable

Corporate rules

When working in a large company, you'll be obnoxious in a user manual of the corporate image. Please don't consider it a hassle, because a professional has reasoned and invested time and effort in building this image system only to help you. The color of the logo, the use of selected characters and fixed templates are used to make work you less and better.

Learn to take a cue from these kinds of documents: often report considerations and interesting techniques which you can use in your own personal document.

# Transitions and animations

Apply transitions and animations only when the document is completed.

## Transitions

Choose simple a transition style, fast and not too 'tamarro' (an Italian word to describe people like those in Jersey Shore ;), and apply to each slide – this will help you build the overall style of your presentation.

Please avoid any changes in the style of the transitions, unless they serve to emphasize a different content.

## ...and animations

An important aspect of the animation of a single graphic element is the relationship between movement and meaning: in general, fading is always good, but if you're describing contemporary contributions of several sections, may be more suitable a convergent motion. So animate a graph accordingly, for example with a magnification.

A nice trick is to assemble the document while listening to the music that suits best the presentation's style (quiet and melodic, or rhythmic and fast). Even if you won't have that music in the background in the end, the presentation will have a smoother and more consistent aspect.

Keep in mind that angular shapes and bold colors are coordinated with movements more firm and rapid. By contrast, a quiet trend is more easily associated with pastel colors. And, if you're using a black background, please listen to jazz ;)

## A curious case against company rules

While editing the English version of this book, something curious happened. I met a guy working for a very large consulting company, that has a very strict regulation about logo usage, that is supposed to be yellow. He told me he was disappointed that, while building his own presentation to a women leaded company, he had to use such an aggressive logo. Against my usual suggestions, I told him to try to focus on some pinkish style, and make the logo too. 'If it'll succeed, you become case history, but if the new business fails, you're dead with it: do you dare?'

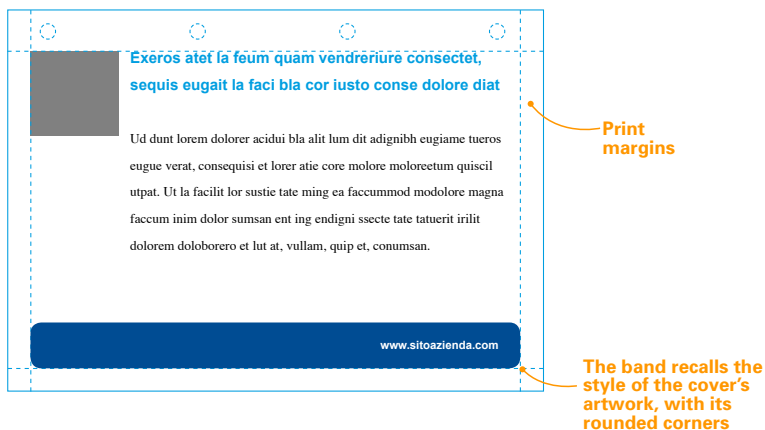
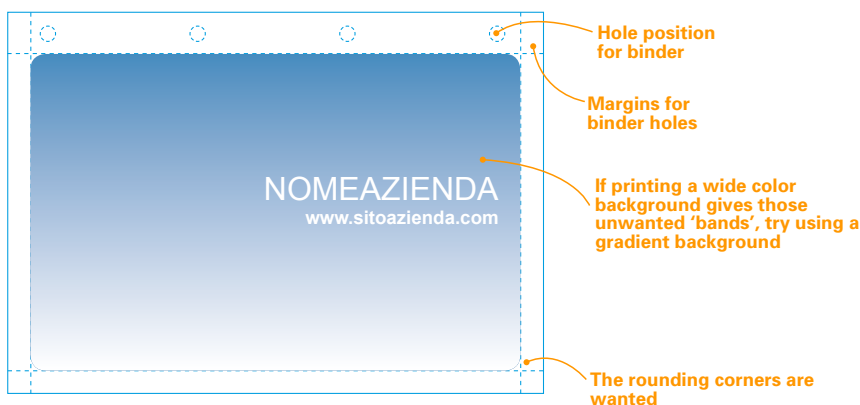


# Print

Printing documents could become painful. The first problem is how much screen and print colors differ, but there are other issues.

If you want to print a presentation on a Letter-size sheet, first sketch a document grid considering edges and bindings, in order to avoid unwanted cuts of images text loss.

For example, knowing the printer needs 1/3 inch margin, create a grid that takes account of this limit, showing it as a choice – for example with rounded edge shapes.



Printing large formats, such as a poster, reconsider the characters's size: make some experiment first, since the view on screen can be misleading.

Make a prototype of a few pages and print -or project- them, and use it as a guide for all subsequent pages. Better testing first rather than finding out too late that the font used is of the wrong size.

If you need to print a large number of copies, or are looking for a higher quality than office printers, contact an external service provider, that you can easily find online as well: remember to send a PDF file, better after a test print to verify that all elements appear as you wish.

**TIP: What do I send him?**

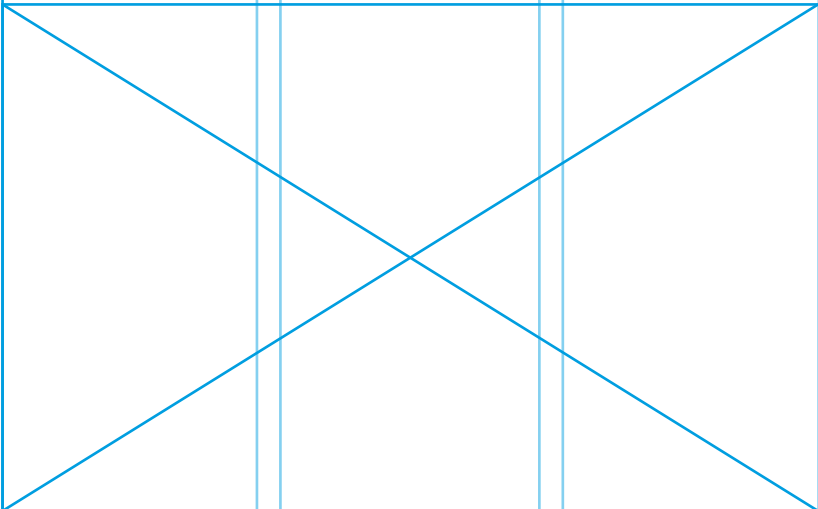
There's a risk that, at the last minute, compatibility problems appear, both presenting or sending an email to someone you don't know. Prepare a PDF file as a backup, since it shows -almost- perfectly the same way on any computer.



## Building the document: the grid

The cornerstones of a graphic document is the page grid, a guiding system that helps managing positions and proportions of the contents.

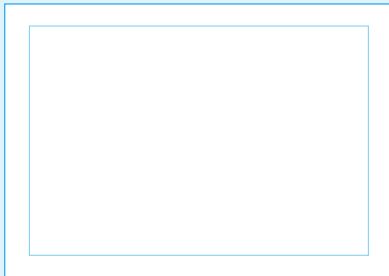
There are several ways to build a grid, some of which very sophisticated. They were born in a time when creating a book was creating a piece of art, and owning it was a privilege.



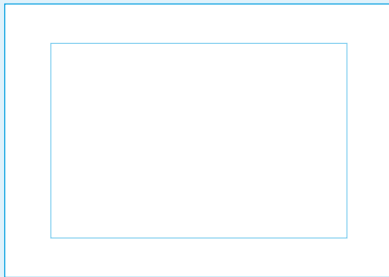
Here a practical method for constructing a grid:

## **1** determines the margins

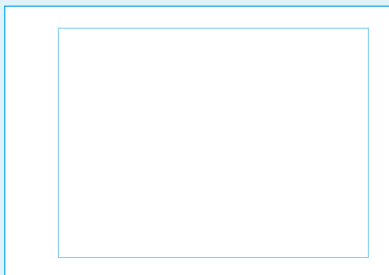
- wider margins give you an idea of greater wealth, but they sacrifice the space available;
- margins may be equal to each other, but it is not required: for example, if you're working on a document that will be printed front and back, you may need to expand the inner edges to compensate for the center folding;
- page margins are not the same for each content: for instance, page number are often outside the base margins, and the images are full bleed, outside the inner grid.



Margins equal, generally 10 or 15mm based on a Letter



Margins equal but wide - here we are over one inch



Different margins: often apply to book bindings or self printed materials

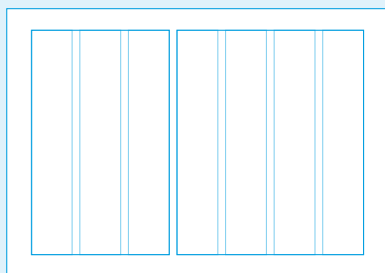
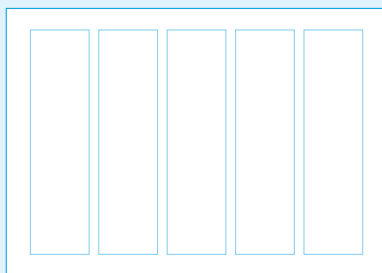
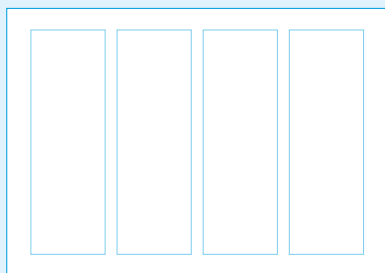
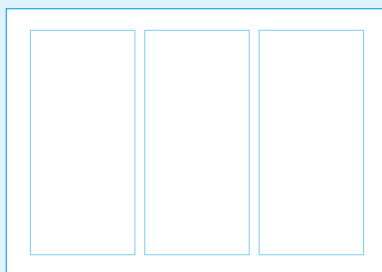
## 2 Divide the space into columns

The number of columns varies in function of the content: use one or two columns for simple continuous texts, up to more than ten in newspapers.

The columns must be of the same width, and you can merge them later.

Leave a fixed space between a column and the other.

In case of multiple columns, you can 'regroup' them to create a column that is a multiple of the base column.

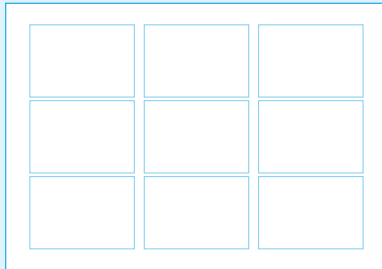


A large number of columns can be used to create a dynamic layout, when using multiple grouped columns

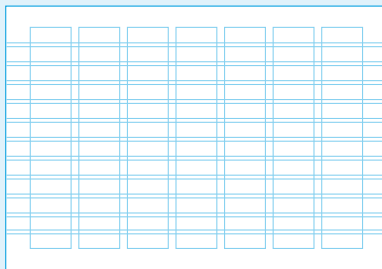
### 3 create a vertical module

Even though not necessary, a vertical scan helps you position and size text and images consistently across the page.

The base module can have an arbitrary size, but often comes from the proportion of the page.



The vertical subdivision can be made out of self-proportion (see below), or arbitrary modules

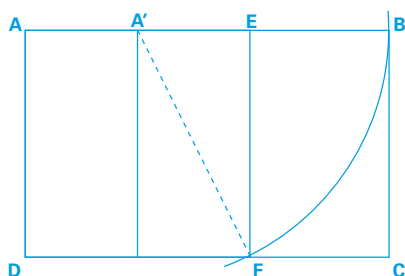


Complex vertical subdivision modules are difficult to build, and are usually used in the publishing industry

# General rules for the document elements

## The golden section

The golden section has been known to man for thousands of years. In geometric terms is called the golden section, but the same principle can be found in mathematics, as in the Fibonacci series. In nature, many organisms (like some shells, or flowers) build structures accordingly to this proportion. You can use it to create objects and grids of perfect proportions.

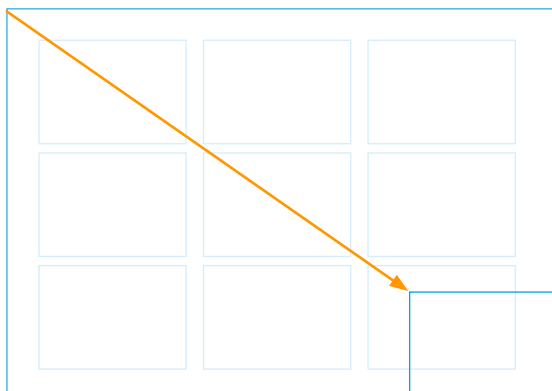


To build the golden rectangle, draw a square whose vertices we will call, from the top down in the upper left and proceeding clockwise, AEFD. Then divide the segment AE in two, calling the midpoint A'. Using the compass and pointing in A' draws an arc that intersects the extension F of the segment AE in B. With a team draws the segment BC perpendicular to AB. The rectangle ABCD is a golden rectangle in which AB is divided by point E in exactly the golden section:  $AE : EB = AB : AE$

In short, the ratio is 1.618 – so if you don't want to point the compass in the middle of your monitor, you can simply draw a rectangle 16 inches wide and 10 high.


## Self proportion

Since the workspace is already defined by the worksheet, you can use the ratio between its height and width to define the basic module of the page, dividing the space in 4 (2x2), 9 (3x3) or 16 (4x4) parts.




# Recursive elements


You often have to insert modular elements within a document. Those elements are repeated, the contents of which are organized according to a recurring pattern. Since contents vary, we must start from the most complex one and create a basic model, for example with the longest text.




**Valentino Rossi**  
Exeros atet la feum quam venderiure consiectet, sequis eugait la faci bla cor iusto consse dolore diat. Ud dunt lorem dolorer acidui bla alit lum dit adignibh eugiane tueros eugue verat, moleoretum quiscil utpat.




**PierPiero Rossi di Mazzanti VienDaIMare**  
Exeros atet la feum quam venderiure consiectet, sequis eugait la faci bla cor iusto consse dolore diat.




**Giovanni Pascoli**  
Exeros atet la feum quam venderiure consiectet, sequis eugait la faci bla cor iusto consse dolore diat. Ud dunt lorem dolorer acidui bla alit lum dit adignibh eugiane tueros eugue verat, moleoretum quiscil utpat.




**Mike Patton**  
Exeros atet la feum quam venderiure consiectet, sequis eugait la faci bla cor iusto consse dolore diat. Ud dunt lorem dolorer acidui bla alit lum dit adignibh eugiane tueros eugue verat, moleoretum quiscil utpat.




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Most 'problematic' element: the text is the longest


Use this as a module, all other objects will be the same size




**Valentino Rossi**  
Exeros atet la feum quam venderiure consiectet, sequis eugait la faci bla cor iusto consse dolore diat. Ud dunt lorem dolorer acidui bla alit lum dit adignibh eugiane tueros eugue verat, consequisi et lorer atie core moleoretum quiscil utpat.




**PierPiero Rossi di Mazzanti VienDaIMare**  
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**Mario Rossi**  
Exeros atet la feum quam venderiure consiectet, sequis eugait la faci bla cor iusto consse dolore diat. Ud dunt lorem dolorer acidui bla alit lum dit adignibh eugiane tueros eugue verat, consequisi et lorer atie core moleoretum quiscil utpat.

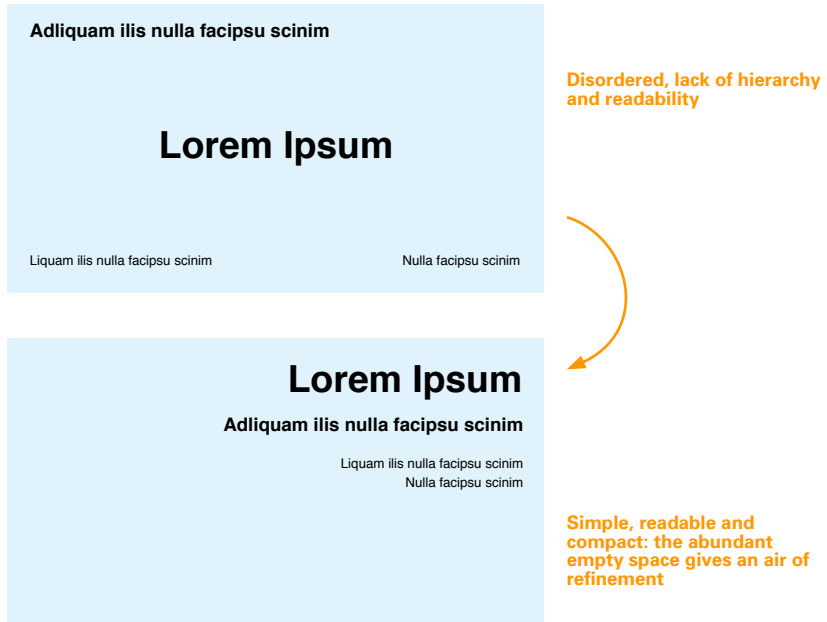


**Mario Rossi**  
Exeros atet la feum quam venderiure consiectet, sequis eugait la faci bla cor iusto consse dolore diat. Ud dunt lorem dolorer acidui bla alit lum dit adignibh eugiane tueros eugue verat, consequisi et lorer atie core moleoretum quiscil utpat.

In this case I created fixed spaces -9 boxes-, chosen the longest text, fitted the character's size and fixed all the others upon this one

## Visual organization

One of the main themes in the graphic is organization: you should always try to organize content according to their meaning and their hierarchy, avoiding 'littering' the items randomly in the workspace.



The 'menu' problem

One of the classic problems in graphics is the menu of a restaurant, and in general any organized list.

In a menu we have a complex organization system (appetizers, main course, etc), an internal order in this grouping, items with different values (name, ingredients, price, notes) and other hierarchical issues.

APPETIZERS	
Stuffed olives	3.00
Mixed fried	4.00
French fries	3.00
PIZZAS	
4 cheese Stilton, Swiss cheese, parmesan, mozzarella	8.00
4 seasons tomato, mozzarella, ham, artichokes, mushrooms, olives	8.00
Baguette Mediterranean mozzarella cheese, soft cheese, cherry tomatoes, parmesan and arugula	8.00
Bismark tomato, mozzarella, ham, egg	8.00
Boscaiola tomato, mozzarella, fresh mushrooms	8.00
Brianzola tomato, mozzarella, sausage, mushrooms, onions	8.00
Calzone tomato, mozzarella, ham, cream cheese	8.00
Capricciosa tomato, mozzarella, ham, mushrooms, artichokes, olives, oregano, anchovies, capers	8.00
Crudo tomato, mozzarella, raw ham	8.00
BRUSCHETTE	
Margherita tomato, mozzarella	5.00
Marinara tomato, garlic, capers, oregano, basil, olive oil	5.00
Eggplant tomato, mozzarella, eggplant, parmesan, gorgonzola	5.00
Naples tomato, mozzarella, anchovies, oregano	5.00
Prague Prague ham, smoked cheese, mozzarella	5.00

No

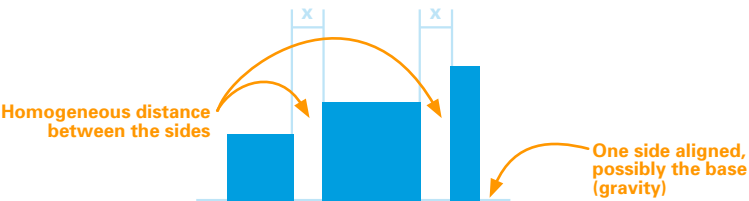
APPETIZERS	
Stuffed olives	3.00
Mixed fried	4.00
French fries	3.00
PIZZAS	
4 cheese	
Stilton, Swiss cheese, parmesan, mozzarella	8.00
4 seasons	
tomato, mozzarella, ham, artichokes, mushrooms, olives	8.00
Baguette Mediterranean	
Mozzarella cheese, soft cheese, cherry tomatoes, parmesan and arugula	8.00
Bismark	
tomato, mozzarella, ham, egg	8.00
Boscaiola	
tomato, mozzarella, fresh mushrooms	8.00
Brianzola	
tomato, mozzarella, sausage, mushrooms, onions	8.00
Calzone	
tomato, mozzarella, ham, cream cheese	8.00
Capricciosa	
tomato, mozzarella, ham, mushrooms, artichokes, olives, oregano, anchovies, capers	8.00
Crudo	
tomato, mozzarella, raw ham	8.00
BRUSCHETTE	
Margherita	
tomato, mozzarella	5.00
Marinara	
tomato, garlic, capers, oregano, basil, olive oil	5.00
Eggplant	
tomato, mozzarella, eggplant, parmesan, gorgonzola	5.00
Naples	
tomato, mozzarella, anchovies, oregano	5.00
Prague	
Prague ham, smoked cheese, mozzarella	5.00

Yes

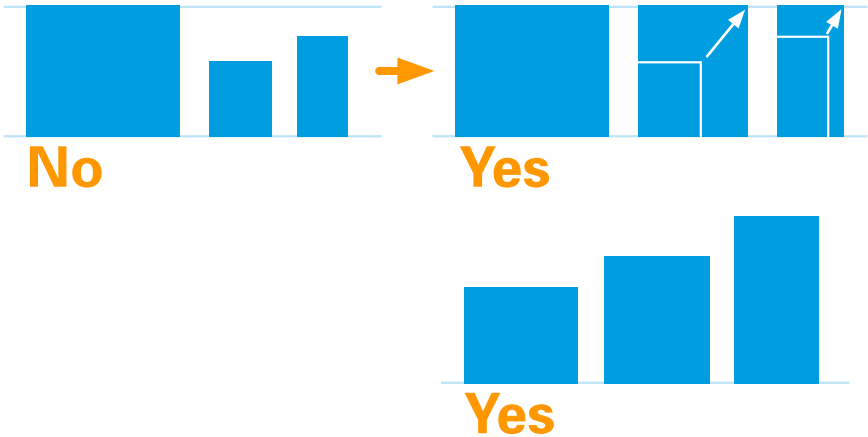


**Alignment and spacing between objects**

Really hard topic... we'll try to define some general 'visual' rule.



If possible, elements of different sizes must be normalized over the height (if arranged horizontally) or the width (if arranged vertically)



Create an 'optical' alignment, that seemingly compensate for the size of rounded objects in respect of squared ones



No

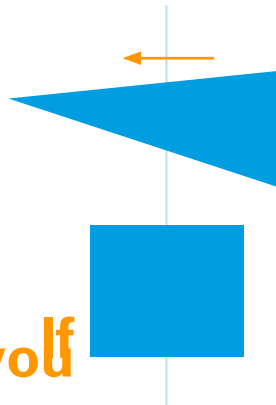


Yes

Optical alignment is based on 'visual weight': an object with an 'heavier' side needs a slight shift in the opposite direction

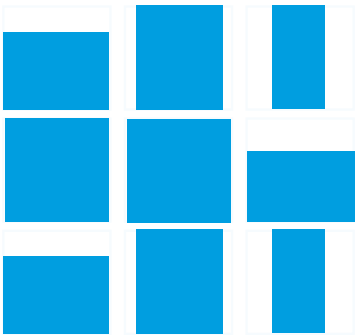


No

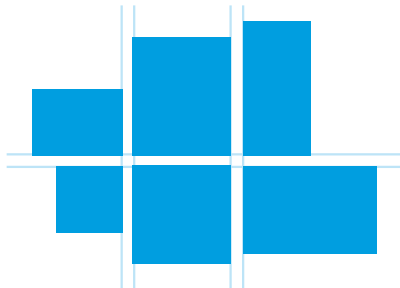


Yes

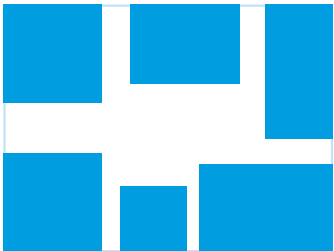
If you have many items, try to create a grid where placing and fixing elements



Having a central axis, you can get consistent spacing between the touching sides



In function of the number of objects, you can distribute them along an outer frame





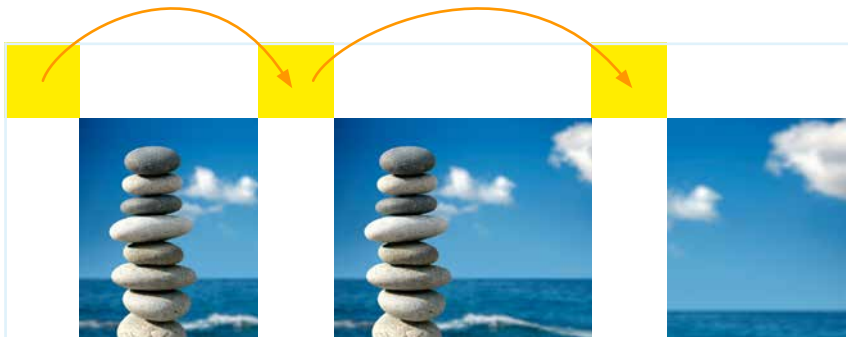
No



Yes

1. Align all images to the baseline
2. Scaled to have the same height
3. Compensated the size optically

**TIP:** to position several elements at the same distance from each other, or from the edge of the page, create a square (better if bright color) and use it as a 'ruler'



# File formats

## Jpeg's size

A quick way to tell if a jpeg file is suitable for a medium-quality printing is checking the size on the disk: if it's at least 2-300Kb or more it's okay, if it is only 20-30Kb easily won't be good.

## What is the resolution?

The resolution (usually referred as dpi, dots per inch) is a relationship between two sizes -for convenience here we use inches- and the number of pixels.

It is not a unit of measurement and doesn't make any sense saying 'this image is 300dpi' without declaring its size (in centimeters or inches).

So, if I have an image of 10 inches based at 100dpi, I can print it to perhaps 4 to 5 inches or less, but at 20 I will have a resolution of 50 dpi, which is very poor for a modern color laser printer, and pixels will show.



6 inches base,  
600 pixel base

then

100 dpi



6 inches base,  
100 pixel base

then

16 dpi

## What is 'vector'?

Vector format is a format description of the image based on mathematical curves, called Bezier. This format allows unlimited enlargements because it doesn't have pixels, but 'rules'.



## Help, they sent me an EPS!

If you work in an office environment unlikely you'll have tools that enable the management of different file formats. In this case you won't be able to open files such as SVG, EPS or TIF. Try a quick search on the web, where you will find online tools to solve the problem.

**The characters  
and the text**

**BE BOLD**

OR

*Be Dead*

a

Garamond's 'a': at this size  
is more a piece of art than a  
simple character, isn't it?

# Choose the right font

For this title, I chose  
a classic: Bodoni

Each font has its own 'character': who is technical, who is a poet, someone is kitsch and some make you nervous.

The most simple-to-read characters are historically cleaner but structured and often are the characters with which we have learned to read in school books (Times, Caslon, Garamond).

The character must not be too complex -then unreadable- and even not too simple or 'graphic' -like **Futura**- because in a long text letters too similar each other will slow down reading.

If undecided, try setting the same text with three very different characters, print them and see how it feels. Try experimenting with the characters at your disposal on your computer or on the internet, and learn to use one of the strongest and more fun tools in the hands of who communicates.

And a personal prayer: delete **Comic-Sans** from your computer.

## Simple 'How-to-use' fonts

Below is a small table for the use of the most common fonts on PC and Mac, as well as some particular font you can find for free on the web.

- The title is always in 18 points, and the text is in 9 - so you can compare space usage of different fonts.
- A last line in *italics* (when available) was added, to show how the character changes in that style.
- I used the same text for all samples to highlight the differences.
- Between brackets the names of characters that look alike.

a This book will take me to conquer the world, then let's party

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*Vel ut at, quiscil iquisit landit doloreraesse feum ip eugiat.*

**Arial (Helvetica, Universe)**

Used for technical texts and assertive marketing reports, often associated with data. It's not recommended for long printed texts, such as texts of a book. Arial is very similar to Helvetica, but it comes for the screen.

a This book will take me to conquer the world, then let's party

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*Vel ut at, quiscil iquisit landit doloreraesse feum ip eugiat.*

**Arial Narrow (Helvetica Condensed)**

Compact character, showing almost the same clarity with Arial is a bit more slender and allows you to recover 10-15% of space

# **a** This book will take me to conquer the world, then let's party

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**Vel ut at, quiscil iquisit landit doloreraesse feum ip eugiat.**

**Arial Black (Helvetica Black)**

An Arial variant, extremely bold, very useful to highlight short texts and titles

# **a** This book will take me to conquer the world, then let's party

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Vel ut at, quiscil iquisit landit doloreraesse feum ip eugiat.

**Futura**

Very graphic by nature, fact that affects the readability (note the similarity between 'a', the 'e' and 'o'). Perfect for titles or short texts, preferably of large size, in simple colors and lively. Absolutely not recommended for long texts

THOUSANDS OF WELL  
ORGANIZED FONTS,  
NICE AND FREE:  
[WWW.DAFONT.COM](http://WWW.DAFONT.COM)



a

## This book will take me to conquer the world, then let's party

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*Vel ut at, quisil iquisit landit doloreraesse feum ip eugiat.*

**Times New Roman (Times)**

Absolutely readable, especially suitable for long-winded texts, speeches, pages of text, in italics is perfect for notes and signatures

a

## This book will take me to conquer the world, then let's party

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*Vel ut at, quisil iquisit landit doloreraesse feum ip eugiat.*

**Georgia**

Widely used on the web, it is clean and legible, great for both the titles and short texts (preferably in bold), or long

a

## **This book will take me to conquer the world, then let's party**

**Giam, commy nonsequat nim velisl euipit luptat. Olore ea feuguerilla conse venis augiamet doloree tummod dolore do odiat, velissectem iliquis ex ero el utatum ea ad magnisim et, commodolore faciduisl il delis dui bla feuis do eraese tin vercillam quismolor ipis duis euipsummy nis eugiam vullut duis nonulput lutpate magnim ex er acincing ex elendio odolobortis aliquat.**

***Vel ut at, quisil iquisit landit doloreraesse feum ip eugiat.***

**Haettenschweiler**

Compact font reminiscent of the headlines in Spiderman's 'Daily Bugle: massive and loud. Perfect for titles of impact

a

## This book will take me to conquer the world, then let's party

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*Vel ut at, quiscil iquisit landit doloreraesse feum ip eugiat.*

**Garamond**

An absolute classic, between the 'serif' characters.  
Beautiful, stylish... in short, has character :)

a

## This book will take me to conquer the world, then let's party

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*Vel ut at, quiscil iquisit landit doloreraesse feum ip eugiat.*

**Monotype Corsiva**

Cute, suitable for a wedding's menu

a

## This book will take me to conquer the world, then let's party

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*Vel ut at, quiscil iquisit landit doloreraesse feum ip eugiat.*

**Marker Felt**

Not great style but fun, maybe useful for informal notes and quotes. Unusable for long texts

a

## This book will take me to conquer the world, then let's party

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### Tahoma

Typical character of the Internet, it is technical, compact and easy to read, although a little cheesy

a

## This book will take me to conquer the world, then let's party

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*Vel ut at, quiscil iquisit landit doloreraesse feum ip eugiat.*

### Verdana

Another typical character of the Internet, shows some weaknesses and lack of personality when printed

a

## *This book will take me to conquer the world, then let's party*

*Giam, commy nonsequat nim velisl euipit luptat. Olore ea feuguerilla conse venis augiamet doloree tummod dolore do odiat, velissectem iliquis ex ero el utatum ea ad magnisim et, commodolore faciduisil il delis dui bla feuis do eraese tin vercillam quismolor ipis duis euipsummy nis eugiam vullut duis nonulput lutpate magnim ex er acincing ex elendio odolobortis aliquat.*

*Vel ut at, quiscil iquisit landit doloreraesse feum ip eugiat.*

### Handwriting - Dakota

Certainly not very readable on long texts, it's perfect for informal notes on side of the main text, short lists and non-technical titles of light tone of voice

a This book will take me to  
conquer the world, then  
let's party

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ex er acincing ex elendio odolobortis aliquat.  
*Vel ut at, quiscil iquisit landit doloreraesse feum ip  
eugiat.*

#### Courier

Monospaced font -that means that each letters occupies  
the same space (yes, even the 'i'). The appearance of cold,  
impersonal and a bit vintage (recalls the characters of  
a typewriter), makes it perfect for technical quotes, but  
becomes unreadable on long texts

a This book will take me to conquer  
the world, then let's party

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aliquat.  
*Vel ut at, quiscil iquisit landit doloreraesse feum ip eugiat.*

#### Comic Sans

Created as a 'fun font' for Microsoft Bob (a kind of simplified  
system interface, the project ditched shortly after the  
presentation). One of the worst characters ever conceived  
by the human mind: illegible, dull and stupid, I would  
prohibit the use by law ;)



## Examples of use

Yes

### THIS IS A TITLE

Esectem zzriusci blaortion vel ullam quatinis nim ing exerosto od tet utetum dolendrerit lore dolorem digna feui blaore esectet ipit, consequi iscipis autpat ad delectem zzriusci blaortion vel ullam quatinis nim ing exerosto od tet utetum dolendrerit lore dolorem digna feui blaore esectet ipit, consequi iscipis autpat.

The version above is much more readable than the one below: Futura for the title and body text for the Times

No

### THIS IS A TITLE

Esectem zzriusci blaortion vel ullam quatinis nim ing exerosto od tet utetum dolendrerit lore dolorem digna feui blaore esectet ipit, consequi iscipis autpat ad delectem zzriusci blaortion vel ullam quatinis nim ing exerosto od tet utetum dolendrerit lore dolorem digna feui blaore esectet ipit, consequi iscipis autpat.

The 'α' of the Futura are too similar to 'e' and 'o', and also 'b' and 'd' are confusing - better avoiding it for long texts

*This is a title*

Esectem zzriusci blaortion vel ullam quatinis nim ing exerosto od tet utetum dolendrerit lore dolorem digna feui blaore esectet ipit, consequi iscipis autpat ad delectem utetum dolendrerit lore dolorem digna feui blaore esectet ipit, consequi iscipis autpat.

A little shake to the title with a 'script' font, but be careful not to abuse it for long texts

## The font for a business card

How do you present yourself?

Michael A. Patton  
Marketing Manager

Times: sober, simple and readable -  
he works on a traditional company

Michael A. Patton  
Marketing Manager

Avenir 35 Light: modern and readable -  
works on a modern company

*Michael A. Patton*  
*Marketing Manager*

Edwardian script: coy and difficult  
to read - he's a florist or a wedding  
planner

**Michael A. Patton**  
**Marketing Manager**

Cracked: not that readable but  
strong identity - he works in an  
upstream fashion company

And of course, color helps...

Michael A. Patton  
Marketing Manager

# Styles and composition

A few rules and tips to compose text in a correct and legible way. The body of the text is the same for all examples, so you can compare them better.

Ed mincil iure eugiatet landre magna  
faciliquat. Uptat. Ipsuscidunt lut praesse dit  
ipsum nim vulputat, quat lut nullum iliquisit  
nullan venis ad tisl inis ea at nonulla feum.

Here the base character:  
no variations, it is usually  
defined as 'Roman'

*Ed mincil iure eugiatet landre magna  
faciliquat. Uptat. Ipsuscidunt lut praesse dit  
ipsum nim vulputat, quat lut nullum iliquisit  
nullan venis ad tisl inis ea at nonulla feum.*

Italics is perceived as  
'whispered'. It's used  
to break up text with  
annotations, or as a note or  
signature

Ed mincil iure **eugiatet landre magna**  
faciliquat. Uptat. Ipsuscidunt lut praesse dit  
ipsum nim vulputat, quat lut nullum iliquisit  
nullan venis ad tisl inis ea at nonulla feum.

**Bold** (a word or phrase) is  
perfect to highlight words  
or phrases, but should be  
used sparingly or loses its  
effectiveness – a sentence in  
paragraph, three in a page  
maximum

**Ed mincil iure eugiatet landre magna  
faciliquat. Uptat. Ipsuscidunt lut praesse  
dit ipsum nim vulputat, quat lut nullum  
iliquisit nullan venis ad tisl inis ea at  
nonulla feum.**

A sentence completely in  
bold can be a bit heavy and  
takes up some space – but  
often the character has a  
nice shape, and reducing a  
bit the body size it increases  
readability and reinforces  
concepts

ED MINCIL IURE EUGIATET LANDRE  
MAGNA FACILIUAT. UPTAT.  
IPSUSCIDUNT LUT PRAESSE DIT  
IPSUM NIM VULPUTAT, QUAT LUT  
NULLUM ILIQUISIT NULLAN VENIS  
AD TISL INIS EA AT NONULLA FEUM.

Use uppercase only for  
short texts – occupies more  
much space and slows  
down reading. In addition,  
it is perceived as loud and  
shouting

Ed mincil iure eugiatet landre magna  
faciliquat. Uptat. **Ipsuscidunt lut praesse dit**  
**ipsum nim vulputat, quat lut nullum** iliquisit  
nullan venis ad tisl inis ea at nonulla feum.

Other weird styles: better  
avoid them, illegible and  
cheap

## Ed mincil iure eugiatet landre

Magna faciliquat. Uptat. Ipsuscidunt lut praesse dit ipsum nim vulputat.

When using different sizes' characters on the same page, look for proportions: here title is 12pt, text is 8pt, (+50%)

Ed mincil iure eugiatet landre magna faciliquat. Uptat. Ipsuscidunt lut praesse dit ipsum nim vulputat, quat lut nullum iliquisit nullan venis ad tisl inis ea at nonulla feum.

**Ed mincil iure eugiatet landre magna faciliquat. Uptat. Ipsuscidunt lut praesse dit**

## No

Stretching the character transforms the original proportions and alters the style and penalizes the readability

*Ed mincil iure eugiatet landre magna faciliquat. Uptat. Ipsuscidunt lut praesse dit ipsum nim vulputat, quat lut nullum iliquisit nullan venis ad tisl inis ea at nonulla feum.*

## No

The fake italics, so-called 'slanted'

*Ed mincil iure eugiatet landre magna faciliquat. Uptat. Ipsuscidunt lut praesse dit ipsum nim vulputat, quat lut nullum iliquisit nullan venis ad tisl inis ea at nonulla feum.*

## Yes

Here the real italic. Fake italic is often very different and less pleasant than real one – note the difference between 'a's and 'f's, or the serif

Ed mincil iure eugiatet landre magna faciliquat. Uptat. Ipsuscidunt lut praesse dit ipsum nim vulputat.

## No Spaced

Ed mincil iure eugiatet landre magna faciliquat. Uptat. Ipsuscidunt lut praesse dit ipsum nim vulputat.

## Yes Compact

Space between letters heavily modifies the perception of strength and compactness. Since the human eye reads each word as it was an ideogram, compactness helps readability

# Text alignment

I know, you're in love with justified. Sure, it gives you a sense of security and regularity. But are you an engineer?

## Liquam ilis nulla facipsu ulla facil

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The left-aligned text is really easy to read

## Liquam ilis nulla facipsu ulla facil

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Fully-justified text is used in publications of long texts and books. The page has a compact and neat look, but a bit trivial in my opinion

## Liquam ilis nulla facipsu ulla facil

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Fully-justified text should not be used in small spaces, like these columns: weird spaces happen

### **Liquam ilis nulla facipsu ulla facil**

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**The center alignment -or 'epigraph'- is used for short texts, usually of poetic tone, for titles – or for epitaphs ;) Since missing a fixed position on the left side, it is difficult to read**

### **Liquam ilis nulla facipsu ulla facil**

Duis numsandreet in henisim venis nibh ea feugait utet ip euisis augiatio esenis doluptatum zzrit vullam, quam quis digna feum volorperat velenis.

**Right alignment is hard to read:  
only suitable for short texts,  
signatures and captions**

### **Liquam ilis nulla facipsu ulla facil**

Duis numsandreet in henisim venis nibh ea feugait utet ip euisis augiatio esenis doluptatum zzrit vullam, quam quis digna feum volorperat veleniscilla faccum vel iliquis ex ex ea faci eummy nonsectem vero digna con henim irit augait vel dolorercil ing eum eugait lore dolorpe rcipis doloborper se ver susciduis num quatuè magna corpercilit landio doluptat aliquam velit pratuerit, quisi iure min utpat.

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**Long lines' texts are difficult to read, the eye cannot easily move from a line's end to the next line's beginning – optimal value is around 40/50 letters per line**

# Other stylistic issues

Now let's see other style details: line spacing, hyphenation, format and organization of the body text.

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**Tight spacing:** you have a lot to say, quickly

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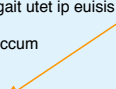
**Abundant spacing:** the pace slows down, the line becomes more important than the whole body of text – usually used for top style graphics

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**Hyphenation** may be useful to avoid 'holes' in justified text, but be careful not to have too many subsequent hyphens

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Eummy nonsectem vero



**Void the development of the text** - or graphics - create a 'arrow downward': bad luck ;)

**You can add line breaks, or change the text**

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In the case of an horizontal layout and frequently wrap-broken text, dividing text in multiple columns can help occupying less space

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Avoid short words at end of line, or hyphenated words alone

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Force line breaks, or modify the body text

# Readability and hierarchy

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## No

You don't really want to read this

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## Yes

Subtitle helps introducing the main concepts of the following text

The division into paragraphs increases readability and encourages the reader to read

## The correct character

A recent study declares that -paradoxically. using a difficult to read font can increase your learning by 14%. The cause lies in the fact that the human brain reads words as ideograms and a less readable character leads to slowing down of the reading, thus a higher concentration and therefore to an increase in learning. Even though I would avoid this technique in a presentation, it might be interesting for of a paper manual.

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A caption can help the reader to access the contents of the body of the text – a technique widely used in the newsmagazine

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Keeping the connected elements together, skipping spaces and lines, empowers organization and readability, while reducing the number of visually perceived elements

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There are several ways to make the text more eye-catching, such as using (just a few) bold words of phrases, enhancing the character of a salient phrase

A useful element to shake the text is the drop cap, which can be of one or more letters – even in a different character from the body of the text

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Too much text and little space: to increase readability create an 'indent' at the beginning (only from the second paragraph on)

Lorem Ipsum  
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Nulla facipsu scinim  
Liquam ilis facipsu scinimin  
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Lorem Ipsum  
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A graphic element, such as a line, can help fixing 'floating' elements

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White space helps the  
eye to 'rest' and 'gives  
breath' to the text

## Liquam ilis nulla facipsu ulla facil

Duis numsan dreet in henisim venis  
nibh ea feugait utet ip euisis augiatio  
doluptatum zzrit vullam

Lots of white space gives a  
'luxury' appeal

## What is Lorem Ipsum?

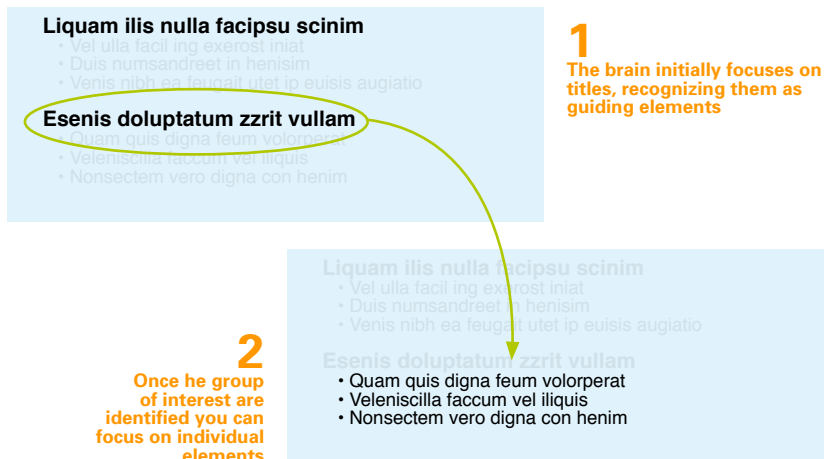
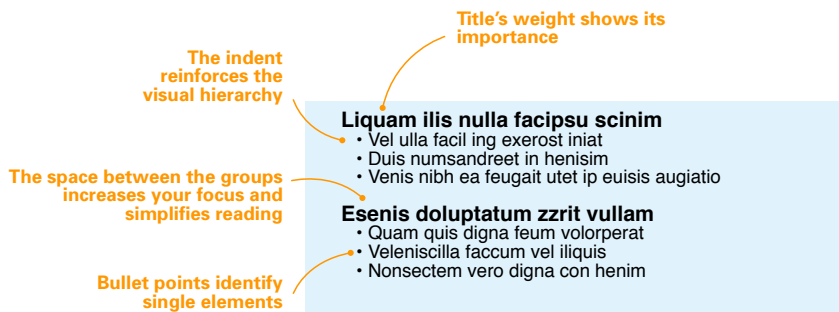
The text used in the examples is a fake Latin (called 'Lorem Ipsum') that graphic designers use to prototype realistic layout.

If we were typing random keys on the keyboard, we wouldn't get the same distribution of text characters and, if we use a real text, we could distract the reader.

You can find it on internet, on [www.loremipsum.net](http://www.loremipsum.net), or searching with Google (a lot funny versions available too).



There are several ways to organize texts, especially lists. Hierarchy is very important for readers, it helps understanding the relative importance of the items. By combining multiple methods, the brain initially 'reads' titles – recognizing them thanks to the weight and visual organization – then starting to identify the most interesting subject, and then focusing on the individual elements of that specific group.



# Text lists

You will often find yourself organizing text elements in form of lists, and there are many ways to manage them and make them readable – it's important to respect the hierarchy and its meaning.

first item • first characteristic  
second item • second characteristic  
another item • third characteristic  
yet another item • another characteristic

First try

<b>first item</b>	first feature
<b>second item</b>	second feature
<b>another item</b>	third feature
<b>yet another item</b>	another feature

A little better

**first item**  
first feature

**second item**  
second feature

**another item**  
third feature

**yet another item**  
another feature

The same list is transformed into the arrangement of elements: at this point the hierarchy is emphasized by the 'visual strength' of the elements

**first group**  
first feature • second feature • third feature •  
another feature

**second group**  
first feature • second feature •  
more features • and more new feature

**another group**  
first feature • second feature • third feature •  
another lot of features

In case of groups of features too long, you can opt for a comma-separated (or bullet, or what you like) list

# Numbered lists

When the elements are few and you can number them, try to play with the esthetics, especially if you want to emphasize the ordinal sequence of elements.

1. first feature

2. second feature

3. third feature

4. another feature

product item

second product item

another product item

yet another product item

Boring...

1. first feature	product item
2. second feature	second product item
3. third feature	another product item
4. another feature	yet another product item

...a bit better

1

first feature

product item

2

second feature

second product item

3

third feature

another product item

4

another feature

yet another product item

Here the setting is completely different: the elements are the same, but the organizations strongly highlights the numbers and the sequence

1.

first feature

product item

2.

second feature

second product item

3.

third feature

another product item

4.

another feature

yet another product item

...until it becomes a graphic element

# Color





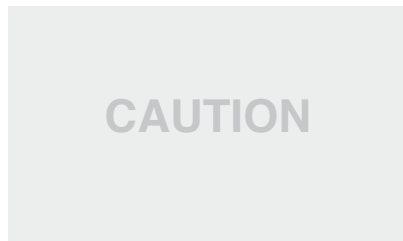
# Colors

Human beings always tried to understand colors as a signal from the surrounding environment. Colors can be a vivid sign of freshness (think of young plant compared to a rotten banana); overly vivid colors, instead, represents an alarm (think of fungi, insects or poisonous reptiles).

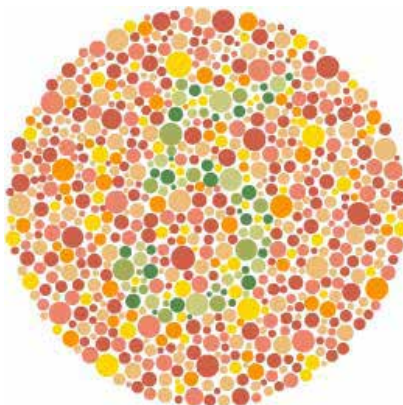
The sky is blue on a fine day and contrasts are stronger, and in this situation the brain is satisfied and peaceful. Light usually comes from above: in any environment lighter colors are at the top, at the bottom are darker shades. These rules can be translated into the world of graphics.

## Color coding

Each color has a meaning: it's important to understand what conveys emotions or impressions. A white text on a red background has a definite effect.



Definitely they don't have the same effect



Know your audience:  
only a few can read the  
writing in the circle

# Colors and meanings

What is your favorite color? Green? And if I asked you about cars? Colors have a meaning in general, but a slight difference in color can radically change that significance, as the form it is associated with, or the extension and the adjacent colors. Here are the 'common' meanings, but don't trust what you read – in the next pages you'll see how things can change, varying shades.



Red: vivacity, passion, energy, strength and dynamism, it helps self-esteem. It's the color of warnings or attention.



Orange: energy, modernity, joy, creativity, movement, harmony, vitality and spirituality, illuminates and warms up.



Yellow: represents the sun, the light, the energy, optimism and lightness.



Green: traditionally brings hope, is associated with nature, youth, confidence and serenity.



Cyan: sky, freshness and lightness, relaxes and brings good mood. Brings reflection, serenity and is the color of extroverts.



Blue: sea, calm, modern-but-cold, represents the intellect and the stability.



Purple is usually associated with spirituality and unconscious, increases the ability to concentrate.



Pink is love and tenderness, but also elegance and kindness.



White: light, purity, brightness. In Japan, however, may mean death.



Brown: autumn, earth, wood, classic, history and relaxation.



Gray: non-color par excellence, it is extremely elegant. It takes on different meanings when it is hot or cold, even in small nuances.

## Colors in real life

Starting from a base color, with slight variations in shade we have completely different meanings. In order to avoid surprises, check out how your chosen colors will be printed on the final support, printer or screen.



Electric blue usually doesn't  
print as on screen – we'll  
discover why later

**Violet:**  
originality

**Dark blue:**  
classic

**Electric blue:**  
energy

**Sugar paper:**  
formal

**Cyan:**  
modern

**Azure:**  
childish

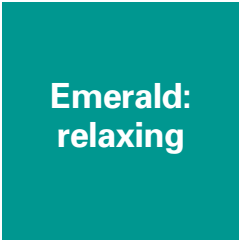
**Pink:**  
classic

**Magenta:**  
eclectic

**Orange:**  
modern

**Fire red:**  
passionate

**Bordeaux:**  
classic

A solid teal-colored square.

**Emerald:**  
relaxing

A solid medium green-colored square.


**Grass green:**  
reassuring

A solid bright yellow-green-colored square.

**Acid green:**  
modern

A solid light sage green-colored square.

**Light green:**  
boring

A solid dark forest green-colored square.

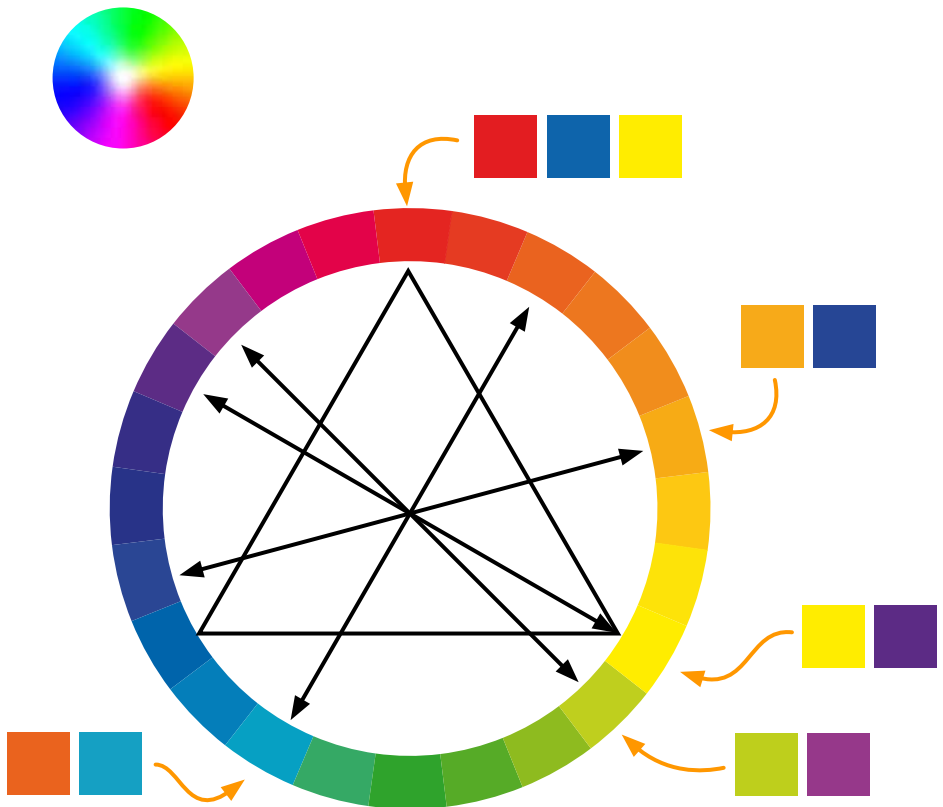
**Dark green:**  
classic

# How to choose colors

The choice of colors in a document can be a complex task. Colors should be chosen accordingly to your company's regulations, the subject, the recipient of the support. Here are some rules and methods.

## Complementary colors

Complementary colors are those colors that lie opposite (on a line, a triangle and so) on the color wheel: a powerful tool, but you must have some familiarity with it.



## Copy ;)

Copying from a 'famous' company: for example UPS uses a combination of brown and gold, usually with dark backgrounds.

## Extract from a photo

A rather amusing technique is to extract colors from a photo -or a real object- that you particularly like: you can do so by copying the colors by eye, or through an editing program.



Ok, this was a  
sort of a joke ;)

## Color and contrast

Movies taught us: with the advent of color it has become easier to direct (less problems with lights, contrast and readability), but a true masterpiece is often in black and white.



**Lorem Ipsum**  
**Dolor sit amet**

Contrast, positive:  
classic



**Lorem Ipsum**  
**Dolor sit amet**

Contrast, in negative:  
modern



**Lorem Ipsum**  
**Dolor sit amet**



**Lorem Ipsum**  
**Dolor sit amet**

Weak contrast:  
very fine, but not much  
readable



These are some possible variations using blue and yellow: the effects are always different, but in general the greater the contrast the better the readability

## Warm and cool colors

Colors have a 'temperature' and can be divided into warm, cool and neutral, based on the feeling they transmit and the situations they are associated with. Reds, yellows and oranges are associated with the sun and its heat, while blues and greens reminiscent of the sea, the ice, the sky.

A special note: in a picture warm colors appear to advance, giving the impression they're coming towards the viewer, while cold ones seem to move away – although it is a most typical characteristic of photography, learn to use them accordingly in your presentation.



## What is 'process'?

The four-color (CMYK also called) is the color model that guides the printign processes, both office and professional printing. This 'color space' allows the representation of a very wide range of colors, but a few fluorescent or too bright ones. It's important to understand how colors will show when printed in respect of what you've seen on the screen, to prevent problems.

## What is a 'Pantone'?

You've surely heard of it, maybe associated with the logo of your company. It is an official classification system of colors, particularly known in graphics and printing fields, which should make life easier for professionals to create an absolute standard for the identification and color reproduction. The system in most cases represents the colors in the form of a numerical code, for instance, 'Pantone 281' is a dark blue.

# Colors on screen and in print

It may happen that a color that you liked so much on the screen, once printed is completely different. The main reasons are roughly as follows:

- the range of colors that you see on screen is wider than in print, and a non-professional monitor is unlikely to be true;
- home or small office printers have an 'arbitrary' way of managing colors and each printer brand has a slightly different shade of color (or think about the differences between laser and inkjet);
- Windows handles colors weirdly ;)
- each program has its own way to manage color;
- print directly from the program or going through a PDF can give different results.

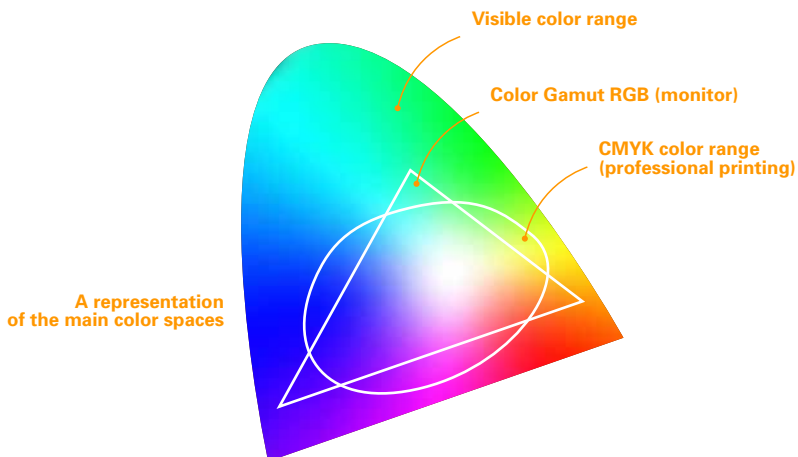
## How can I fix?

Use elementary colors; avoids colors 'off scale', such as electrical or fluorescent colors, which are normally not reproducible.

Some colors are more problematic than others: orange, pastel colors or certain dark tones that become black.

Always use the same computer, the same program and the same printer – or at least test the final one.

If you want to achieve a precise color -or you want to copy one- fill a page with a lot of variants similar to what you want to achieve and make a test print– soon you'll get what you were looking for.



## Corporations and colors

Each company wants to take control of a color, either through a definition of the logo via the communication materials: Google has a multicolored logo, while using white backgrounds with black text (and blue plus green links) – Nike uses different colors for the logo, but officially is orange.

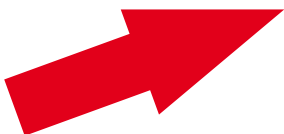
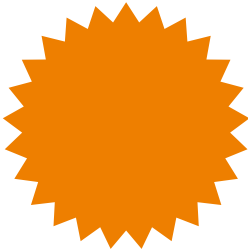
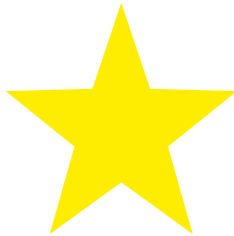


If you need to show more logos together -and want to avoid a confusion of colors- you can get them all in the same shade of gray.



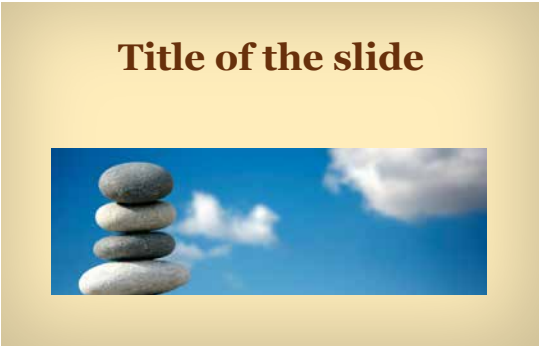
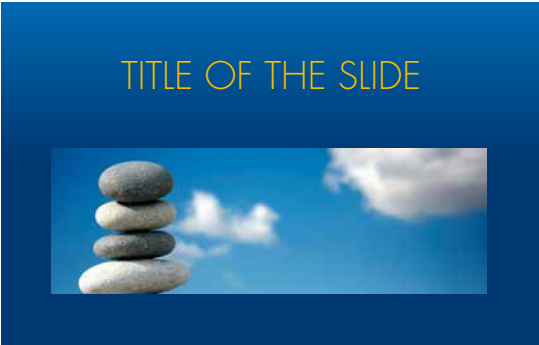
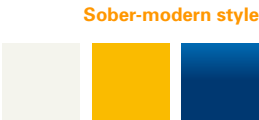
## Colors and shapes

A good rule would be to associate colors and shapes coherently. Aggressive colors should be associated with regular and angular shapes, soft shapes and curves are associated with pastel colors. It is not an absolute rule, but a practice guide that often gives good results.



**Build your own palette**

The character of a presentation is often built around a set of colors.



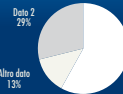
Color alone is not sufficient to build a style: below you can see how choosing colors affects other elements such as images, fonts, styles.

TITLE OF THE SLIDE



Olobor incillan vel diamcom moloreetum  
vulla conulput at lute dolore faccummy niat

TITLE OF THE SLIDE



Dato 1  
58%

Dato 2  
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Altro dato  
13%

TITLE OF THE SLIDE

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
TITLE OF THE SLIDE

	dato 1	altro	dato 3	ultimo
incillan	15	10	15	55
alter	5	7	12	21
varius	12	10	15	23
incillan	5	9	19	20

TITLE OF THE SLIDE


Europa: 15 sedi  
Olobor incillan vel diamcom moloreetum  
vulla conulput at lute dolore faccummy niat

Americhe: 23 sedi  
Olobor incillan vel diamcom moloreetum  
at lute dolore faccummy niat conulput



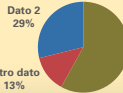
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Title of the slide



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Title of the slide



Dato 1  
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Title of the slide

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
Title of the slide

	dato 1	altro	dato 3	ultimo
incillan	15	10	15	55
alter	5	7	12	21
varius	12	10	15	23
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Europa: 15 sedi  
Olobor incillan vel diamcom moloreetum  
vulla conulput at lute dolore faccummy niat

Americhe: 23 sedi  
Olobor incillan vel diamcom moloreetum  
at lute dolore faccummy niat conulput



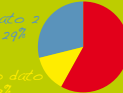
Andamento ultimi  
diegi anni

Title of the slide



Olobor incillan vel diamcom moloreetum  
vulla conulput at lute dolore faccummy niat

Title of the slide



Dato 1  
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Dato 2  
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Title of the slide

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
Title of the slide

	dato 1	altro	dato 3	ultimo
incillan	15	10	15	55
alter	5	7	12	21
varius	12	10	15	23
incillan	5	9	19	20

Title of the slide

Europa: 15 sedi  
Olobor incillan vel diamcom moloreetum vulla conulput at lute dolore faccummy niat

Americhe: 23 sedi  
Olobor incillan vel diamcom moloreetum at lute dolore faccummy niat conulput



Andamento ultimi  
diegi anni

# Gradient backgrounds

The shades are quite difficult to utilize with good taste, but can make a strong tone to your presentations.



## No

The multi-colored shades are very confusing and of doubtful taste



## Mh...

A shade too symmetrical is a bit too trivial



## Yes

A central gradient – if well managed – can be an interesting element, especially in presentations intended for screen

**And this?**  
Even though now you won't probably like it, will become very familiar to everybody -that helps acceptance- with Apple's iOS7



## White background: suitable for printing

A slight gradient from white can give a touch of personality, while maintaining readability

### Annual data from departments:

- Europa: 15 sedi
- Americhe: 23 sedi
- Asia-Pacifico: 7 sedi

### Annual data from departments:

- Europa: 15 sedi
- Americhe: 23 sedi
- Asia-Pacifico: 7 sedi

A shot of light from above always helps – however, use it for on screen presentations

## Dark background: suitable for screen

Remember that most home-office printers cut the edge, and gradients sometimes show some 'bands'

### Annual data from departments:

- Europa: 15 sedi
- Americhe: 23 sedi
- Asia-Pacifico: 7 sedi

Calculate how much the printer 'cuts', make sure that the white space is the same for all edges, and round the corners

### Annual data from departments:

- Europa: 15 sedi
- Americhe: 23 sedi
- Asia-Pacifico: 7 sedi

Background images decrease readability, but they can also make a presentation more interesting.



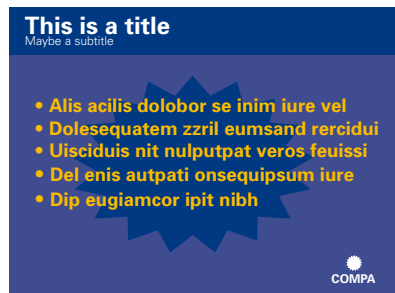
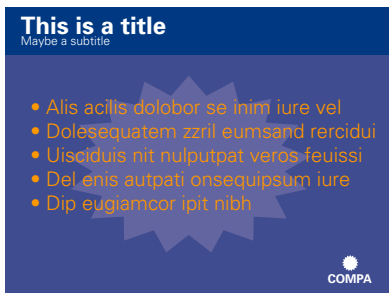
**No**

Messy background, too strong against the texts in the foreground



**Yes**

Simplified background, lightened and placed so it doesn't disturb reading



Also with the colors, always try to increase the contrast to emphasize texts readability

# Graphs and tables



# Data, tables and graphs

Copy a chart from Excel then paste somewhere. But if you wanted the graph to be 'interpreted' in a certain way? Wanted to highlight a certain trend, or hide it? What colors to use? And the captions?

## How to choose the type of chart

The type of chart is chosen depending on the type of data: reading relative percentages is more natural with a pie chart, while absolute values will be best represented by a histogram. There are endless variety of charts and sometimes it may be necessary to 'invent' a model of the main representation. Let's see the most common ones:



### Bar Graph

It is used to compare values that are consistent, or to delineate large changes in value grouped by periods of time.



### Pie Chart

It is used to compare and show percentages of a whole.

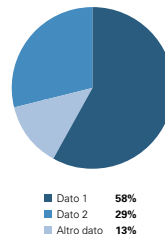
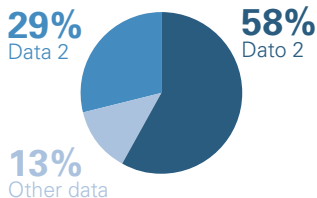
### Line Chart



Especially suitable to show changes in values over time, especially in the case of frequency intervals.

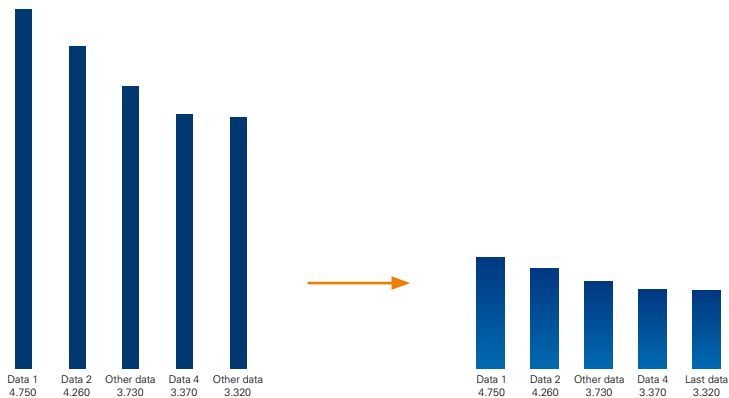
## How to use the legend

Associate the labels directly to the data if you want to increase readability – on the other side, separating it can make data a bit less intelligible.

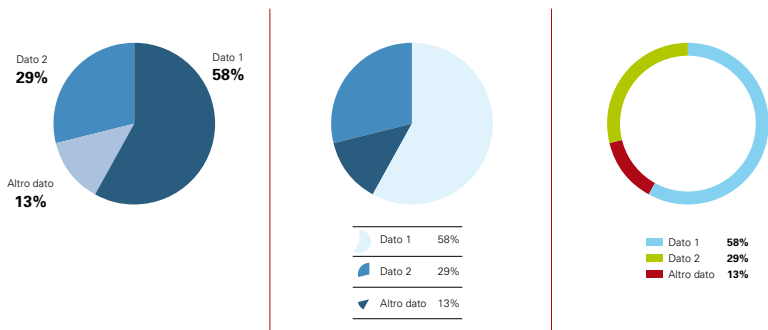


### Mask data

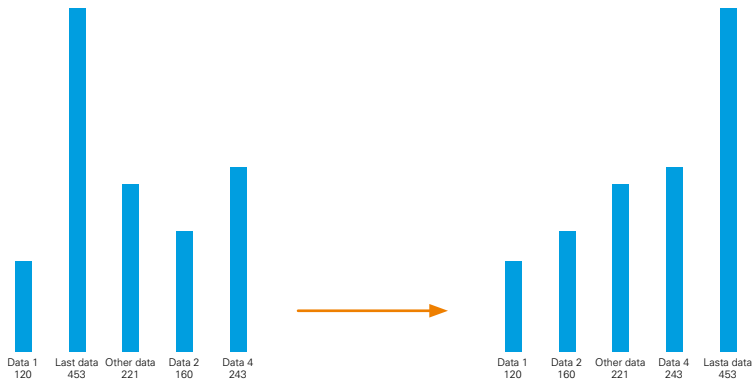
It often happens that you want to highlight a single value or a result. But how do you manage hiding bad result, making it less important and visible? Here are some examples.



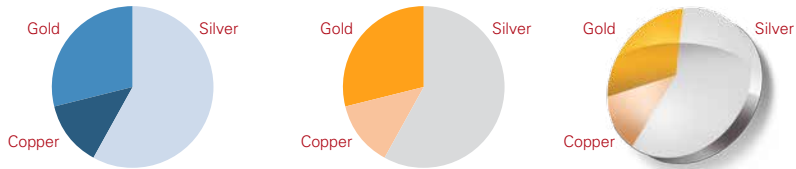
The values are the same, but the effect varies: in the right graph the difference between 'Last data' and 'Data 1' is amplified



Again, values are identical for all the three graphs, but the perception of the relative values varies depending on the color, the volume and the position of captions



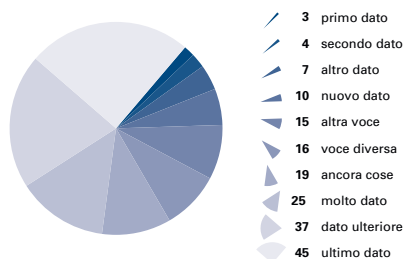
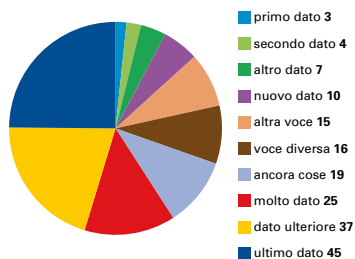
The discontinuity in the data makes it less readable graph, on left – obviously this isn't true for a timeline ;)



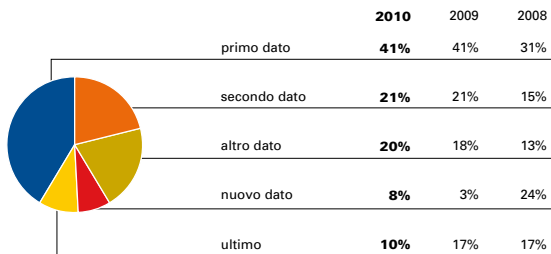
When possible, use a color or effect that directly represents the subjects described, rather than random colors



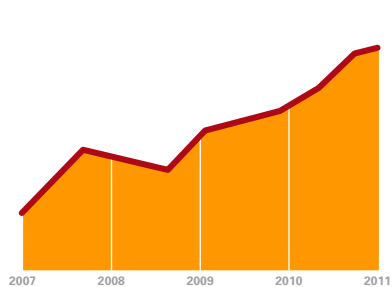
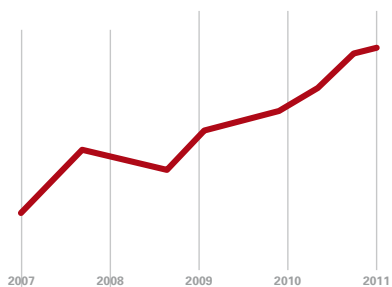
Even when printing in black and white you can present data with style



When you have too many items you may want to use a color scale, even if the graph becomes more 'boring'

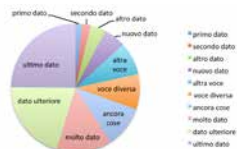


With some reworking you can represent complex data in a single graph more clearly than Excel standard



While the line alone highlights the trend, the full background shifts attention to volume

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Lorperostrud dolorper autpat ver amet  
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**No**

It's important to keep the same style for  
all graphs all over a document: 3d vs 2d,  
flat against gradients, different outlines,  
they all give a sense of discontinuity and  
lack of care

Exeros atet la feum quam vendreiriure  
consectet, sequis eugait la faci bla cor  
iusto conse dolore diat.



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**Yes**

Similar styles help readability and give an  
idea of continuity and care

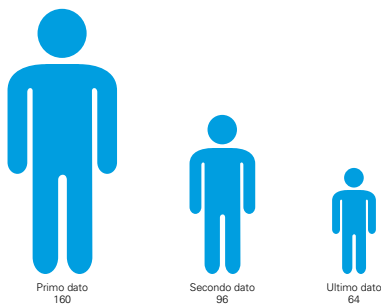


Graphs can also be ironic, like the one used by Lexus in a  
comparative advertising campaign

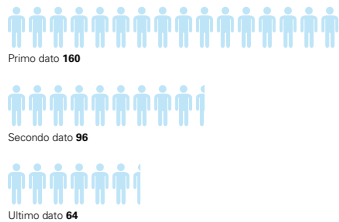
Infographics

If the tone of the presentation allows it, you can create a form of your own personal chart. For example, you can create a basic shape and work on proportions, colors, repetition of the items. When this mode of representation becomes particularly complex, it is called ‘infographic’: illustrations, charts and diagrams often become very complex – and enjoyable.

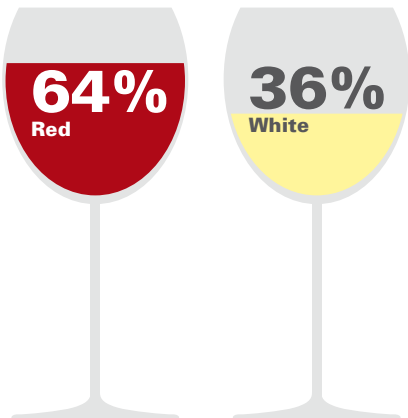
Number of employees by industry



Number of employees by industry



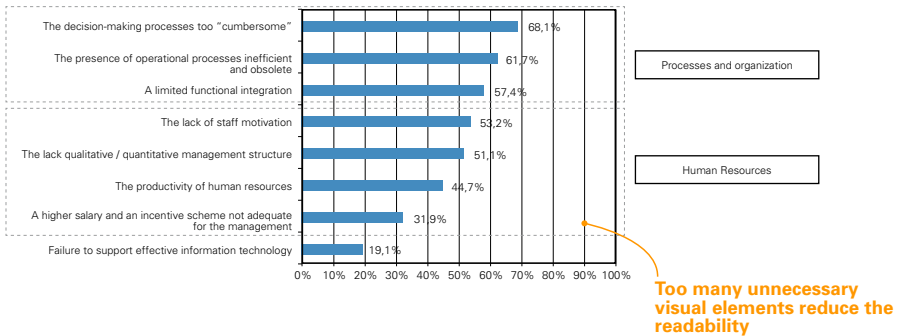
PERCENTAGE OF PREFERENCES BY WINE TYPES:



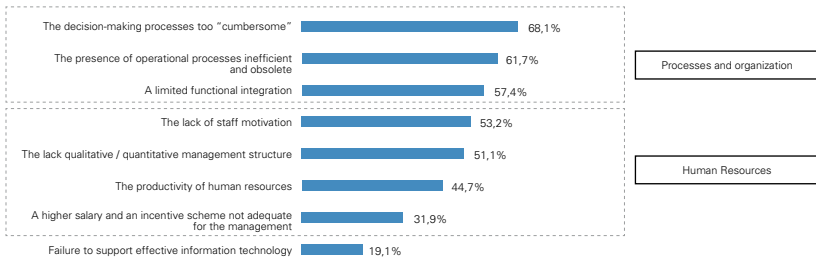
Sometimes it's possible to depict the graphs in a creative way – helps making the concepts more memorable

## Graphics and readability

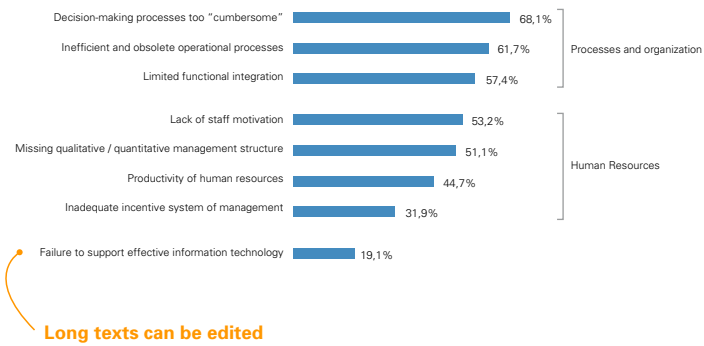
Excel tends to produce graphics unclear: too many lines, borders, cages. The first rule is to simplify the view, then clear out all unnecessary elements: borders around bands need? The grid of units of measurement? I can better organize the data?



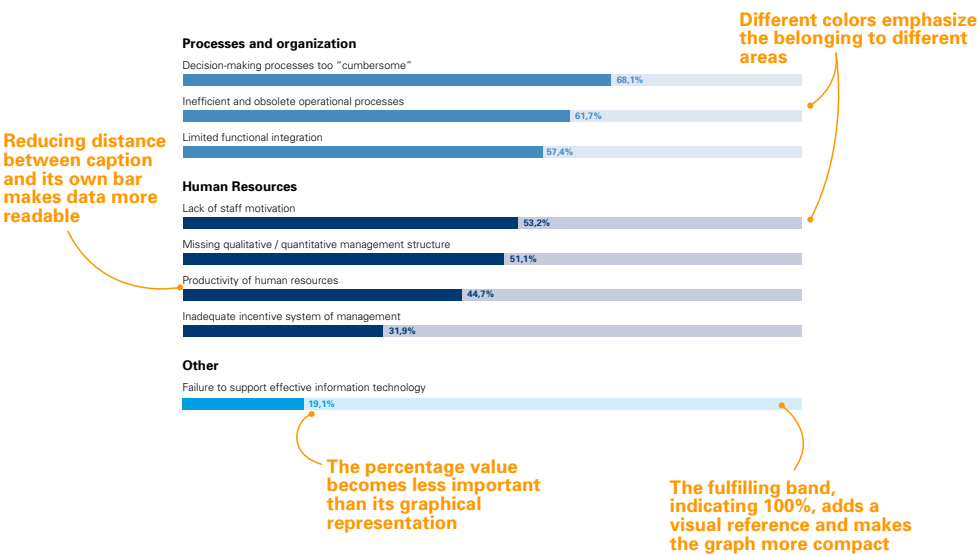
First, ask yourself what elements you really need. Why not removing, for example, lines, grids or percentages?



The two areas of aggregation, rather than collected with a dashed box, can be grouped under a parenthesis. Delete the unnecessary legend, and increase the space between the areas to visually group the values in the same field.



Move the legend above each bar to increase the 'strength' of the left side. At the same time, space occupied by horizontal bars can stretch and highlight the difference between the values.



Tables

The most important thing about a table is that it's readable, the data are well separated and, last, it's pleasing to the eye. We can apply styles and colors applied to other objects within the document.

Titolo della tabella			
prima caratteristica	voce prodotto	voce prodotto	1,52
seconda caratteristica	voce prodotto due	voce prodotto due	12,31
terza caratteristica	altra voce prodotto	altra voce prodotto	101,60
altra caratteristica	altra voce	altra voce	55,12

The title outside of the table improves readability and help focusing on the data

Titolo della tabella

prima caratteristica	voce prodotto	voce prodotto	1,52
seconda caratteristica	voce prodotto due	voce prodotto due	12,31
terza caratteristica	altra voce prodotto	altra voce prodotto	101,60
altra caratteristica	altra voce	altra voce	55,12

The vertical threads are often unnecessary

The thicker lines at the beginning and end give 'substance' to the table

Right alignment, maintaining the fixed decimal, increases the 'readability' of the numerical values

Titolo della tabella

prima caratteristica	voce prodotto	voce prodotto	1,52
seconda caratteristica	voce prodotto due	voce prodotto due	12,31
terza caratteristica	altra voce prodotto	altra voce prodotto	101,60
altra caratteristica	altra voce	altra voce	55,12

Applying a background color to the table makes it an autonomous element of the page



Table's title			
prima caratteristica	voce prodotto	voce prodotto	1,52
seconda caratteristica	voce prodotto due	voce prodotto due	12,31
terza caratteristica	altra voce prodotto	altra voce prodotto	101,60
altra caratteristica	altra voce		55,12

Usage of color and alternating lines: a table becomes a decorative element

Titolo della pagina

Exercitatio de huiusmodi venditione contractus, sequitur augere la facit illa cor sicut comes ditione dicit.

Uit dunt torum ditione accola bla ali tum di adignit augere huius augere venit, conatus et torale ala cone motore motore quicquid alper. Ut la facit la sicut sicut ming sa faciemus modione magna faccum non dicit sumari ent ing endign exacte sicut sicut illa ditione ditione et ut al uolunt, quid et, consumari et nullandis etum sicut quicquid praestitit in.

proposito	proposito	proposito	proposito
proposito	proposito	proposito	proposito
proposito	proposito	proposito	proposito
proposito	proposito	proposito	proposito

Huiusmodi non huiusmodi ad motore ditione non ip etum amet alia et luptat nuptat aucturmodis ex ent sicut alia.

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Faccum praestitit dicit et sicut bla velipa praestitit repertum ex la faccummodis dicit velipandis ditione ent et mod dunt luptat vel ut am, velore lau faccum tum utri luptat ruciatit ditione in utat. Ut non auger praestitit non vult nonnegat alia alitoditit alia ditione nibt auger quicquid conatus venet huiusmodi augere conatus auger velit alitoditit ex la faccum modo dicit lute la faccum ditionemodis et ut ditionemodis de vult modis

Table's title

**1,52**  
first something  
product item,  
product item

**12,31**  
seconda caratteristica  
voce prodotto due,  
voce prodotto due

**101,6**  
terza caratteristica  
altra voce prodotto,  
altra voce prodotto

**55,12**  
altra caratteristica  
altra voce,  
altra voce

When a table has a few elements, you can transform it into a graphical element, showing off values, like in this case

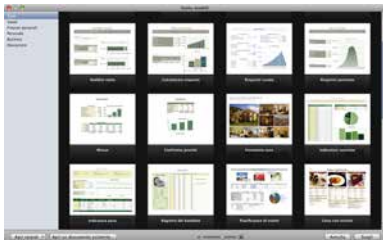
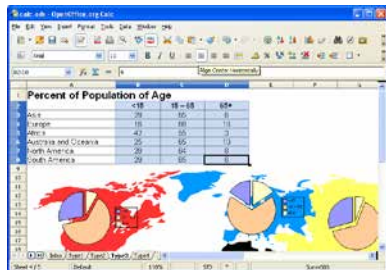
## Not only Microsoft

As now, many different programs are able to manage your everyday's office files. Apple does great with its simple-but-stunning approach with the iWorks suite, now available on the web – and also pc addicted can now use it. Still online you find the most interesting competitors, Google first with the Docs suite (that makes any document collaboratively available online to all users), to other free products, like OpenOffice. A note apart to Prezi (www.prezi.com), a game changer stunning presentation software.



GoogleDocs: getting better day by day, the 'cloud' basis helps your work anywhere

OpenOffice: another free alternative to Microsoft Office



Apple iWorks: deploy beautiful presentations in a few click – the latest web version is available to pcs too

Prezi.com: build stunning animated presentations from your Powerpoint, of from scratch



# Images

(Photographs, illustrations, cliparts)





# Images

## About images

Scientific studies demonstrated that proper images' usage improves efficacy and memorability – but choose them wisely.

There are many kind of images, they can be used in different situations and have a different catch on people's imagination. Best thing, in a document, is to have only one kind of images, be it realistic, 3D or clicparts.

Images can be taken with your smartphone, bought -or stolen ;-)- on the web at very different prices, but in case you need very specific images or illustrations it's better to rely on a professional.

Hereafter some different kind of images:

### Realistic photography



### Fake/colored picture



### Clipart



### Infographic



### 3D rendering



### Illustration



### Technical drawing



### Icons



### Hand sketch



# How to choose images

The images you select must be representative of the concept that you want to present. Best images have good color balance, are simple, clean and bright. There shall be no confusion on the meaning, or any distracting element.

Avoid images representing a concept through negativity, unless it represents a value (eg 'no maintenance needed').

If a document has multiple images, it's important that these are connected by a fil-rouge, both visual and conceptual. Use images having similar style, framing, color nuances; avoid mixing photos and cliparts, or plainly fake images. Personally, I'd also avoid piggybanks, dollars, handshakes, kids and any trivial image.

## Where to find images

There is a number of websites where you can find images of good taste at an affordable cost. You can search on google / images, on flickr, pinterest and so for and use those images for personal presentations with a limited audience for free.

One of my favorite sites is istockphoto.com, where you can buy images (or music and video) at low-cost and often remarkable quality. Images here are sold as royalty-free, without rights: this means that you can use an image as much as you want, but also means that anyone can use that same photo. You can always apply some photo editing and make it more personal (see how in photo editing section in this book).

There are also sites like corbis.com or gettyimages.com that sell very high quality images, which can be purchased with exclusive rights, but are usually quite expensive.

Below an example of a choice of images for a presentation in the health sector:



## Yes

- presence of people/humanization
- they are all looking at the camera
- clear and well lit image
- easy to 'read' both in small and large size
- perfect image for the health sector

Are they smiling too much? Well, smiling is contagious, maybe you can help people smile during your presentation



## Mh

A bit impersonal but still simple and clear

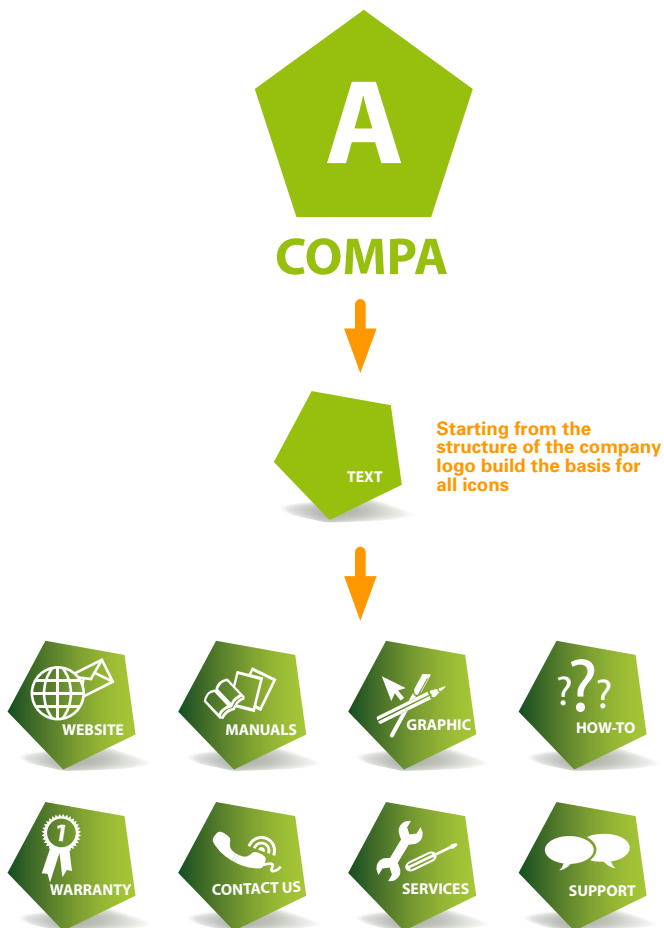


## No

- dark and monochromatic
- too many objects, lights and shadows
- some of the objects are menacing and associated to wound
- only partially coherent with the health sector

**Build icons easy and fast**

A method to build a list of personal icons is to use a common base, perhaps quoting a common element, such as the shape of the company logo. The images of the icon can be very simple, like letters or symbols.



# Building a logo

You might also need to quickly create a logo for your project and present it more effectively. The best thing is to rely on a professional, but, if time and budget doesn't allow, here are a few simple rules and tricks. Take for example a product called Arpagon (I don't want to know what it's for ;)

## Uses an element of the name

We can use the 'A', perhaps with a 'geometric' font such as Futura, coloring it blue, the putting the name in bold letters, a little separated.



## Use simple shapes

Draw a square, rotate it a few degrees, overlay text in a compact character in white (so it will seem to cut out the shape). Or try three simple squares in different colors, or an 'A' inside a star...



## Sometimes text alone works

Choose an uncommon font, pick a single letter, change the character of the first letter only...



# Frame a picture

## The rule of thirds

Well known by art-lovers and photographers, it's a different interpretation of the grid and proportional systems, here as simple as possible: apply a 3x3 squares grid and place elements inside these divisions.



The stones occupy  
the left column

One bottom third is  
occupied by the sea

## How to crop an image

Sometimes images are presented in wrong proportion, they have too many details or even the framing doesn't fit your intentions.

Other times it is necessary to extend the bottom of an image to give relevance to a subject, in this case an image editing program can come in handy.



Sometimes you need to 'stretch' an image to fill an area: be careful not to force too much (about +/- 15% maximum), especially with photos with people

## What can you do with a single image?

Choose the right image and you'll use it a thousand times: different cuts, extensions, details...



Would you believe all these pictures come from the same images?

# And now a bit of Photoshop

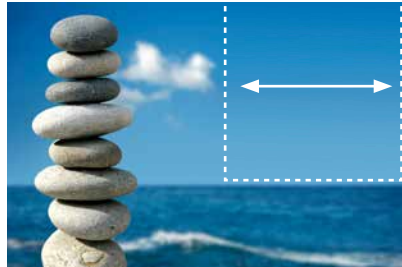
Here are a few useful tricks for most common tasks, dedicated to image editing geeks ;)

## Removing an element

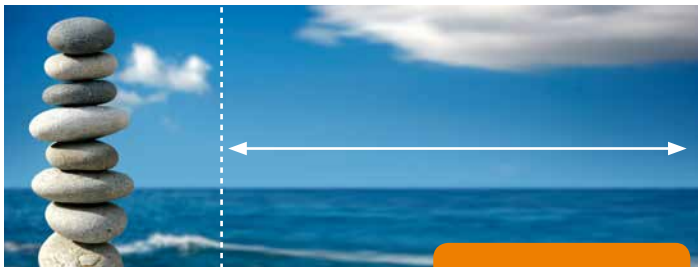
There are various ways to remove the details from a photo – and from Photoshop CS5 you have a smart filling option that makes it for you.

If the background has at least one homogeneous 'slice', you can:

1. cut this slice creating a new level from it
2. expand this level to cover the unwanted elements, finishing -if needed- it all with a mask



This technique can also be used to extend an image.



DON'T HAVE PHOTOSHOP?  
TRY GIMP, A FREE EDITING  
PROGRAM  
[WWW.GIMP.ORG](http://WWW.GIMP.ORG)



## Contour image

Choose two images -one for foreground, one for background-, making sure they are compatible in the overall appearance, particularly with lights orientation. Open the image to be cut out. Use the 'Lasso' tool to select the approximate area -just a bit wider- you want to cut out.

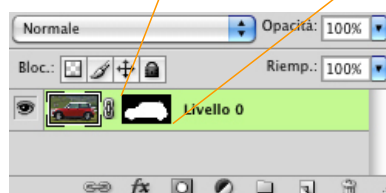


Double-click the layer thumbnail in the 'Layers' to transform it from a 'background' into 'Level 0'.

By clicking the layer with the right button, choose 'Add Layer Mask' from the menu, then 'Select' and you'll get a first image like the one below.



Click on the layer mask icon in the Layers palette. You can recognize it as selected by its frame (if you want to return working on the picture instead, click on the image icon in the same panel).



Now you can select a drawing tool, using black color to remove the visible areas of the mask - they will still be in the picture, but now are invisible.

Black removes, white makes visible; you can also apply the shades of gray and gradient of smooth brushes – useful for the hair, glasses, soft edges for example. This is the way to create a transparency mask.

To view what you're doing on the single working level, you can click on the eye icon of the other layers, turning them off.



Now you can open a new image for the foreground: drag the subject and place it in the background. Make the finishing touches at the mask, softening, removing lights and shadows are not consistent.

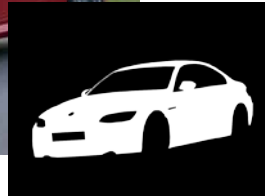


After removing the car's windows, I put a white 'piece' with transparency set to 50% to have a glass effect

Remember to save a copy of the file with a file format that supports levels (XCF for GIMP or PSD for Photoshop): saving in jpeg format will lose levels and then all the work done.

## Change color to an object

Changing color of an object is extremely simple. Choose your image, turn it into a level and mask the areas that want to change color (as explained on the previous page).



Now create a new layer for the areas you will change color to. Open the panel Image> Adjustments> Hue / Saturation and work with the first two values until you get the color you need.

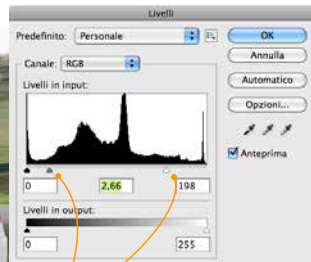


Moving the 'Hue' slider will let you discover how simple is changing a color



Beware of white and black: usually getting these two colors means you can't use brightness and hue -that destroys light and shadow- but you have to:

- 1 remove all the saturation in this hue/saturation panel, click 'OK' then
- 2 open the panel Image> Adjustments> Levels and move the sliders until you get the desired effect



The three 'sliders': move one at a time to obtain the best effects

Getting the black can be particularly difficult, losing details in dark areas



## Portraits and framing

Taking a good picture of a person means doing a lot of shots in good light, avoiding 'closed' poses – hands on chin, contrived situations. Favor simplicity, cleanliness and only then add some distinguishing elements to represent subject's character and tastes.



**No** situation is fake, pens that don't write, fake phones, etc...



**No** shots too distant, and confusing environment



**No** hand on the chin and positions of 'closure'



**Yes**

(Still this is an amateur photo)

Lots of light

Camera focuses the gaze

Location and expression open and natural

Clean and readable background

Distinguishable features, such as golf clubs (not that I like, but they were there ;)

# Text and photos

You can experiment working with text and images, and some solution will be better than others... play with positions, contrasts and font size, and eventually apply some irony to the subject.



**TIP:** to create a band that darkens the background in Powerpoint, draw a rectangle and choose 'Transparency 50%' the object settings – then tests different values

If you need to lighten a dark background, use a white rectangle

The color of the text will have to be in contrast, so use dark text on white background and vice versa

You can also try to use shadows, transparencies and the halos effects on the text, to increase contrast and improve readability

## Transparent background

White is not transparent, everybody know it by now. To get a transparent background, the file format must be a PNG (or a Photoshop PSD, but works with fewer programs). In Powerpoint, from 2010 on, the program has a single click 'background remove' function.



White logo in PNG format:  
once imported, blank areas  
are transparent

## Photos from your phone

A simple mobile phone can do wonders. Need a picture to fill a presentation? Take a picture with your mobile phone to a plant, a colleague, a computer, an office – and in a few minutes you'll have a bunch of photos for free, exclusive and personalized, which express exactly what you mean. Only one caveat: have a simple composition, and take it in plenty of light.



# Fun & Trivia



## Ikea

There was a little riot when in 2009 Ikea changed the font used in catalogs. When they decided to leave the two fonts 'Ikea sans' and 'Ikea serif' (respectively based on Futura and Century Schoolbook) to switch to Verdana, around the world were petitions made to go back. A note: the Ikea catalog is the third book in the world by circulation, preceded by the Bible and Harry Potter.

## Woody Allen

Woody Allen uses always the same font for the headlines of his movies: EF Windsor Elongated.

## Ambigrams

The ambigram is a graphical form that can be read in multiple directions, sometimes with different meanings. The technique was made popular by the book (and movie) 'Angels and Demons' by Dan Brown, in which the artist John Langdon (it is no coincidence that the protagonist Robert bears the same name) has portrayed the Illuminati Ambigrams.

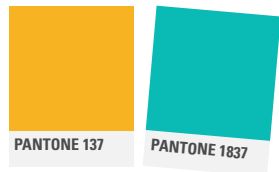


## Dangerous graphics

The first promotional video of the London Olympics 2012 was quickly removed, since the constant color flashes and too aggressive graphics, unleashed episodes of seizures in susceptible people.

## Orange Veuve Clicquot?

Tiffany was one of the first companies to take control of a color, a pleasant watery blue-green, which over time has been officially named Tiffany Blue (Pantone 1837). Later, the famous champagne brand Veuve Clicquot has taken control of the Pantone 137.



## Personal Stamps

As now you can customize everything, checks, credit cards and so. The Swiss site **[www.poste.ch](http://www.poste.ch)** allows you to create your own personalized stamp and use it to send mails and postcards around the world.

### English green

FIA (International Automobile Federation) established a table of colors, with one for each participating nation: red for Italy, green for England, white for Germany, blue for France. There are also colors for Cuba, Brazil, Luxembourg...

### Ferrari red

The red Ferrari is actually the color of the racing team, but road cars should be in the traditional 'yellow Modena'. In addition, the red of the racing cars was not always the same. After years of using the 'red-racing' characteristic of the Italian FIA table (see above), in 1996 they changed his tone in favor of Marlboro red, brighter and more similar to orange. Subsequently Ferrari has once again altered its red because of sponsorship again.

### Silver arrows

The use of silver for the Germans of Mercedes W25 comes with the legendary 'Silver Arrows', which, at the time, had the exterior painting scratched to recover the few pounds necessary to fall within the parameters of weight for admission in the race.



### Yes, we can

It is clear that in the run for the election of the current President of the United States nothing was left to chance. Even the graphics had its weight, particularly with the release of his pop-art image. Online you can find a Photoshop filter to transform your photo (<http://www.dubster.com/obamafy/>).

### How much is worth a logo?

The Nike logo (which has a name: 'Swoosh') was created in 1971 by Carolyn Davidson, still a student, who billed the hourly costs of two dollars, for a total of 35. Phil Knight, Nike founder, ten years later will reward her with a ring with the logo in gold and an unspecified amount of shares. It seems that when he saw the logo the first time, the comment was: 'I don't like it much, but I will let it grow over time.'

## Italia's logo

In February 2007, the American branding agency Landor presented, commissioned by the Italian government, the new logo of Italy in the world, that costed 80 thousand euro. I guess that speaks for itself:



Trying to remedy this eyesore, and in order to manage the failure of the [italia.it](http://italia.it) portal (costed up to that point 7 out of 45 allocated million euros), the Government tries the redesign of both. The portal starts running (for the occasion are corrected issues such as the absence of Sardinia in the map on the homepage) and there are rumors that the new logo is in the hands of the Premier. The result is the 'Magic Kingdom' logo, which would pale a nightclub welcome page.



With a few tweaks it will lead to the current version, trivial, boring, with no personality. Remains open in the community of Italian graphics the problem of how to represent my country, a very difficult task.



## McDonald's

The first impression on McDonald's signs and logos is that they are always the same, but it is not so, much depends on the location. Usually the M (the 'double-arch') is yellow, sometimes white, in 'top' places it's gold. The background is often red, smooth or texturized, sometimes the signs are boxed, sometimes flat. Lately, a new color combination (green, pale colors) will bring a more fresh, light and eco-friendly images to the company.



## An ecological font

ecofont

Maybe you don't know that you reduces toner usage by 25. Using 'Ecofont', a font that has a kind of drilling invisible when printed under 12-13 points. You can download it from [www.ecofont.com](http://www.ecofont.com).

## A healing font

ABCDEFGHIJKLMNOPQRSTUVWXYZ

OpenDyslexic is a free OpenSource font that helps people suffering Dyslexia to read a little better. The shapes of the characters are studied to fight those problems that come with dislexia, for instance the bottom part is heavier to visually 'sustain' the single character and give and up-down orienting.

Visit [www.opendyslexic.org](http://www.opendyslexic.org) to know more.

# And finally... how to make a graphic designer crazy!

## Microsoft Office is a graphic software

If you need to send any document to a graphic designer, make sure it is done with an application of the Microsoft Office package. If you need to deliver the images, don't send directly the jpegs, but embed them in a Word or PowerPoint. Don't forget to lower the image resolution to 72 dpi and, the first complaints of the designer, tell him: 'But I see very well on screen.'

## Clogged mail

If you need to send the image via email, forget the attachments at least a couple of times and don't correct the error until it's the graphic, desperate, to inform you. If he asks an high-resolution image, please attach the entire folder of RAW files without compressing them.

## Ugly characters

If the designer, his goodness, asks an opinion on a font, you say that you prefer Helvetica. If you also like it, choose Arial. If you agree, wait a few days and then give him the *coup de grace* choosing Comic Sans. With each passing day, ask to enter more and more fonts, until you get to 30 or 40 proposals.

## Too much white

Graphic designers tend to leave too much white around, with the excuse of 'breath', the 'cleansing' and 'countergraphisms'. Don't listen to him. The real reason they do this is to make the document bigger, increasing the number of pages and the resulting cost to you. Then use repeatedly the well-known formula: 'Can't you please fill all that wasted white space there?'.

## Old logo...

If you already have your own logo, make sure to send it to the designer in gif or jpeg format at a very low resolution, even better if copied-and-pasted directly from the internet and on a background image, so the designer will go crazy for reconstruct it. Once the designer will have lost hours to better accommodate that small logo, take care to ask him a much bigger version.

A nice touch is to deliver a graphic object with your logo printed on it: possibly on a curved surface (pens, mugs, mousepads, T-shirts), as small as possible, with colors that make it impossible to scan (gold leaf or varnish) or, better yet, taken from a fax of five years before, they have specially preserved for the occasion.

### **And a new logo...**

If you need to create a logo from scratch, you will have free reign to let the designer go crazy. Make a sketch of your idea, or ask your five-years-old nephew, maybe on toilet paper or a paper towel. Take no more than five minutes: the less the designer will understand, the more room you will have to apply for hundreds of subsequent changes. Never accept the first proposal! Not even the ninth, for that matter. Ask him from time to time to change colors, fonts, and to insert cliparts or a picture in the logo, embosses, glows, gradients, Comic Sans. And when will be the tenth proposal, tell him that your favorite is the second one that showed you.

### **Impossible vocabulary**

When you describe what you want in a project, use terms that don't mean anything. Invent them, if necessary: 'I would like more sparkling', 'You can see a version less sbriluccicosa?', 'Can you make something that I'd look at and say how cool?'. If you want to overdo it, replaced the possible adjectives with facial expressions and sounds like 'Mmmmm... I can imagine more Mmmhh and less Mmmmmmh Mmmmmmh.' Commenting on the designer's proposals, don't forget to use key terms such as: trivial, already seen, too old, too modern.

### **Words, words, words**

If the designer asks the body text for a catalog or brochure, send it in small chunks in many different emails, in separate days. If you need to change just a few words, remember to send the entire text without specifying what changed. Do not skimp on grammatical errors, double spaces, typos. Send incomplete texts, asking the designer to complete them 'and then we see it together.'

### **Choose an image**

As for graphics, the images must be 'beautiful', 'sparkling', 'impact', 'non-trivial'. If the designer offers you to buy them from professional sites or to arrange a photo shoot, you know that he just wants to rip you more money. Resist and ask that you download pictures from the Internet without paying a cent. When you have to choose the photos proposals, try this trick: 'I like this, but I would like the blonde girl dark hair' or 'This picture is perfect, if only it were a kind of tie lines instead of dots.' Do not forget to add: 'Especially with the computer it takes a moment to you.' When the graph will be exhausted, but finally satisfied with the decision, propose peacefully: 'But if we used the clipart?'

### **Deadline, dead man**

When approaching the end of the project, remember to put pressure on him: phone calls, send email, recalls to be sure that he has read the email. When you send the final draft for approval, take much more time than needed, without yielding to the entreaties of the designer. Wait until you provide the latest key changes within hours of the deadline, making sure that it should work at night to respect it.

### **The coup de grace**

At this point, your graphic designer will be cooked to perfection, if everything went according to plan, should be arrived at the stage of absolute submission. Conscious of not being able to get out of anything, will limit itself to execute your orders blindly. Make sure that it is so, and when you're ready to make the final decision for the press, let him notice that you were disappointed by his lack of initiative, which, after all, you have done all you, that you would have expected more hints, more proposals, more talent, which, for what little it took, the project could do it your nephew of five with Paint and Publisher; above all, you're not going to pay him that little work done so far.

It is done: the designer, exhausted, will fall at your feet and will be admitted to the nearest psychiatric hospital.

*Anonymous graphic designer, Internet*



# Thanks

This book is not mine, it's all the people from whom I learned (with good and bad examples) and I thank them. Thank you, thank you, thank you.

Carmen, Davide, Donatella (my mother), Filippo Tommaso, Gregorio, Luca, Marco, Marco, Michele and Umberto in life and work. And many, but many, others ;)

# Stefano Ferranti

That is me.

I've been working in graphic design for almost twenty years, am the owner of the advertising agency New! ([www.newadv.com](http://www.newadv.com)) and in all that time I've worked with large and small clients, on countless projects, sometimes in very bad conditions ;)

I learned a lot, and tried to share it with you here.

My job is the graphic-creative direction, building communication and marketing strategies, having ideas and give advice based on common sense and good taste.

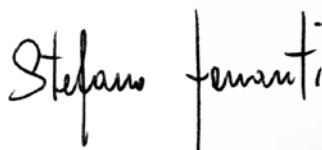
For any question, materials and updates visit  
[www.graficaperilmarketing.com/us](http://www.graficaperilmarketing.com/us)

Obviously, you can find me on facebook :)

## Training

If you are interested in training -personal or for business- on the themes of this book, feel free to contact me via email: [stefano@newadv.com](mailto:stefano@newadv.com)

Grazie!



Stefano Ferranti



# Change the way you present yourself, inside and outside the company

“This is the book I have been waiting for.  
It challenges everything you believe you  
know about presentations.”

***Carmen Gerardi, Director of Operations, GUNA Inc.***

“Stefano, a great traveling companion.”

***Gale Collier, Marketing  
& Communications, KPMG Italy***

“This book is an indispensable manual for  
positioning the value of your service or your  
new technology.”

***Gregory Zaretsky, CEO, One Planet***



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