

JOB AIDS JOB AID

“A job aid is a repository for information, processes, or perspectives that is external to the individual and that supports work and activity by directing, guiding, and enlightening performance.” – Rossett and Gautier-Downes, *A Handbook of Job Aids*, p. 45

Consider...

- Examples are everywhere! Phone books, sticky notes, tax forms, instruction sheets, online help, laminated cards, posters, ...
- Low-tech *embedded virtuality* – smart objects.
- Job aids can be put online, but usability can suffer.

Design Ideas

Use Job Aids When...	Avoid Job Aids When...
Performance is infrequent	Use damages credibility
Consequences of errors are high	Speedy or fluid performance is needed
Self-correction is appropriate	Novel situations predominate
Large or changing knowledge base	User lacks skills/ability to use them
Training resources are limited	

- Target expert-level performance.
- Any format might be appropriate for any category; natural fits are shown.
- Combine formats for complicated situations.
- Use color, typography, layout, cartoons, etc. for clarity.
- Test-drive the result.

Three Perspectives

① Job Aids for Information

Repository of facts...Organized by natural structure or use. Ex: phone book.

② Job Aids for Processes

Tell how and when...Provide feedback...Highlight verbs. Ex: instruction sheet.

③ Job Aids for Coaching

Tell why, or tell how to think about a task...Provide suggestions, not directions...Help user form models...Accommodate new, difficult, or ambiguous situations...May reveal multiple perspectives. Ex: this section.

Resources

A Handbook of Job Aids, by Rossett and Gautier-Downes, Jossey-Bass/Pfeiffer, 1991. (Their categorization was adopted for this aid.)

Terrific Training Materials, by Frank, Lakewood Publications, 1996.

<http://edweb.sdsu.edu/courses/edtec540/540WWW/home.html>

<http://www.qaproject.org/methods/resjobaids.html>

<http://www.stc.org/confproceed/2000/PDFs/00108.PDF>

JOB AIDS JOB AID. From William.Wake@acm.org, <http://www.xp123.com>

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A Gallery of Formats

Key: Common formats used for... ①Information, ②Processes, or ③Coaching aids

ARRAY ①

Name	Number
Samples	555-1234
Staples	555-9872
Subs	555-4321

- Focused on data
- No natural starting point
- No natural path

CATEGORIES or CHECKLIST ①②③

Your POV	Their POV
€ What you want	€ Must-haves
€ What you need	€ Don't-haves

- Considers many factors
- May require experience to use
- Need not imply a process

COMBINATION ①②③

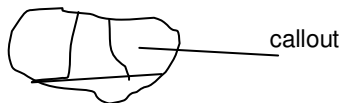
- Mix and match any of the other formats
- For complicated situations
- Use whatever works!

DECISION TABLE ①②

Status	Children	Enter
Married	⇒	1
Single	0	3
	1 or more	4

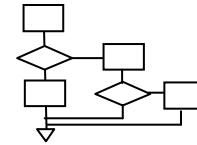
- Several conditions or variables
- Enter at any point
- Options are limited

DIAGRAM or MAP ①③



- Physical or conceptual structure
- Add insets for extra detail
- No natural starting point

FLOWCHART ②



- Apply binary decisions in order
- Clear path to solution
- Several decisions involved

PSEUDOCODE ①②

```
IF Status = Married THEN Enter 1
ELSE IF Children = 0 THEN Enter 3
ELSE Enter 4
```

- An alternative to DECISION TABLE or FLOWCHART
- Implied order

RECIPE ②

1 c. water dash salt ½ c. oats
Bring water and salt to a rolling boil. Add oats, stirring constantly. Gently boil 5 min., stirring occasionally. Serve.

- Textual description
- One path
- May have sub-recipes & variations

STEPS ②

#	Action	Result
1	CLICK icon	Window opens
2	SELECT box	Item highlights
3	CLICK Reply	Window opens

- Simple
- Steps in sequence
- One path

WORKSHEET ②

Category	Cost
Parts: _____ * \$ _____	\$ _____
Labor: _____ * \$ _____ /hr	_____
TOTAL	\$ _____

- Implied sequence
- One path
- User writes responses