

POWERPOINT PRESENTATIONS

ON POINT

General guidelines for PowerPoint Presentation writing, design, text, graphics and color:

Before the Presentation:

- Check to see if the equipment will work properly
- See if the projector's resolution is the same as that on your laptop
- Determine how far you will stand from the audience and how far the audience will be from the screen. This will help determine your font size, which can account for 90 percent of your success.
- Generally use only equipment you are familiar with. Take your own.
- If using another laptop, make sure PowerPoint is installed or that it is the same version as the one you created the presentation in.
- Cut off screensaver. You don't want to apologize for your home pictures.
- Cut off standby. If you are talking and the screen goes into standby it may take a while to get back to the presentation or it may require you to reboot. (Start, Settings, Control Panel, Power, Power Schemes, System Standby – Never)

Writing Guidelines:

- Organize the entire presentation before you create the PowerPoint presentation
- Determine the key points you want to make
- Make sure you thoroughly researched your topic
- Determine the purpose of the presentation – entertain, inform, persuade or sell. Is it lighthearted or formal – this will also help you determine colors, clip art and templates.
- Remember you are not there to overwhelm the audience or demonstrate every bell and whistle of the software.
- Don't get caught up in the gee-whiz.
- Write an outline for each slide.
- Eliminate unnecessary words on slides. Think about writing headlines.

Design Guidelines:

- Make a pact with the devil – remember 666 – no more than six word slides in a row, no more than 6 bullets on a slide and 6 words to each bullet
- A long list can overwhelm an audience.
- All text should be 18 to 20 points or larger.
- Fonts should be easy to read. Try Arial, Helvetica or Tahoma they work well.
- Choose one font and font size for headlines and another font and font size for body text. Headline fonts should be san serif and body copy should be serif type. Remember, serif is with feet. San serif without feet.
- Do not use more than 3 fonts.
- Use no more than two levels of bullets (Level 1 headings for main topics and Level 2 headings for subtopics).
- Organize the elements of the slides in advance. Decide which elements are the most important and the least important and organize them accordingly.
- Emphasize text with bold, size, color, and spacing formatting. Be careful with italic, it can be hard to read.
- Consider creating a visual theme by selecting colors and graphics related to the topic of the presentation.
- For slides containing a lot of text, choose simple backgrounds.
- Use bright colors in small areas for emphasis.
- After designing the slides, stand back and examine them. Make any needed adjustments. Do the drop test to see if you can read the slide. Print out a copy. Drop the paper to the floor. Stand and see if you can read the material. If you can't, you need to start over.

Text Guidelines:

- Avoid using all caps. (ALL CAPS ARE MORE DIFFICULT TO READ THAN UPPER AND LOWER CASE TYPE.) Research shows that it takes 57 percent longer to read all caps.
- Choose readable fonts. Also use standard fonts. If you create a presentation and use a non-standard font and use a different laptop for the presentation, the machine will substitute a font for you.
- If using WordArt, use it sparingly. I prefer you not use WordArt at all.
- Write phrases, not sentences.
- Less is more. Keep the line length of text to no more than 45 to 55 characters, including spaces. Longer lines are difficult for the audience to read.
- Avoid underlining text. Use italic or bold type instead. Use both sparingly.
- If text is placed over a color graphic, make sure the text is readable on all parts of the slide.
- Be careful when using rotated and vertical text.
- Allow for margins on slides.

- Make sure everything on the slide can be seen or read.

Graphics Guidelines:

- Limit the use of lines to three or four lines per slide.
- Choose graphics that relate to the topic.
- Make use of white space.
- Limit the number of graphics per slide. Keep graphics throughout the presentation in the same family.
- Simplify data labels.
- Use photographs sparingly. They take up a lot of space and if you use a laptop with limited space, you may have to run the presentation from the disc, making everything slower.
- If you have clipart on every slide, you are doing something wrong.
- Don't animate unless you need to make a point.

Color Guidelines:

- Use a limited number of colors.
- Choose colors that contrast for text and background.
- Because some people have problems distinguishing certain colors, avoid using certain color combinations including: red/green, brown/green, blue/black, and blue/purple.
- Use cool and muted colors for backgrounds. Bright warm colors are hard to look at for a long period of time.
- Light backgrounds with dark text can be used to create a soft look.
- Use PowerPoint's built-in color schemes.
- Colors help set a tone. Generally blue, green and gray say professional. Red and orange are high energy, but can be difficult to look at for long periods. Use them sparingly.
- For text colors white and yellow or a black background are best. Cyan and bright green on a dark background are second best. There is a reason that traffic signs are yellow and black. They are easy to see and read.

The Slide Master

The Slide Master of a PowerPoint presentation can be a very helpful tool in creating and carrying out a presentation design. It is a part of the design template of a slide that stores information about the template, including font styles, placeholder sizes and positions, background design, and color schemes. It functions as the skeleton of a presentation. The Slide Master defines the options for every slide in a presentation.

To make the most of the Slide Master:

- Format the background - Create a background for the slides in a presentation. A PowerPoint template can be used, a background can be created using PowerPoint tools, or a background can be imported from another source. Once the background is added to the slide master, it will appear on every slide in the presentation.
- Define the color scheme - PowerPoint's built-in color schemes can be used or a color scheme can be created.
- Select fonts and bullets - By applying fonts to the Slide Master, font formatting will be applied to all slides in the presentation.
- Add logos or other elements to each slide - Any graphic elements that need to appear on each slide can be added here.

Using Charts and Graphs

Charts and graphs can be a very effective part of a presentation, but each chart and graph should have a purpose that adds to the presentation's overall effectiveness. A common mistake is adding unnecessary charts and graphs to a presentation. Use charts to highlight key points of a presentation. When designing charts and graphs for presentations:

- **Guide the eye to the main point** - The main point of the chart or graph should jump out at the audience. Arrows, animation, or color can be used to draw the eye to the main point.
- **Limit the number of lines** - Make charts and graphs as simple as possible. A single data series, such as a line or row of bars, per chart or graph is best. Too many lines can be confusing.
- **Use either an axis scale or data points** - Do not use both. Keep charts and graphs as simple as possible.
- **Remove details** - Remove details including grid lines, footnotes, and other details whenever possible. They can distract from the main point.

Slide Transition

Use PowerPoint slide transitions wisely. Many transition options are available, but they should be used with reserve. A good solution is to choose a simple transition and apply it to every slide in the presentation. Rules to follow for slide transitions include:

- When using sections to divide a presentation, a second transition can be used for the introductory slide for each section.
- Slide transitions, like animations, lose their effectiveness when used more than a few times.

- Slide transitions should not distract from the content of the presentation, so the best ones blend into the overall presentation.

Tips for Effective Presentations

Tips for Presentations:

- **Allow one minute per slide** - An audience has a short attention span and if you spend longer than one minute per slide, you risk losing the attention of the audience.
- **Don't read your slides** - Put your key points on your slides and use speaker notes for your presentation.
- **When using charts and graphs, highlight the bottom line** - Re-enforce your message by highlighting the benefits or bottom line results.
- **Dim the lights** - Use dark backgrounds with light-color text. This will provide good contrast for projection in a light-dimmed room.
- **Maintain eye contact with your audience** - Practice your presentation until you are able to discuss your subject without reading your slides. Position yourself so that you can have eye contact with most of the people in the room.

Some General Tips:

- Keep in mind, most people read from left to right and from top to bottom. They also tend to notice dark or bright areas before light ones. Consider this when placing elements on a slide.
- Consider using backgrounds that are neither very light nor very dark. Very dark backgrounds are usually used with white or yellow text for contrast, but the result can be hard on the eye. To create a softer effect, use a medium green or blue, but be sure there is sufficient contrast with the color of the text.
- A watermarked company logo can work well as a slide background.

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7 Steps for Preparing Powerful Presentation

1. State the objectives and write them down – at the end of the presentation I want the audience to think... I want her to do I want them to say... I want him to feel.
2. Answer the basic questions – why am I making the presentation? What am I going to say? What do the audience want to hear? Who am I saying it to? Where will I be saying it?
3. Use a clear and logical structure – break your material into manageable “chunks” like the chapters in a book. Share the structure with your audience, it will help them too.
4. Tell the audience what they want to hear, nothing more – they don’t want to hear everything that you know, or have done. They want to hear the parts that are relevant to them.
5. Think of your presentation as telling a story – there should be a beginning, a middle and an end. Each part should flow logically from the previous part and it should be told in your natural style of speech.
6. Spend time on the opening words of the presentation – you need to grab the audience’s attention while you have the change, once you have lost their attention it is very hard to get it back.
7. Rehearse with someone who doesn’t know the subject – they can tell you whether or not it is clear, whether you have missed something and most importantly whether it meets the objectives you set in Step 1.

10 Power Tips for Calming Presentation Butterflies

1. Arrive early and walk briskly around the room before anyone is there, making it your own.
2. Greet audience members as they come in, shaking hands and building friendship bridges.
3. Go to an out-of-sight area and bend from the waist, letting your hands and arms drop to the ground.
4. Take deep breaths, letting the air out slowly.
5. Tense and relax the muscles in your face, arms, stomach and legs.
6. Stretch your neck, arms and legs.
7. Concentrate on your success.
8. Visualize the audience as you want them to act immediately after the presentation.
9. Engage in positive self-talk about your excellent presentation.
10. Tell a story or anecdote very early on that will require you to move around, make large gestures or raise your voice – any of which will serve as a release for your nervous energy.