

Planning and Producing Slide Presentations for Orthotics and Prosthetics

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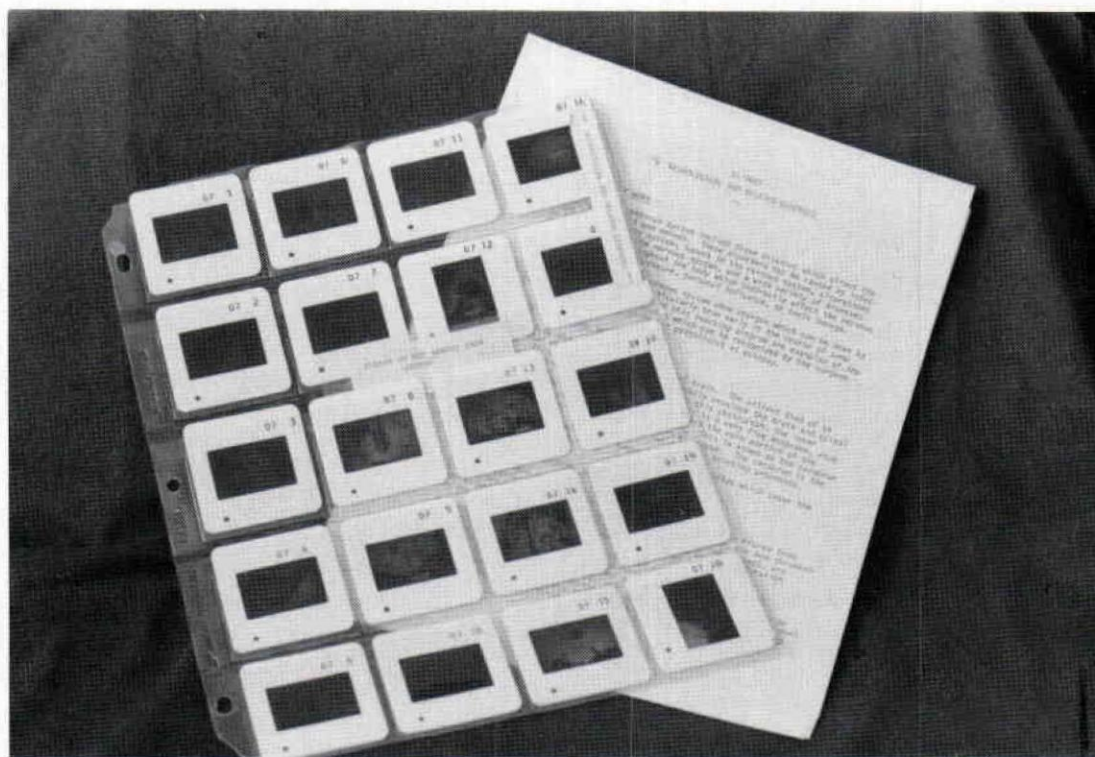


Fig. 1. Slides can supplement the text of the speech and reinforce the key points.

INTRODUCTION

Slides and audio-visual presentations are recognized as a medium in medical presentations and are effective in training patients, doctors, therapists, agencies and professional personnel. With proper visual support, the impact of any speech can be greatly enhanced. Visuals encourage a

smoother flow of communication from the speaker to the audience and, when used properly, can even accelerate the flow of communication and further the audience's retention. Slide presentations are the visual support that can aid orthotist or prosthetist by clarifying and amplifying the message with concise visual simplification.

The purpose of this article is to instruct the orthotic-prosthetic practitioner in the use and technology of slide presentations. High quality, visually appealing slides are essential for a successful presentation. Slide support can supplement the text of the speech and reinforce its key points by giving the audience facts, examples, illustrations, contrasts, and motivation (Fig. 1). For the most effective presentation, slides should be chosen that build around the speech. The ideal situation is, of course, to work with a specialist in the preparation of a speech and the production of slides. But no matter who plans the presentation or who prepares the visual aids, the following procedures will ensure a quality product.

PLANNING THE PRESENTATION

Know the audience—never underestimate their intelligence, and never overestimate their interest. Respect their time and their right to not listen. Most people in an audience are experienced at looking attentive. Engage them in thinking, comparing, experimenting with a new perspective. Keep your presentation brief: there are few things worse than nothing to say—except taking a long time to say it.

Have a clear purpose. Before outlining the information in your presentation, ask the simple question: What am I trying to say? Answer this question in one, simple sentence. Most often a speaker wants to change something (an attitude, a misunderstanding, a point of view). Know the result that is to be produced. The presentation is less likely to be boring if the audience is considered first and the presentation second. It must relate to their needs. Few people are interested in more information unless it is relevant to them personally, would be of value in their practice, or is critical to their professional expertise. Ask yourself these questions: Who is the audience? How much do they know? How much are they able and willing to understand? How can they be interested in this subject?

ORGANIZING THE PRESENTATION

People remember more when they see as well as hear. Well-organized slides allow the speaker to document the past, focus on the present, and project the future. Visual impact can convey ideas that would not otherwise be as easily or readily understood. However, the process of "letting the pictures do the talking" involves thinking visually.

Once the subject matter has been determined, slides should be selected that visually outline and emphasize the main points of the presentation. Each frame should contain only a single idea in the simplest form possible. Before photographing such ideas or examples, illustrate that point with a general sketch on a single card. Group these sketches together in sequences. Sort out, but do not discard, the impractical or irrelevant ideas (they may be the basis for another presentation). Ask: Is this slide necessary? Does it have continuity? Does it add to the presentation? Are distractions removed? Is it the best way to illustrate the point? *If you cannot visualize an idea, consider rewriting it.*

Most slides are projected for less than one-and-a-half minutes. Keep it simple. Separate the information on each slide. Add a variety of angles, close-up shots, and perspective. Do not have too much to say on one slide. Each slide should be loaded and marked accurately. The 80-Slide Carousel Tray is recommended (Fig. 2), as the 140-Slide Trays tend to lock or jam slides. Even with slides of the finest quality, a presentation can be ruined by malfunctioning equipment or disorganized slides. If the slides are out of sequence, upside down, or remain on the screen for too long a time, they will lose their impact.

EQUIPMENT

Never let the equipment determine the format or content of the program. There are technical brochures, schools and classes available for every piece of equipment. The most expensive is not always necessary.

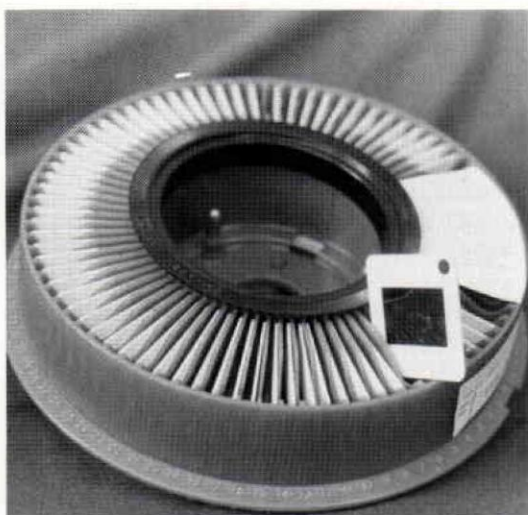


Fig. 2. The 80-slide tray is recommended to prevent jamming. Each slide should be loaded and marked accurately.

There is no need to be a professional photographer—just approach it that way.

The 35mm camera is recommended for flexibility, accuracy, and control. Two cameras at the same time are necessary if black & white photographs (for publication) are also required. Polaroid cameras are good for instant documentation, but remember that their prints are hard to duplicate and slides cannot be produced from Polaroid prints.

A copy stand is absolutely necessary for photographing books, flat documents, title slides or precision close-up shots. These stands eliminate distortion and assure proper focus, exposure, alignment, and positioning. Copy stands can be either purchased or simply constructed by using a stable platform and an adjustable bracket for the camera. An illuminator is useful for comparing subjects, checking exposure, and inspecting slides. An illuminated editor (Fig. 3) is even better because it is

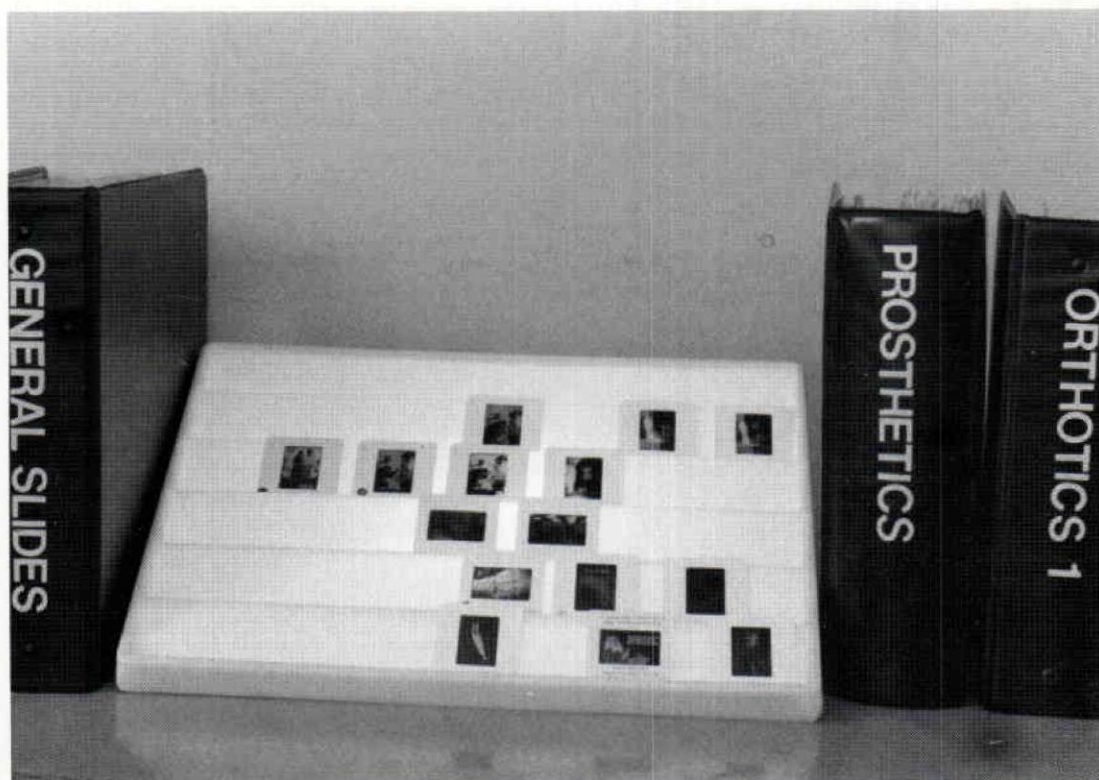


Fig. 3. An illuminated editor can be used to review and organize slides.

specifically designed for editing, previewing and organizing an entire presentation. More elaborate illuminated editors can also be used for storage.

The projector is the final, and critical, link in the complete presentation. When a projectionist is available, clearly mark the slide trays with the title of the presentation, time and the speaker's name, and give them directly to the projectionist. Request to have the remote control attachment located on the podium. It is a distraction to keep asking the projectionist for "next slide, please." Several preliminaries and many rehearsals will ensure a smooth-running presentation.

More sophisticated slides presentations engage multiple projectors, dissolve units, sound synchronization, and multi-media demonstrations. Keep in mind that more equipment exponentially complicates the program, and gives multiple opportunities for equipment failure and uncertainty. Simplicity and well-rehearsed familiarity can often produce a far more efficient, confident and successful presentation.

TITLE SLIDES AND ARTWORK

Titles are important to the slide presentation to introduce the program, answer questions, bridge gaps, introduce a new concept, or emphasize a specific point. There are a number of ready-made title subjects available for immediate shooting such as signs, billboards, nameplates on equipment, labels on doors, etc. Title slides can also be "custom-made" quickly, inexpensively, and easily.

The simplest title slides are write-on slides. On these blanks, the speaker can add drawings, diagrams, comments or titles. For a more professional look, presstype letters are recommended. No photographic developing is necessary with the technique, therefore it is excellent for the last minute changes or when working with existing slides that simply need to be organized and titled.

Title slides can be simply typed on a typewriter and then photographed, but the results are usually uninteresting. The

amount of type per slide should always be limited to three or four lines, with no more than seven words per line. Adequately space the type and letters within the slide frame, leaving plenty of open space. Between the lines, always leave space equal to the height of a capital letter. A black background will increase legibility; the familiar diazo slide is royal blue with white letters. The diazo slides are commercially prepared or can be produced by a medical photography department in a hospital.

More interesting title slides can be bold and creative using presstype letters on bright colorful backgrounds, or on sheets of acetate gels with graphic backgrounds. These backgrounds can be photographs from medical journals, magazines, cartoons, illustrations from books, historical photographs, artwork, or a limitless source of excellent visual communications. Transfer letters are easy to apply and give the impression of a neat, professional printing job. Because the work message is on the transparent sheet, the same background can be used over and over again with different gels. These creative backgrounds provide a psychological effect to hold the audience's attention and interest.

All illustrations should be simple, bold, and graphic. Never copy graphs or complicated diagrams directly out of books. They are difficult to read at a distance and, unlike reading a book, the audience does not have the luxury of studying the drawing in detail and analyzing the content. Do not insult the audience by reading line by line off a tabular chart. Be sure to use round numbers and keep the captions to a minimum. If tables must be used, don't crowd the slides. Draw diagrams, charts and graphs to read horizontally, clearly and simply. To attract attention and lighten the tone of the presentation, cartoons are ideal. However, do not include pictures that have nothing to do with the presentation simply for shock value. It is common sense: irrelevant visuals only ultimately detract from the speech.

For a complex concept, use a series of simple visuals. Use many illustrations rather than one confusing drawing. One technique for presenting a list of items is to

use Progressive Disclosure. This technique builds on the next slide and allows the presenter to disclose and emphasize each point as they are ready. It is an exciting way to pace a presentation. The method is extremely simple: merely shoot the entire list or completed photo, then remove a section, shoot, remove another section shoot and so on. For the presentation, simply project the slides in reverse order. The illustration or list will appear to "grow" before the audience's eyes. Similarly, motion can be simulated by repeating different positions of slides in rapid succession. The same slides can also be used more than one time in a presentation to emphasize or reinforce an important point.

COMPOSITION AND PHOTO TECHNIQUES

The art of photography is selection. Editing and composing can be done right in the camera. Similarly, selective forms can eliminate such confusion. By intentionally blurring a background or by having a closer shot, the resulting slide becomes more interesting. There are long, medium, and close shots. Look at the purpose of the shot and then determine the proper perspective to be viewing the action. Simply—look before you shoot and shoot with a purpose. A photograph can be candid (there is a low probability of effective composition), arranged, or staged depending upon the photographer's attention. The "rule of thirds" suggests that the main subject be located at a point where visual lines intersect. Symmetry can be used for accent, horizontal placement is generally relaxing, and diagonal visual lines are dynamic. Knowing these basic visual laws of composition can be useful in avoiding the "snap shot" or unprofessional look of amateur slides.

All "studio" shots (that is, shots taken where there is some control of the environment) should be professional. Backdrops add visual clarity, focus, contrast, and start building consistency in a slide library. Drapes should be dark, unwrinkled and cover all irrelevant areas. Using a

system of propping or wedging will result in a clean and stable-looking subject. Only the well-manicured hand should be included in any photograph—and only if it is used for scale or is an integral part of the device.

Photographing people is a particularly delicate area in orthotics and prosthetics. Every person has the right to refuse to be photographed. It is unwise to publish or show the face without a written release granting permission to do so. Masking facial features, or photographing only the body or extremities are the most practical methods of concealing identity. Editing and composing in the camera often eliminates much unnecessary embarrassment. It is imperative to remember that people with deformities, abnormalities or amputations are often self-conscious. Explanations should always be made to the patient as to how the photograph will be used. A dark drape, again, is useful in both composing the photograph and in easing the patient's attitude. In addition, patient street clothing rarely contributed to the photograph. The drape eliminates most distractions.

Another technique for effective photographs is the use of masking and taping. Silver tape may be used to improve slide composition, block out irrelevant information, conceal a patient's identity, or emphasize a particular area. This is also useful in title slides when background edges are visible. Masking slide mounts are available at the same photographic stores where silver tape is purchased. These mounts allow the combination of one or more slides on the same mount. By using these mounts, comparisons are more easily identified and they add visual interest to the standard horizontal format.

One final note to the photographer: *take two shots—always*. Take multiple exposures, multiple angles, multiple perspectives, especially when photographing people. The opportunity may not come again. Secondly, the cost of a duplicate slide is far more expensive than the click of another frame. In building a slide library, multiple slides allow for many complete programs rather than having to reshoot or reorganize for each presentation.

CARE AND HANDLING OF SLIDES

The primary factors affecting color slides are light, moisture and heat. Avoid projection times longer than one minute. Also, do not allow color negative to remain on the illuminated editor for an extended period of time. Store them in transparent plastic sleeves or slide trays (Fig. 4). There are two other lethal enemies of slides: fingerprints and dust. Slides can be professionally cleaned, but throwing them in a drawer is not only disorganized, but it will also ruin the slides.

Transparent plastic sleeves may be stored in labeled notebooks. Slide trays are ideal for storage purposes. They keep the slides clean, orderly and always ready for the next presentation. Trays should always be carefully handled.

The production of an effective slide presentation involves planning, visual de-

sign, composition, photography expense, time in preparation, rehearsals and careful protection. The accumulation of a complete slide library represents a considerable investment of time, money, and a commitment to education, vision, and the profession. Slides should be treated with all the care, respect, and integrity that has gone into their production.

CONCLUSION

The production of slide programs is technically not difficult, in fact, it can be recreational. The careful planning, preparation and professional presentation is well worth the effort. Well-produced programs result in an effective demonstration of skill and expertise. The goal is to keep them simple—the result is a visual impact that conveys more than words alone.

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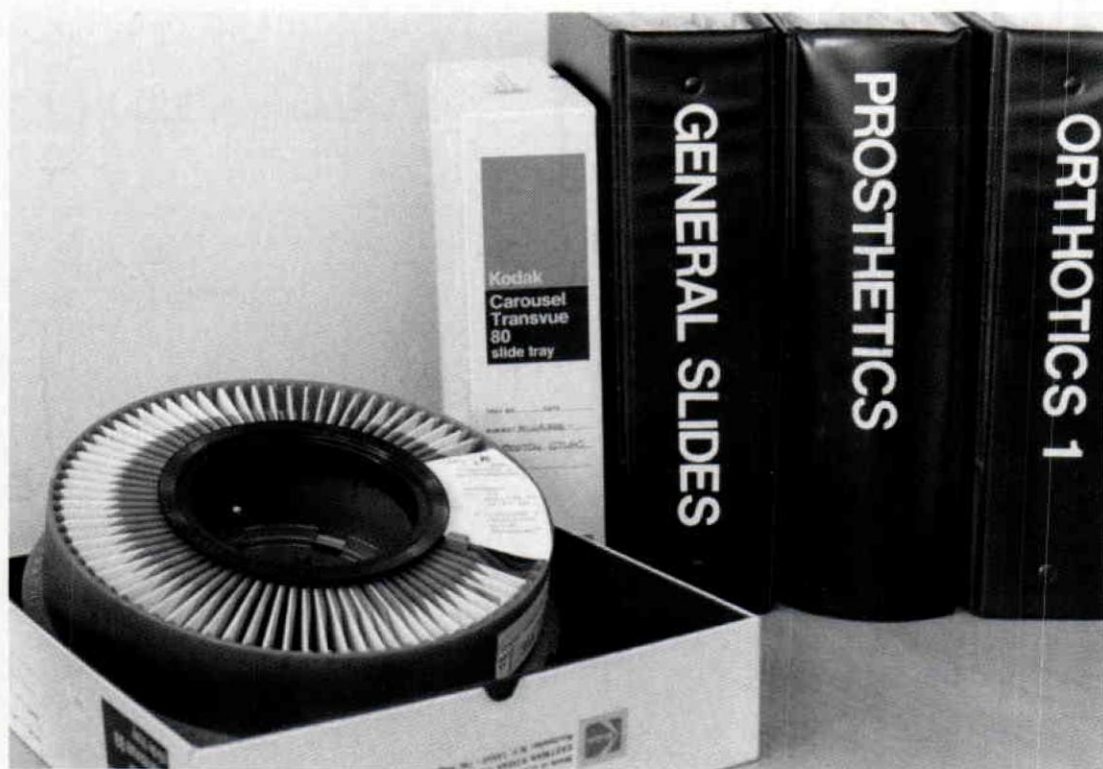


Fig. 4. Slides should be stored in trays or in transparent plastic sleeves, which can be kept in binders.

Appendix

Slide Resources

A Guide to Medical Photography by Peter Hansell, University Park Press, 233 East Redwood Street, Baltimore, Maryland 21202, c. 1979.

Available Publications of particular interest to persons producing slide programs for any audience:

Kodak Guide to 35mm Photography	AC-95
Kodak Color Films	E-77
Sources of 2 x 2 inch Color Slides	S-2
Audio-Visual Projection	S-3
Images, Images, Images—The book of Programmed Multi-Image Production	S-12
A Pre-show checklist for effective dissolve Projection	S-14
Speechmaking—more than words alone	S-25
Slides with a Purpose	I-15
<i>Presenting Yourself</i> , by Michael Kenney	S-60 (new)
Reverse Text Slides	S-26
Kodak Sourcebook—Ektagraphic Projects	S-74
Kodak Ektagraphic Tray Bands (for Single and Multi-Images)	S-85
Kodak Ektagraphic Tray Bands (for Dissolve presentations)	S-86
Basic 2 x 2 inch Slide Packet	S-100
Clinical Photography	N-3

The Communicators Catalog:

Publication #S-4 lists approximately 250 Publications covering Kodak products and services in professional motion pictures, television and audio-visual applications.

The Index to Kodak Information:

Publication #L-5 is a comprehensive listing of approximately 800 Publications produced by Eastman Kodak Company.

One FREE COPY of each of the Indexes (The Communicators Catalogue and the Index to Kodak Information) can be obtained by writing to:

Eastman Kodak Company
Department 412 L
Rochester, New York 14650

Services of Commercial Laboratories

You may find it practical to use the services of a commercial laboratory that specializes in processing slides. If so, you or your staff would make all of the original photographs and the artwork and then order slides from the laboratory. Because prices and quality vary radically, we recommend using only reputable laboratories. The names and addresses of color laboratories are listed in:

Photo Methods for Industry Catalog
Director of Products and Services
Ziff Davis Publishing Co.
1 Park Avenue
New York, New York 10016

and

Industrial Photography
1980 Gold Book Directory of
Photo Equipment and Services
United Business Publications
750 Third Avenue
New York, New York 10017