

ARCHITECTURE PRESENTATION BOARD TIPS

From FIRST IN ARCHITECTURE



Structure

Before you start creating your presentation boards, take a moment to organise your work. What are you trying to convey? What drawings / images do you have to show as part of your criteria? What are your key elements in design that you would like to portray.

Collect together the information – even list out all the images to be included and what text you would like to put it, then you can start planning the structure of your boards. This will really help you visualise what information will be on your boards and how you are going to communicate your design.

Orientation, setting and size

Are you restricted to orientation of your presentation boards? Make sure you know whether your boards are supposed to be presented in landscape or portrait orientation. How will the boards be viewed, will they be displayed in a sequence so they follow on from one another, or if you are not sure this is something you need to consider.

What size are your presentation boards going to be? Make sure you know if you are limited by the size of the boards.

Layout

Consider using a grid to help you organise the visual elements on your board. You can use a simple grid or something more complex.

Consider the visual hierarchy. You will want some of your images to receive more visual attention than others, in order to communicate your idea. You can do this by giving certain images more space in the grid than others.

When you view your presentation board, you want something viewable from a distance (impact image) 6ft away, and up close. This communicates your visual hierarchy. I would recommend sketching out your layout before you start, so you can get an idea of the possible configurations you can use and what might work best.

Make sure you plan your board so that you can see the relationship between the drawings. For example sections and plans should be aligned so it is clear to read.

Make sure every instance of a plan is of the same orientation (north point always in same place) otherwise it can get very confusing for someone who has not seen the project before.

When showing plans and elevations/sections together, it is beneficial if they are of the same scale and in line. However, if one drawing is more important than the others then it makes sense to show that in a different scale.

Just because it's a pretty presentation board, don't forget to include your symbols! Scale bars, and north points often get forgotten, but are important to be included in order to make your drawings and information clear.

Background

Try to keep your background plain, unless it is featuring one of your key images.

A white background will make your images and text stand out and look professional. Most of the board images I am sharing in this post feature white backgrounds, it is clear to see why. The information comes across well, and the background makes the visuals pop of the page. A background image can often be distracting, so make sure all the information is crystal clear if you decide to go down that route.

What to include

Well this is tricky as it depends on the work you have done, and what the project brief requires of you. That being said, make sure you select the images and drawings that explain your design. Imagine you are viewing this project for the first time, what would you want to see in order to be able to understand it?

Usually the basics will include floor plans, and elevations, maybe some sections. Some sort of perspective view, 3d drawing, render. Then maybe a focus on some of the key features of your design, perhaps with brief sentences explaining if required. Hand drawings and development work can be good to include if relevant.

Information – Title, story, content

Do you need to have a title bar? If so, consider a consistent title bar throughout your boards, giving a sense of professionalism, and orderliness. Don't forget to include your details – name, title of project etc and whatever else is applicable.

Text

Its tempting to get carried away with multiple fonts but please, don't! Stick to one font, maximum of two. Use font sizes to create a hierarchy on the board – e.g. large font for your titles, a bit smaller for subtitles and standard size for the remainder of your content. Make sure your chosen font and size is readable! Keep your sentences short and punchy. No one is going to want to read an essay on your presentation board. A picture paints a thousand words!

Consider how to align your text within its text box. What is easier to read? Think about text spacing, and hyphenation and how it appears on your board.

Colour

The standard architectural style – particularly for students appears to be black white and grey! Grey grey grey! I understand why people sway that way, but sometimes its good to break out and use a bit of colour. I remember going to a student show not so long ago and overall it was just so bland. Every single board looked the same, a collage of grey! I agree there is a place for simplicity, and grey can give a professional atmospheric board, but try to inject some colour.

Other Tips

Give yourself time. It's a real shame when you have spent weeks/months on a design project, and leave yourself an hour or two to put it together for your presentation boards. Such a waste. By denying your project the time and care of developing a structure and a plan for how you present your work, you are effectively deducting grades there and then. By showing a well thought out presentation, with a clear process and design result, which is easy to engage with

you will greatly increase your chances of showing how good your design is and why it should receive a stellar grade!

Use negative space. Don't fill your board with useless information, use the negative space to set off your design and make it stand out.

Use a program you know. The last thing you need to be doing is learning a whole new software program whilst in the panic of putting your boards together. If you have allowed yourself enough time, fair enough. I would recommend InDesign or Photoshop, but Microsoft Word or Pages on the Mac will still give you good results if you are more comfortable using them. Powerpoint or Keynote on the Mac, can be good options, but just check they can print to the size you require the boards to be.

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