Graph Tips

Using effective graphs is essential to developing a successful presentation. Truly, a picture says a thousand words. Engineers and scientists use graphs to convey concepts and interesting findings. However, graphs can also be deceiving if some precautions are not taken. Follow the tips below and you will be on your way to creating effective graphs.

1. Each graph should have a purpose by supporting your discussion or presenting new information in a concise manner. If your idea can be communicated without a graphic, a simple bullet point will do.

2. Keep your graphs simple. Avoid minor gridlines as this can often cause graphs to appear cluttered. If possible, create two-dimensional graphs since three-dimensional graphs are harder to understand. Try to keep colors dark.

3. Graphs can distort, complicate, and hide pertinent information. Common mistakes include omitting data and not beginning the axes scale at zero. Be responsible and honest in what you are conveying.

Funding By NASA California Space Grant Consortium