

Presentation boards

162 All the presentation material which has been carefully generated needs to be organised and delivered to the viewer in the sequence intended by the designer. There needs to be a ready system for ordering and organising the visuals, text, plans and other material such that it tells a coherent and easily understandable story. This is usually accomplished through the use of presentation boards or panels. It may be that all relevant information can be presented legibly on a single board, or it might be appropriate to use multiple boards to tell the story (in the context of this book, the term 'board' is used to describe any composite of drawings, images and text that is displayed in either printed format on rigid or flexible media, or digitally as part of a slideshow).

While you may give a verbal presentation to the client in addition to showing a set of boards, it is likely that the presentation boards will be left for the client to review, and the client and others that may not have been at the presentation will need to be able to easily assimilate all the material that forms the submission. Once again, clarity is the key, as any discrepancies, inconsistencies or breaks in the narrative of the presentation will create doubts in the mind of the client. Even when the designer has made a verbal presentation, the boards need to be able to stand on their own to explain the design.



The sample board for this informal kitchen/dining area shows samples that are neatly explained in the key. The visual that accompanies the board has been drawn by hand and rendered in Photoshop.

Constructing presentation boards

Boards can be constructed by traditional paste-up methods, whereby individual images, blocks of text, photographs and so on are trimmed and mounted on to the presentation board itself, or digital versions of paste-ups can be created in any of a number of software packages. CAD software, word-processing software, presentation programs (such as PowerPoint), photo editing, page layout and desktop publishing applications can all be used to create digital composites of your technical drawings, illustrations, textual explanations and product images from suppliers. The digital image can be output to paper for final finishing and mounting, or used as an image within a slideshow.

Which is the best route to follow? As ever, there isn't a simple answer; it will depend upon circumstance. Digital imagery can be transmitted anywhere easily, and it has a slick, contemporary feel that can be very seductive, but traditional methods allow the integration of real material samples within the presentation. Sometimes there is no substitute for being able to see and touch the real material. Samples of fabric and finishes show depth and character, they allow the play of light to become a dynamic part of the presentation as materials catch the light, and the depth of colour or sheen of a surface can never quite be replicated in a photograph; however, they are potentially more expensive to transport and are more susceptible to damage during transit.

Drawings always represent interpretations rather than the empirical truth, but it is important to be aware of the implications of the information that is communicated on the boards. As clients have nothing other than the presentation material to go on, their understanding of the scheme will be derived solely from what is included on the presentation boards. When these are shown, they can take on the status of a contract document; that is what is seen on these boards in miniature is what will be provided on a larger scale when the project is realised. Any deviations or changes should therefore be carefully documented and communicated in writing to the client, and the client will need to be made aware that while every effort will be made to match the appearance of samples of natural materials, it cannot be guaranteed that they will appear exactly as they do on the presentation boards.

The boards themselves are unique, bespoke, creations in their own right. Every project will suggest a different approach to their use and construction, and if they are to do the job of selling the scheme they need to be compiled to a very high standard. When creating physical boards, all the cutting and mounting needs to be of the highest standard, and when working digitally care must still be taken to ensure neatness and consistency of layout. The time spent preparing the boards should reflect the value of the project. Clients will not have confidence in designers who supply dirty, damaged, or carelessly constructed presentation material, and could find it easier to decline to take the project further.



Presentation boards must tell the story of the design in a clear and concise way. A lot of care should go into deciding what illustrations to use, which material samples to show and the layout of the boards. They should be constructed to the highest standards to project a professional image.