

HOW TO CREATE ALTERNATE DESCRIPTIONS

BACKGROUND

Alternate descriptions are usually provided for those individuals who have visual challenges. The alternate description provides them information about any graphics to enable them to gain the same knowledge from these items that a sighted user would. However, we often discover that additional benefits are gained from completing this action of attaching alternate descriptions.

Benefits of using Alt tags

1. Non-sighted users have equal access to information.
2. Graphics may get chosen based on instructional value rather than decoration.
3. The key concepts related to the graphic are reinforced for sighted students as well.

Techniques

As you look at a graphic; you need to describe what knowledge the graphic reinforces. Be specific about the key concepts covered. DO NOT describe the graphic visually unless this explains the purpose in more depth.

How to enter an ALT tag in Word

1. *Right-click* the shape, picture, chart, border of the SmartArt graphic, or other object, and then click “Size” or “Format picture”
2. Choose the Alt Text tab, and then in the Alternative text box, enter your text.



Image above shows a person using proper....

Graphic Sample

In the example below, the graphic reinforces the accompanying text in the second paragraph. The appropriate alternate description would contain the key ideas from that paragraph.

Here is a good alt description of this graphic: “THIS GRAPHIC REINFORCES THE NOTION THAT WITH THE THREE CHOICES OF PROFIT, SALES OR OFFSET COMPETITION, YOUR TARGET GOAL DETERMINES YOUR COURSE OF ACTION. THE PARAGRAPH JUST ABOVE THE GRAPHIC DESCRIBES THESE CHOICES.”

An inappropriate description would describe the graphic below merely as a flow chart identifying the possible pricing objectives. This type of description provides no information of educational value to the learners.

5.2.1 Criteria for Price Objectives

The strategic marketing objectives, what the organization hopes to accomplish, will drive the type of price strategy selected. Price strategies are also closely aligned to the type of product or service offered. The three most common objectives in determining price strategy relate to profit, sales revenue, or offset competition as illustrated.

If the objective is profit, the choice is made between attempting to achieve a specific target return or simply to maximize profits. If the choice is sales, companies define whether the sales growth should be in dollar or unit sales amounts or whether the sales growth is reflected in market share. Finally, if the objective of the price strategy is to offset competition, the decision is whether to meet competitors’ prices or to compete on something other than price.

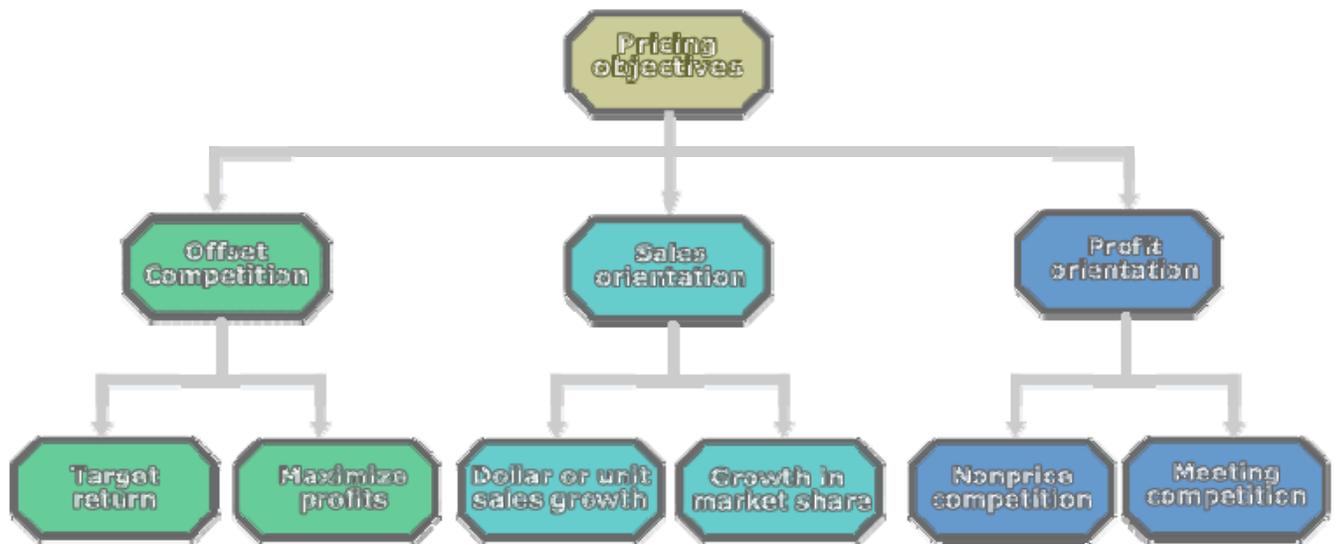


TABLE ALT TAGS EXAMPLE

One additional item of note. It is helpful if you also provide an alternate description for a table that identifies the configuration of the table and where the headings are located. This is helpful only to the non-sighted user. (However, it may also be helpful to those with cognitive challenges.) The non-sighted user can then set the screen reader to appropriately read the headings in advance of reading the items in each cell. Those with cognitive challenges can better discriminate the main concepts under review in a table.

Table 1

Color Distinctions

(alternate description: 3 by 3 grid with headings in the top row and first column.)

Category	Color Group 1	Color Group 2
primary colors	green	red
secondary colors	turquoise	maroon

Having set the parameters for the table, the screen reader would then read the second line as: Category primary colors, Color Group 1 green; Category primary colors, Color Group 2 red. Without this, the screen reader would read the following for the second row: primary colors, green, red. As you can see, there is a difference in understanding the information provided. You could imagine as the table information got more complex that this distinction could become pretty substantial.