

Introduction to Document Design: Visual Organization

By Linda Elizabeth Alexander

Introduction to Document Design: Visual Organization

Linda Elizabeth Alexander
lalexander@write2thepointcom.com

Write to the Point Communications <http://www.write2thepointcom.com>

Introduction to Document Design: Visual Organization
--(c)2002 by Linda Alexander

Good document design helps readers find and understand information more quickly. It can help organizations and company save time and money. Therefore, before you begin writing, and again before writing your final draft, consider these tips for making your document's design aid in the clarity of your communication.

1. Before even processing the text, readers should get a sense of the document's structure through visual clues such as white space, headings, subheads, bold face, different size fonts, numbered lists, charts, etc.
2. Give them a sense of the organization quickly, and make sure the text supports that organization and comprehension will be helped before your audience even begins to read your document.
3. Rather than trying to fit everything in by reducing font size, good editing eliminates unnecessary words and sentences. Is your message consistent? Is it unique and appropriate for your audience? Does your writing make it easy for readers to understand your meaning?
4. Use templates (empty documents with preformatted margins, colors, font faces and sizes) to increase your efficiency and productivity.
5. Use selective emphasis: Headings, subheads, italics, pull quotes, and different font sizes are all good ways to organize sections, break up text and emphasize important points. Be sure not to overdo it,

however, or your document will be *more* difficult to read.

6. Keep paragraphs short - they should only contain one main idea. If you are starting a new idea, begin a new paragraph.

7. Use numbered, lettered, or bulleted lists to help your reader follow your thinking.

8. Use spaces between paragraphs, rather than indenting. It simply looks neater. Use single spacing for your text and double spacing between paragraphs.

9. Number your pages. Even in early drafts, this will keep you and your co-authors organized. When the document is finalized, your readers will appreciate being able to turn to a certain page number to find what they are looking for.

=====
Linda Elizabeth Alexander writes marketing copy for nonprofits and other businesses. Contact her today to discuss your next project and get your FREE quote!
mailto:lalexander@write2thepointcom.com
<http://www.write2thepointcom.com>
=====

[Get-Articles.com](http://www.get-articles.com) : 1000's of reprintable business and internet marketing-related articles.

[Submit your article for reprint.](#)