



Death by PowerPoint

The ultimate dull
life experience



Have you ever been an audience participant viewing an endless PowerPoint presentation... counting minutes and slides until the ordeal is finally over? Your only hope is that you haven't snored too loudly.

If you are in a position that involves some type of public speaking, using PowerPoint, consider some of the following tips to avoid this calamity yourself. The appreciation of your audience will be truly heartfelt.

What a presentation should do

Preview or review

Tell them what is coming, or tell them what you have covered.

Outline or elaborate

Show the main topics, or give additional details for a topic.

Inform

Give them information but don't overwhelm them with your wealth of knowledge.

The three stages of a presentation

Before you begin

Before sitting down at the computer, plan and organize your thoughts and topics.

During the creation process

What should you consider as you start to design your actual presentation?

- Creating slides
- Adding a template design
- Adding animation
- Adding transitions

As you present

What should you consider during the delivery process?

STAGE 1: Before you begin

Know your subject

- Read
- Research
- Takes notes
- Organize your thoughts
- Put an outline on paper

What is your intent

- Are you trying to **persuade**, convince, or sway opinions?
- Are you going to **inform**, tell them this is how it is done, or instruct?
- Are you calling them to **action**, convince them to take up a cause, or to get involved?



STAGE 2: During the creation process

Consider the content and purpose

Have I clearly defined my purpose?

Define the main purpose for this presentation.

Have I outlined the pertinent issues or topics?

Organize the topics to be covered. Make sure the topics are in logical order.

Have I focused on quality and not quantity?

Do not create too much verbal "fluff". More actually can be said with less. People who don't know the topic tend to dance around the subject, and not address the topic head-on.

Design Issues

Create the basic presentation

Create the basic presentation in black and white, using the default template with no frills. Make sure your intended message is conveyed before adding backgrounds, animations, and transitions.

Consider the audience when choosing backgrounds

Consider the environment of the room in which you will be presenting. Will it be dark? Use a light colored background with dark text. Will the room be light? Use a dark background with light text.

Consider the audience when choosing a color scheme

Use a color scheme that is fitting for the audience. What a red background might indicate to one group might not hold true with another. The color red would indicate loss to a financial group, but a group of nurses would associate it with healthy blood. The color green would indicate profit to the financial group, but would suggest infection to the nurses.

Do not use slide numbers

Would you want to know you have endured 58 slides and you have 97 to go?

Consider the audience when working with fonts.

- Limit the different types of fonts used per presentation to three.
- A good rule of thumb is to use a serif font (type with flourishes i.e. **Times New Roman**) for the title and a sans serif font (without flourishes i.e. **Arial**) for the body or vice versa.
- Consider using fonts within families for emphasis and variety (i.e. **Arial**, **Arial Black**, **Arial Narrow**, **Arial Rounded MT Bold**).
- Font size should be at least 18 points. The default sizes are
 - Titles - 44 points
 - Text - 32 points
 - Subtext - 28 points
- DO NOT USE ALL CAPS. This format is very difficult to read. After seven consecutive capitalized words, the audience is forced to reread.
- Use a font appropriate for the audience. A script font would not be suitable for a group of wrestlers.

Font

Fonts

Intersperse graphics with text slides

Have no more than three contiguous text slides. The audience will begin to lose interest. Insert an appropriate graphic or chart.

Keep bullet slides minimal

Do **NOT** enter your entire speech. Try to limit each bullet or text slide to no more than six lines with six words per line (try to keep each item on one line). Begin each bullet item with the same part of speech (i.e. noun, verb, adjective).

Be consistent

The presentation needs to flow smoothly. If it does not, the audience will become distracted. Use the same background template for each slide. Use animations and transitions sparingly, and limit sound effects. **Simple is elegant.**

Practice, practice, practice

There is no such animal as too much practice. Know your stuff! Practice in front of a mirror. Record or videotape yourself, and then evaluate. Practice in front of a family member or friend.

STAGE 3: As you present

A fear of public speaking is normal and can even be beneficial. As long as you are familiar with your subject matter, that should provide needed confidence. Have fun with your presentation. If you don't, no one will. Consider humor, if appropriate.



Are you on the same page?

Assure active slide is relevant to what you are talking about

Don't talk ahead of the current slide, or advance while you are still talking about the previous slide. Make sure what you are talking about is relevant to the current slide contents.

Fill in the gaps in the outlines

Your presentation should be an outline. Expand on these points. Use PowerPoint's Speaker Notes feature for your cheat sheet.

Interact with the active slide

Walk over to the slide. Point out objects such as charts, graphs, or diagrams.

Be enthused

Use voice inflection. Do not talk in a monotone. Convey your interest in the topic to your audience.

Physical Do's and Don'ts

Do not turn your back to the audience

A backside is not normally a pretty thing. Face the audience.

Look at the audience

Look around the room slowly as you are speaking. Do not direct your entire presentation toward one person. Spread the wealth around.

Do not talk too fast

Talking too fast shows you are nervous, and you just want to finish as soon possible. Slow down, and enunciate clearly.

Be aware of your body language.

Your body language is considered unspoken words. You communicate non-verbally by using posture, gestures, facial expressions, and mannerisms.

DO

- Stand straight
- Smile
- Relax
- Maintain good eye contact
- Use your hands moderately to express yourself

DON'T

- Place your hands in your pockets or behind your back
- Fidget
- Cross your arms
- Blink your eyes rapidly
- Clear your throat frequently

Know your audience

There are three types of audience members. Try to remember to appeal to all of them.

Visual

These folks react to the physical appearance of the presentation itself and any graphics included.

Auditory

These people react to the contents and how it is delivered verbally.

Kinesthetic

These folks react to the emotional impact of the presentation.

The Main Point Theory

You may be able to use the main point theory. Consider it a miniature introduction, body, and summary.

Tell them what you are going to tell them

We are going to learn how to create a new slide in a PowerPoint presentation.

Tell them

Click the *New Slide* button, and then choose the appropriate layout.

Tell them what you told them

We have just created a new PowerPoint slide.

Utilize grabbers

Use any of the following to keep interest flowing during your presentation:

Stories - make sure they are factual.

Examples - relevant cases to validate your point.

Analogies - similar situations to the current example.

Statistics - use charts, graphs or diagrams. These say more than words, or tables, or spreadsheets.

Shock - an element of surprise.

Suspense - keep them waiting with baited breath.

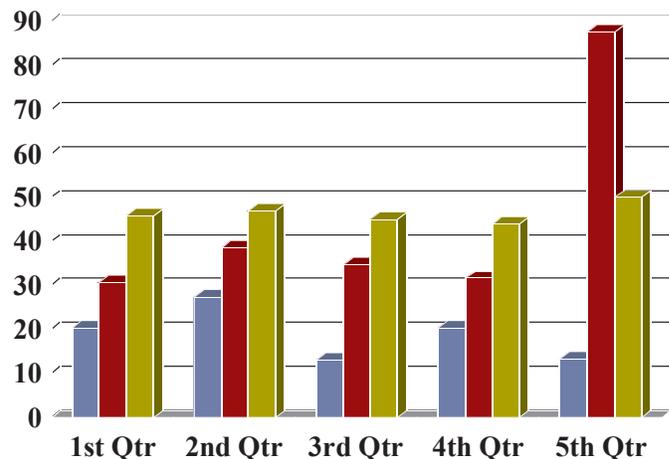
Interact with the audience

Ask questions

Don't be afraid to admit that you don't know an answer. Volunteer to get back to the person with the answer, and then **do it!** This will not diminish your credibility.

Ask for comments

Sometimes the comments may be a little tough on the ego, but they could improve future presentations.



Keep it simple!

Occam's Razor (scientific and theory building)

One should not increase, beyond what is necessary, the number of entities required to explain anything.

"There are times when expertise leads to wordiness, and the audience is bombarded with too many long-winded explanations....The greater the vocabulary, the harder it is to get to the point....For some reason, when a presenter has a great command of a language, it takes them longer to get to the heart of the matter."

Tom Mucciolo, 2001, *Using Microsoft PowerPoint 2002*, Indianapolis, IN: QUE, p. 492