Research Communication: When Do I Need a Professional?

Scientists often create their own communication products. They plot their own graphs, write their own reports, and develop their own presentations.

In some situations, do-it-yourself works well. In others, it may help to call in a professional who has training and expertise in design and communication.

The chart below (*and accompanying examples*) can help you decide whether to **TRY DIY** or **GO WITH A PRO**.

Try DIY

Go with a Pro

Stakes	Little potential risk or reward *Presentation for preschool career day*	Big potential gains or losses *Oral contract proposal for $5M in funding*
Complexity	Simple graph or chart, Basic icons *Bar chart or line graph depicting two variables*	Complex graph or chart, Intricate illustration *Single data visualization incorporating many variables*
Size, Number & Reach of Products	Brief/small product, One-time product, Small audience *Paragraph in faculty newsletter*	Long/large product, Series of related products, Large audience *One-hour keynote address for 1,000 people*
Resources	Limited financial resources, Sufficient labor resources *Have graduate research assistants with availability*	Sufficient financial resources, Limited labor resources *Have a well-funded research project with small or overextended staff*

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