



Using Overhead Transparencies

by

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While the current trend in the training industry is heading toward the use of the LCD Projector technology, the overhead projector is still the most popular presentation device used today. Most facilities have an overhead projector in every training room or conference room. Although it is the most widely used, it is also the biggest abused. Some presenters continue to misuse the overhead projector even though they have used them for years.

I have provided below some basic guidelines and tips when using an overhead projector. Although some of these tips seem like common sense, many presentations fail because these basic tips are not consistently applied.

Here are some tips and rules to be aware of:

1. **Practice giving your presentation using your visual aids** to check out how well they project. This is a good time to also check for spelling errors. Have a friend sit and watch your presentation and make notes on any problems or needed improvements with your visual aids. Practice using your overhead transparencies so you will be comfortable with handling them correctly.
2. **Stand off to one side of the overhead projector while you face the audience** - Too many people stand between the overhead projector and the screen causing a shadow of the presenter's body. Standing to one side will allow the audience to see you as the presenter and will prevent you from blocking their view of your visual aid.
3. **Do not face the "projected" image on the screen** - Face your audience and not the screen. Many presenters face the screen and end up talking to the screen.

4. **Cover the transparency when you are done using it**-with an opaque piece of cardboard (I usually mount a solid sheet of paper on one of my transparency frames). You may also turn off the projector completely, but beware, this can cause the projector bulb to burn out sooner.
5. **Bring a spare bulb!**-Nothing is more unsettling than to have your overhead projector bulb burn out during your presentation. Bring spare bulbs and a glove to change the bulb. The old bulb will be HOT! Make sure you know how to change the bulb. CAUTION: Remember HOT glass looks the same as cold glass!
6. **Place the overhead to your RIGHT if you are right handed and to your LEFT if you are left handed**-This will make it easier for you to face your audience and write if you need to. In either case, you want to stand in the center of the speaking area and face the audience when you speak.
7. **Place your overhead projector on a table** low enough so it does not block you or the screen. Have a small table next to the overhead so you can stack your overheads before and after you use them.
8. **Place your screen on a diagonal instead of directly behind you**-this will assure that you do not block the view for your audience. Also, have the top of the screen tilted forward towards the overhead projector (if possible) to prevent the "keystone" effect (This is where the top of the image is larger than the bottom).
9. **Tape the power chord to the floor**-to protect you or someone else from tripping. As the presenter, tripping over the chord and falling, although humorous, is one large gesture you would prefer to avoid.
10. **Store your overhead transparencies in a sturdy box or container** so they will stay clean and protected for the next time you need them. Label the box and include a "clean" copy of your handouts in the box. This will make it easier for you the next time you give your award winning presentation again.

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