

Presentation Tips

1. Consider your audience!
It is important to remember the background of your audience and prepare your talk accordingly.
2. A general rule of thumb in preparing PowerPoint slides is no more than one minute, one idea per slide, and as few lines of text per slide as possible.
3. Use easily readable fonts such as Arial and Comic Sans and font sizes that are 20 pt. or greater
4. When possible, use a bright font on a dark background, e.g. white and yellow are good font colors on a dark blue background
5. In making your presentation the aim is to engage the audience, to make them feel like they are part of a 'conversation' and not just passive listeners. Changes in voice levels and appropriate gestures that illustrate your energy and enthusiasm for the issues you are addressing will assist with this. By engaging with the audience they are more likely to follow up with questions and discussion, even after your session.
6. Use pictures to complement your discussion. Picture slides are a good way to break up your presentation, particularly after presenting a series of text or data slides.
7. Keep figures simple. Limit the number of curves. It is not always necessary to place a regression equation beside every curve.
8. Limit special effects as necessary.
9. Remember that the slides are there to support your presentation, not to make the presentation for you. Generally you do not need to read from your slides. If the audience can read everything you say there is no point in you making a presentation as the audience will spend most of their time reading what's on your slides rather than listening to and engaging with you as the presenter.
10. Always check the equipment you are going to use beforehand and preview the show!

Five parts to a good presentation:

1. Tell them what you are going to talk about
2. Tell them why it is interesting to you/them
3. Talk about it
4. Review what you talked about
5. Reiterate why it's important

http://www.cob.sjsu.edu/splane_m/PresentationTips.htm

PowerPoint Presentation Advice

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Structuring Your Talk:

Preparing a talk always takes far longer than you anticipate. Start early!

- Write a clear statement of the problem and its importance.
- Research. Collect material which may relate to the topic.
- Tell a story in a logical sequence.
- Stick to the key concepts. Avoid description of specifics and unnecessary details.
- If you are making a series of points, organize them from the most to the least important. The less important points can be skipped if you run short of time.
- Keep your sentences short, about 10-20 words each is ideal. This is the way people usually talk.
- Strive for clarity. Are these the best words for making your point? Are they unambiguous? Are you using unfamiliar jargon or acronyms?

Preparing Your Slides:

Presentation Design

- Don't overload your slides with too much text or data.
- FOCUS. In general, using a few powerful slides is the aim.
- Let the picture or graphic tell the story. Avoid text.
- Type key words in the PowerPoint Notes area listing what to say when displaying the slide. The notes are printable.
- Number your slides and give them a title.
- Use the "summary slide" feature in slide sorter view to prepare an Agenda or Table of Contents slide.
- Prepare a company logo slide for your presentation.
- You can add a logo and other graphics to every slide using the slide master feature.
- Proof read everything, including visuals and numbers.
- Keep "like" topics together
- Strive for similar line lengths for text.

Visual elements

- A font size of 28 to 34 with a bold font is recommended for subtitles. The title default size is 44. Use a san serif font for titles.
- Use clear, simple visuals. Don't confuse the audience.
- Use contrast: light on dark or dark on light.
- Graphics should make a key concept clearer.
- Place your graphics in a similar location within each screen.
- To temporarily clear the screen press W or B during the presentation. Press Enter to resume the presentation.

Text

- Font size must be large enough to be easily read. Size 28 to 34 with a bold font is recommended.
- It is distracting if you use too wide a variety of fonts.
- Overuse of text is a common mistake.

- Too much text makes the slide unreadable. You may just as well show a blank slide. Stick to a few key words.
- If your audience is reading the slides they are not paying attention to you. If possible, make your point with graphics instead of text.
- You can use Word Art, or a clip art image of a sign, to convey text in a more interesting way.

Numbers

- Numbers are usually confusing to the audience. Use as few as possible and allow extra time for the audience to do the math.
- Numbers should never be ultra precise:
 - “Anticipated Revenues of \$660,101.83” looks silly. Are your numbers that accurate? Just say \$660 thousand.
 - “The Break Even Point is 1048.17 units. Are you selling fractions of a unit?”
 - Don’t show pennies. Cost per unit is about the only time you would need to show pennies.
- If you have more than 12-15 numbers on a slide, that’s probably too many.
- Using only one number per sentence helps the audience absorb the data.

Statistics

- Use the same scale for numbers on a slide. Don’t compare thousands to millions.
- When using sales data, stick to a single market in the presentation. Worldwide sales, domestic sales, industry sales, company sales, divisional sales, or sales to a specific market segment are all different scales. They should not be mixed.
- Cite your source on the same slide as the statistic, using a smaller size font.

Charts

- Charts need to be clearly labeled. You can make more interesting charts by adding elements from the drawing toolbar.
- Numbers in tables are both hard to see and to understand. There is usually a better way to present your numerical data than with columns and rows of numbers. Get creative!
- PowerPoint deletes portions of charts and worksheets that are imported from Excel, keeping only the leftmost 5.5 inches. Plan ahead.

Backgrounds

- Backgrounds should never distract from the presentation.
- Using the default white background is hard on the viewer’s eyes. You can easily add a design style or a color to the background.
- Backgrounds that are light colored with dark text, or vice versa, look good. A dark background with white font reduces glare.
- Colors appear lighter when projected. Pale colors often appear as white.
- Consistent backgrounds add to a professional appearance.
- For a long presentation, you may want to change background designs when shifting to a new topic.

Excitement

- Slides for business presentations should be dull! You don’t want to distract the audience.

- Sounds and transition effects can be annoying. Use sparingly.
- Animation effects can be interesting when used in moderation.
 - Too much animation is distracting.
 - Consider using animated clip art
 - Consider using custom animation
- You can insert video and audio clips into PowerPoint.
- You can also insert hyperlinks.

Hints for Efficient Practice:

Timing - Practicing Your Presentation,

- Talk through your presentation to see how much time you use for each slide.
- Set the automatic slide transition to the amount of time you want to spend discussing each slide.
- Are you using the right amount of time per slide? Decide which slides or comments need alteration to make your presentation smoother.
- Change the automatic slide transition settings for individual slides to fit the amount of time needed for that slide and practice again. Are you still within the time limit?
- Decide if you want to remove the automatic slide transition feature before giving the presentation.

Content

- Make a list of key words/concepts for each slide
- Read through the list before you begin.
- Don't attempt to memorize your text;
- Your words will probably be different each time you practice.
- Think about the ideas, and your words will follow naturally.

Delivering Your Talk:

Pre-Talk Preparation

- Plan to get there a few minutes early to set up and test the equipment.
- Dress appropriately for your audience.
- Turn off your cell phone.

Handouts:

- Edward Tufte, the leading expert on visual presentation techniques, advises speakers to always prepare a handout when giving a PowerPoint presentation.
- Make about 10% more handouts than you expect to use.
- Distribute handouts at the beginning of your talk.

Opening:

- Jump right in and get to the point.
- Give your rehearsed opening statement; don't improvise at the last moment.
- Use the opening to catch the interest and attention of the audience.
- Briefly state the problem or topic you will be discussing.

- Briefly summarize your main theme for an idea or solution.

Speaking

- Talk at a natural, moderate rate of speech
- Project your voice.
- Speak clearly and distinctly.
- Repeat critical information.
- Pause briefly to give your audience time to digest the information on each new slide.
- Don't read the slides aloud. Your audience can read them far faster than you can talk.

Body Language

- Keep your eyes on the audience
- Use natural gestures.
- Don't turn your back to the audience.
- Don't hide behind the lectern.
- Avoid looking at your notes. Only use them as reference points to keep you on track. Talk, don't read.

Questions

- Always leave time for a few questions at the end of the talk.
- If you allow questions during the talk, the presentation time will be about 25% more than the practice time.
- You can jump directly to a slide by typing its number or by right-clicking during the presentation and choosing from the slide titles.
- Relax. If you've done the research you can easily answer most questions.
- Some questions are too specific or personal. Politely refuse to answer.
- If you can't answer a question, say so. Don't apologize. "I don't have that information. I'll try to find out for you."

Length:

- To end on time, you must PRACTICE!
- When practicing, try to end early. You need to allow time for audience interruptions and questions.

Demeanor:

- Show some enthusiasm. Nobody wants to listen to a dull presentation. On the other hand, don't overdo it. Nobody talks and gestures like a maniac in real life. How would you explain your ideas to a friend?
- Involve your audience. Ask questions, make eye contact, use humor.
- Don't get distracted by audience noises or movements.
- You'll forget a minor point or two. Everybody does.
- If you temporarily lose your train of thought you can gain time to recover by asking if the audience has any questions.

Conclusion:

- Close the sale.
- Concisely summarize your key concepts and the main ideas of your presentation.

- Resist the temptation to add a few last impromptu words.
- End your talk with the summary statement or question you have prepared. What do you want them to do? What do you want them to remember?
- Consider alternatives to “Questions?” for your closing slide. A summary of your key points, a cartoon, a team logo, or a company logo may be stronger.

From Death by PowerPoint (Alexei Kapterev, www.kapterev.com)

- Structure choices
 1. Problem - Pathway – Solution
 2. Problem – Solution – Reasoning
 3. Fancy stuff (if it makes sense)
- Give 3-4 reasons supporting your point. They will not remember more anyway.
- “Everything should be made as simple as possible but not simpler.”
- PowerPoint **helps** to:
 1. Visualize ideas
 2. Create key points
 3. Impress
- People read faster than you speak.
- One simple point. Remove everything else

HELPFUL WEBSITES

- <http://www.presentationzen.com/>
- Death by PowerPoint : www.kapterev.com
- Preparing Presentation Slides: A Tutorial by John Battalio:
<http://bcs.bedfordstmartins.com/techcomm8e/tutorials/presentationSlides/index.html>