What are Design Communication Methods?

Worksheet

Design communication methods are the drawings, models, diagrams, and digital media architects use to explain a design - including sketches, orthographic drawings, physical and digital models, renders, and presentation boards.

Questions

1. Which method best suits explaining a concept to a non-technical client?

A) Detailed CAD construction drawings
B) Simplified diagrams with a verbal narrative
C) Structural calculations
D) Building code text

2. Which communication method is essential for structural coordination?

A) Mood board
B) Precise, scaled drawings or BIM model
C) Watercolor sketch
D) Marketing brochure

3. What is the purpose of a presentation board?

A) To record construction costs
B) To summarize a design for formal review
C) To calculate structural loads
D) To list building code sections

4. Why should the communication method match the audience?

A) It doesn't matter, one method fits all
B) Different audiences need different levels of technical detail
C) Only clients need visuals
D) Contractors only need verbal descriptions

5. An architect must explain a floor plan concept to a non-technical client in a first meeting.

6. A structural engineer needs to coordinate beam locations with the architect's design.

7. A firm is competing for a public building commission and needs to win over a review committee.

8. Define: What are design communication methods?

9. Define: When is a hand sketch the best communication method?

10. Define: What communication method is essential for construction coordination?

Answer Key

1. B) Simplified diagrams with a verbal narrative - Clients understand simple visuals and plain language better than technical notation.

2. B) Precise, scaled drawings or BIM model - Coordination requires exact dimensions, which sketches and mood boards don't provide.

3. B) To summarize a design for formal review - Presentation boards combine images and text to summarize a design for reviewers or clients.

4. B) Different audiences need different levels of technical detail - Engineers need precise data; clients need clear, accessible visuals - matching the audience improves understanding.

5. Step 1: Use a simplified diagram or hand sketch with labeled rooms rather than a technical CAD drawing. Step 2: Add a short verbal narrative describing how the client will move through the space. Step 3: Avoid dense technical notation the client cannot interpret.

6. Step 1: Share a BIM model or CAD drawings with precise dimensions and grid lines. Step 2: Overlay the structural and architectural layers to spot conflicts. Step 3: Use written notes or markups for specific coordination issues, not verbal description alone.

7. Step 1: Prepare polished presentation boards and a photorealistic render or animated walkthrough. Step 2: Combine visuals with a concise narrative explaining design intent and site context. Step 3: Anticipate committee questions and prepare supporting diagrams (site plan, sections) in advance.

8. The drawings, models, diagrams, and digital media architects use to convey a design to others.

9. For early, informal conversations where speed and flexibility matter more than precision.

10. Precise, scaled drawings or BIM models with exact dimensions.