

Cheat Sheet for Creating Tip Sheets

1. Leave lots of white space.
2. Arial font is most readable for the screen, Times New Roman for print. Generally no smaller than 12-pt type.
3. Add 4 to 6 points of extra spacing between logical groupings to keep ideas together graphically. Don't double-space the entire document
4. No more than 10% of text should be formatted different from the default font
5. Things related logically should be related visually. To show connection use:
 - Spacing
 - Nesting
 - Size and formatting
 - Color
6. Headings should be bold and flush left on the page for easier scanning.
7. Use numbering for things in sequence. Use bullets for things NOT done sequentially.
 - Indenting lists helps readability
8. A picture is worth a 1000 words, but it has a confusing effect if it does not enhance your point.
9. Highlight very important tips or very confusing points with a box or shading.
10. When writing step-by-step exercises, review to see if each numbered item is really one separate step or action. Beware of including text that is parenthetical in the middle of an action.
11. Use **bold** for things seen on the computer screen and ***bold italics*** for things the user must type or say.
12. Stick to your conventions for all training materials.
 - The more cues you use, the less useful they are!
 - If a red arrow signifies danger, it must be used the same way everywhere.
 - If a box is used to highlight something that is tricky, it needs to do that everywhere--not highlight an important concept the next time you use it.
13. When writing tip sheets, keep your purpose in mind. If you want people to be able to use the tip sheet on their own, use the strategy of telling the person the task they are expected to do (the big picture), then give the steps for doing it indented underneath.

Be aware - There is a big difference between people successfully following directions with you standing there versus being able to do a task on their own.