

Technical Communication: Process and Product 6th Edition

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Graphics

This chapter discusses the following:

- Objectives
- Color
- Three-Dimensional Graphics
- Criteria for Effective Graphics
- Types of Graphics



Objectives

Wall-to-wall text is neither clear nor concise. Effective technical communication includes graphics, which provide the following benefits:

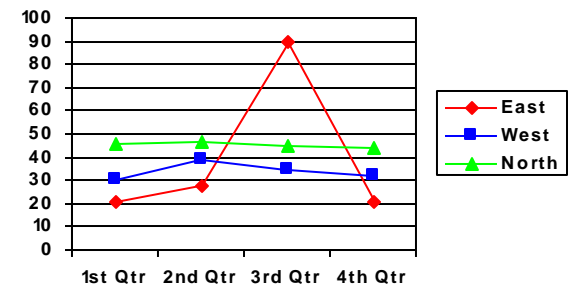
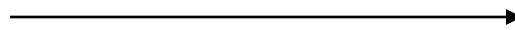
Objectives (cont.)

- Conciseness—visual aids can convey large amounts of information in less space.

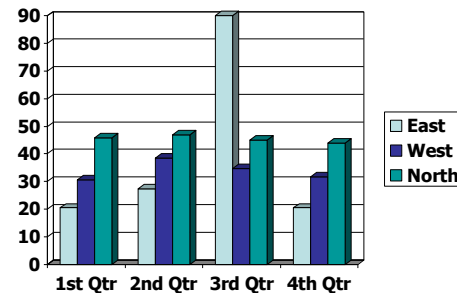
Objectives (cont.)

- Clarity—visual aids can clarify complex information by showing

– Trends



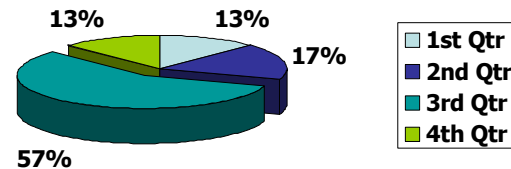
– Comparisons



Objectives (cont.)

- Clarity—visual aids can clarify complex information by showing

– Percentages →



– Facts and figures →

1st Q	2nd Q	3rd Q
1600	1360	2145
2311	6743	2456

Objectives (cont.)

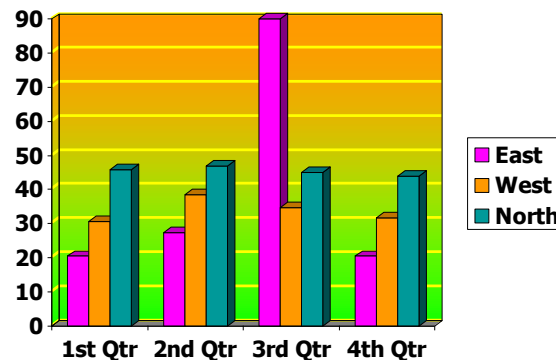
- Cosmetic Appeal—visual aids add interest to documentation.

Color

Color adds interest to visual aids.

However, use color with caution. Color can cause problems:

- Harsh colors can be distracting.



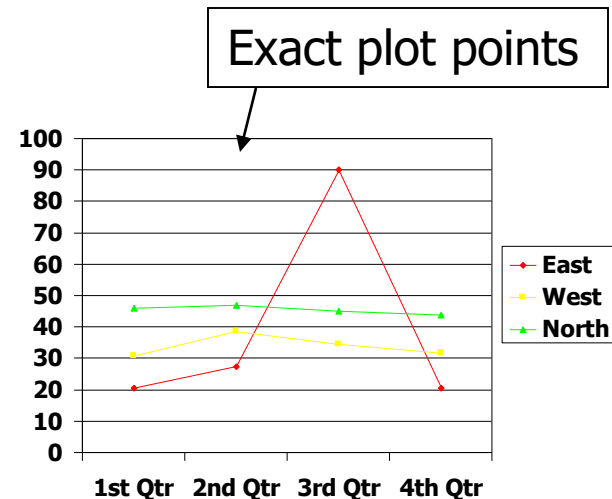
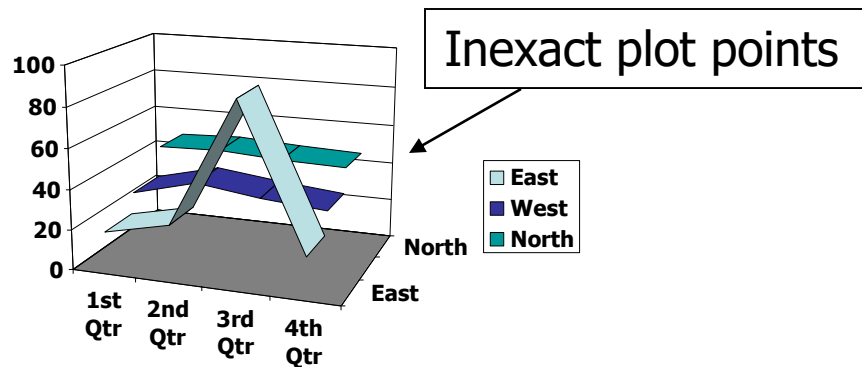
Color (cont.)

- Colors can go out of style.
- Color can increase production cost.
- Color consumes disk space.
- Color can cause problems for people with visual impairments.

Three-dimensional Graphics

Three-dimensional graphics add interest to visual aids. However, use 3-D with caution. 3-D can cause problems:

- Unclear data



Criteria for Effective Graphics

Effective graphics are:

- Integrated with the text
- Appropriately located
- Add to the text
- Communicate important information
- Do not detract

Criteria for Effective Graphics (cont.)

- Are sized effectively
- Are readable
- Are correctly labeled
- Are consistent in style with other graphics
- Are well conceived and executed

Types of Graphics

Graphics include:

- Tables
- Figures

Tables

Tables have these benefits:

- Conciseness—avoid needless repetition of words
- Clarity—provide easy-to-see comparisons/contrasts
- Easy reference

Tables (cont.)—Criteria

To create effective tables:

- Number them in order of presentation (Table 1, Table 2, etc.).
- Title all table (Table 1: Comparison of Annual Wages).
- Place tables soon after mention in text.
- Do not insert table before mention in text.

Tables (cont.)—Criteria

- Use introductory lead-ins to tables.
- Provide follow-up explanations to tables, explaining the significance.
- Provide headings for all columns.
- Abbreviate terms to size columns appropriately.
- Do not crowd tables on a page.

Tables (cont.)—Criteria

- Separate columns with ample white space for easy readability.
- Show omissions with ellipses (. . .) or hyphens/dashes (- - -)
- Use numbers consistently (either $\frac{1}{2}$ or .5)
- Write “cont.” if a table spans more than one page.

Tables (cont.)—Criteria

Table 9.1 Student Headcount, 2008		
Age Group	New Students	Continuing Students
18-20	1,400	900
21-23	330	602
24-26	263	496
Total	3,393	1,998

Figures

There are many different types of figures:

- Bar charts
- Pie charts
- Line charts
- Combination charts
- Flowcharts
- Organizational charts
- Schematics
- Geologic maps
- Line drawings
- Renderings
- CAD drawings
- Photographs
- Icons
- Downloadable clip art

Figures (cont.)—Criteria

To create effective figures,

- Number the figures in order of presentation (Fig. 1, Fig. 2, etc.).
- Title each figure (Fig. 1: Percentages of Work Performed).
- Preface each figure with an introductory lead-in.
- Do not use a figure until mentioned in the text.

Figures (cont.)—Criteria

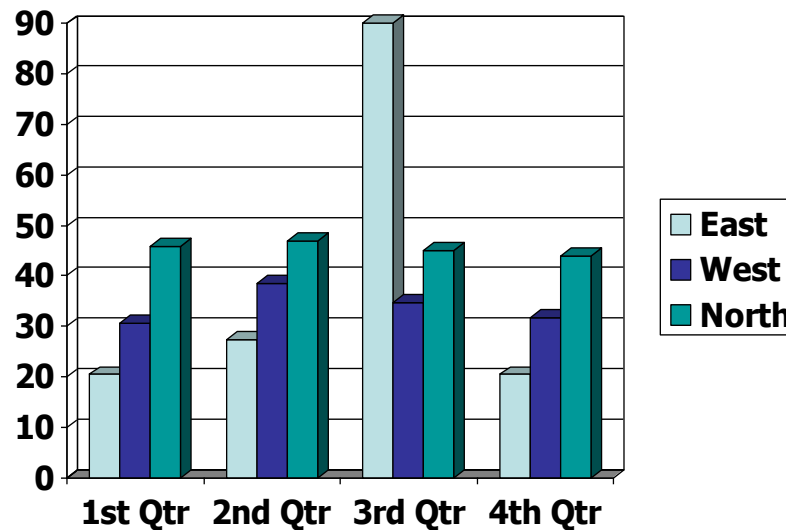
- Present the figure soon as mentioning.
- Explain the figure's importance.
- Label the figure's components (x- and y-axes, for example).
- Provide a legend when necessary.
- Define any abbreviations.

Figures (cont.)—Criteria

- Cite sources of information as needed.
- Do not crowd figures on a page.
- Size the figures appropriately for readability.

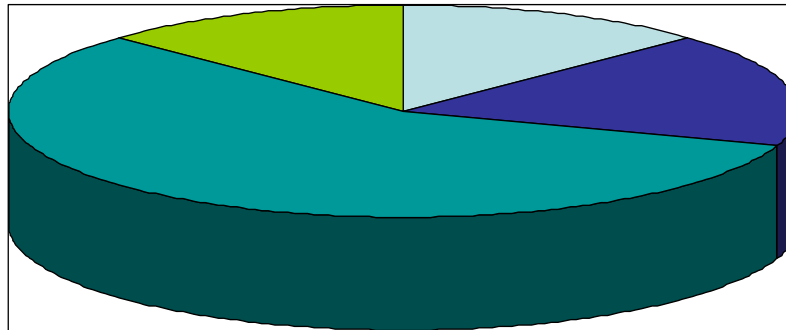
Types of Figures

- Bar charts



Types of Figures (cont.)

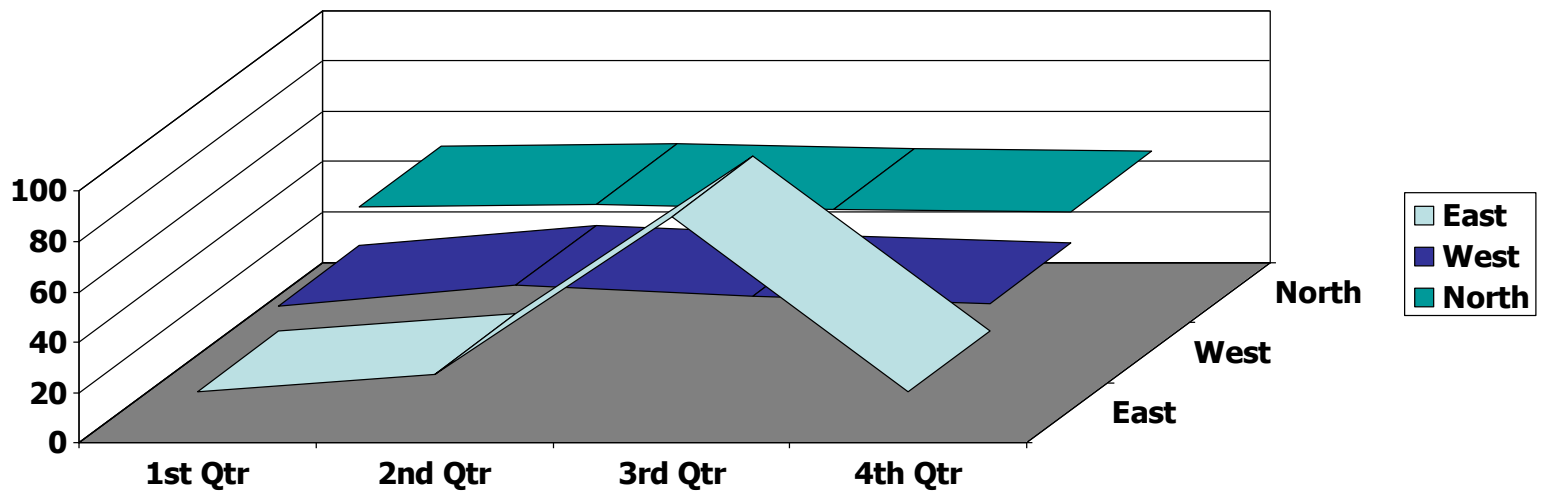
- Pie Charts



1st Qtr 2nd Qtr 3rd Qtr 4th Qtr

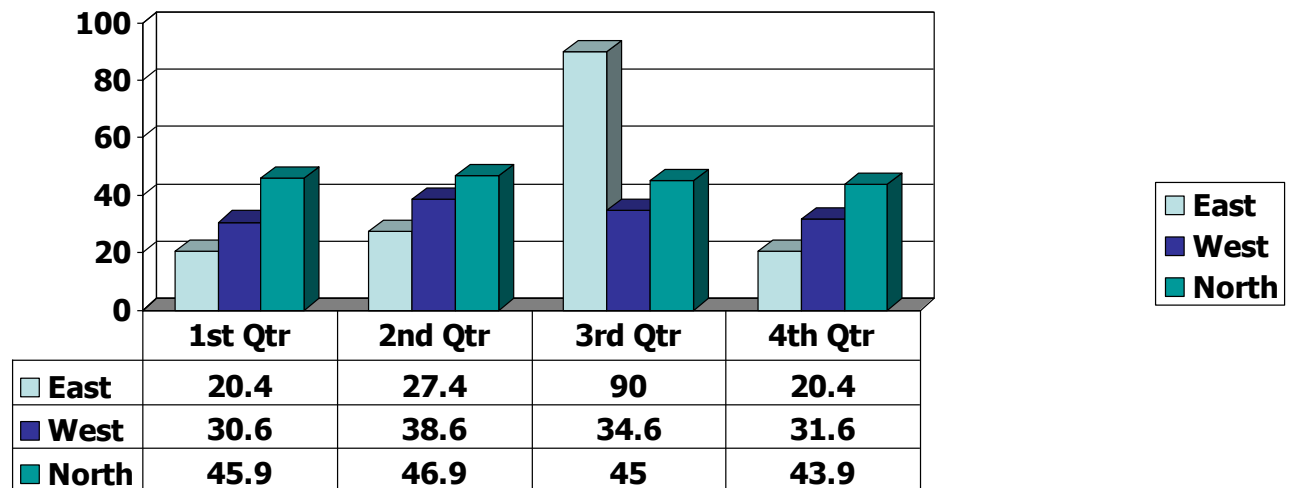
Types of Figures (cont.)

- Line Charts



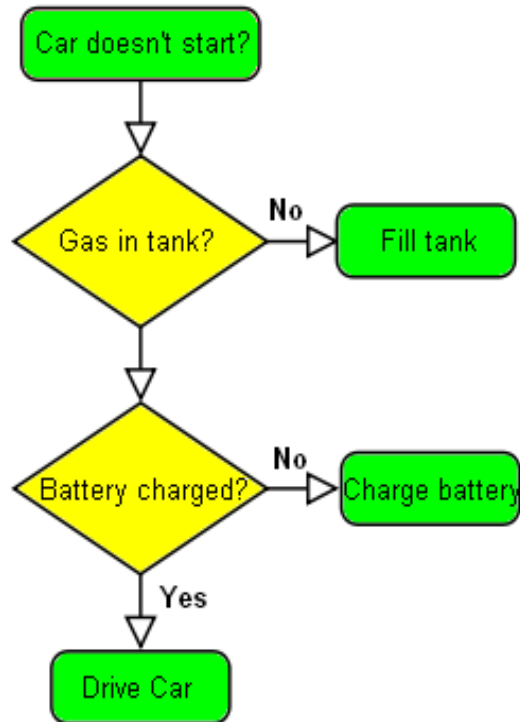
Types of Figures (cont.)

- Combination Charts



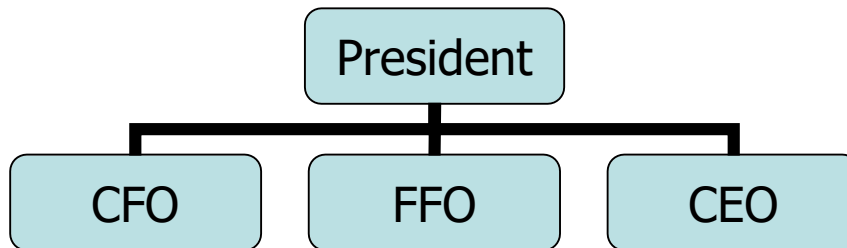
Types of Figures (cont.)

- Flowcharts



Types of Figures (cont.)

- Organizational Charts



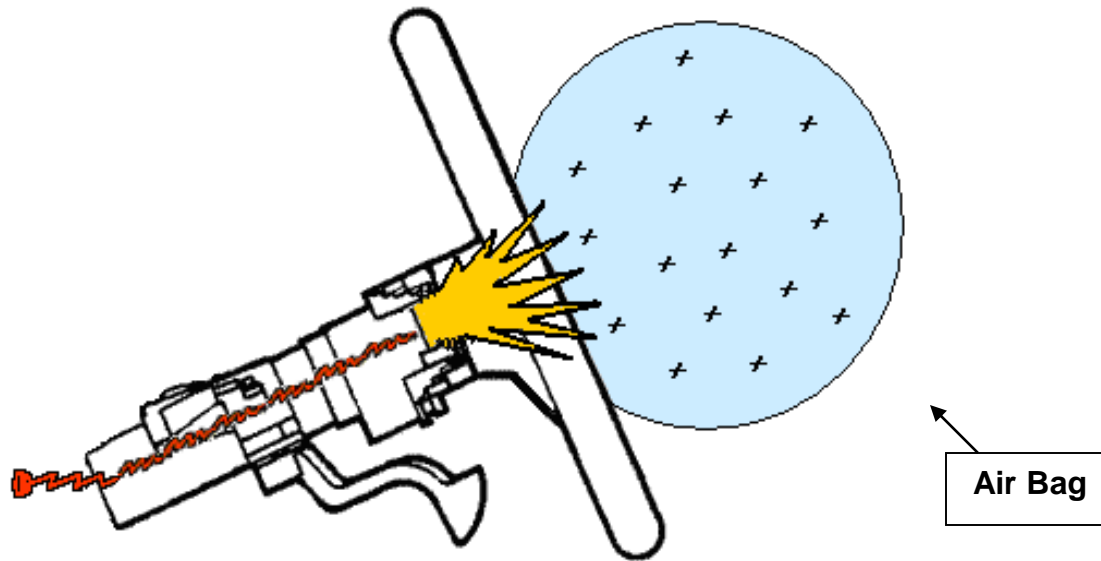
Types of Figures (cont.)

- Schematics
- Geologic maps
- Line drawings
- Renderings
- CAD drawings
- Virtual Reality



Types of Figures (cont.)

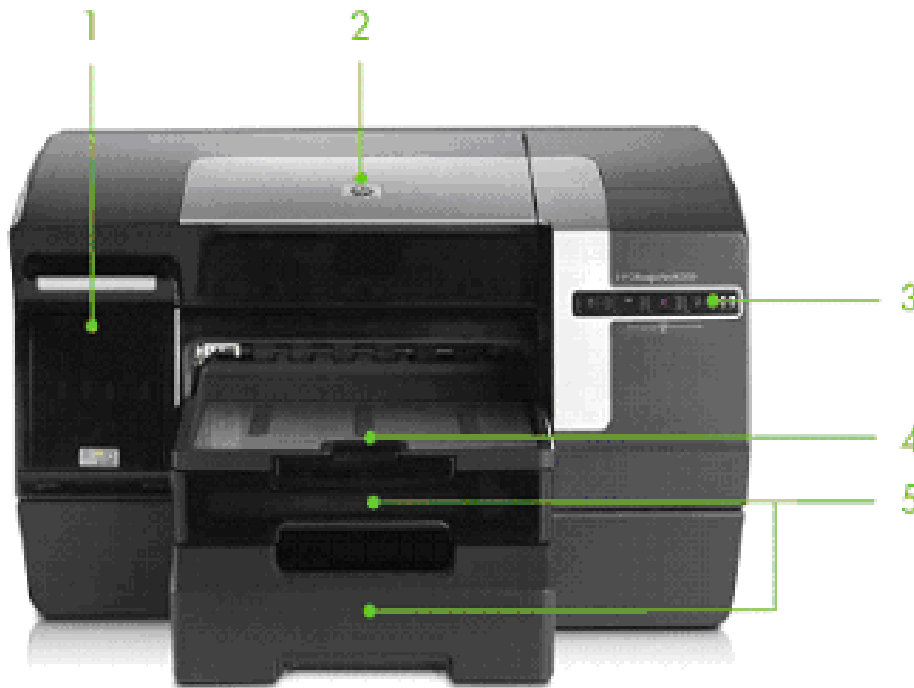
- Line Drawings



Types of Figures (cont.)

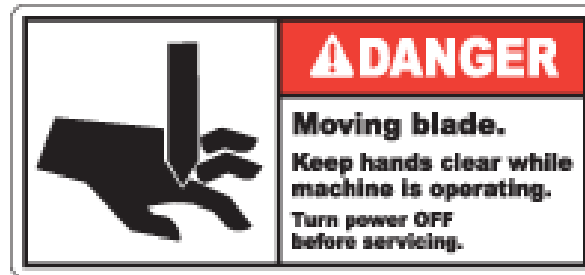
- Photographs

HP Officejet Pro K550dtwn color printer shown



Types of Figures (cont.)

- Icons



Types of Figures (cont.)

- Internet Downloadable Clip Art
 - The Internet (sites like “Google”) offer millions of downloadable clip art.

NOTE:

Be careful when using downloadable clip art.

Abide by copyright laws.

- Modify the graphics
- Give credit to the artists (source citations)
- Get permission before use

Practice

- Use the end-of-chapter activities to practice graphics.