

Presentation Tips

Structuring PowerPoint Slides

Presentation Design

- Don't overload your slides with too much text or data.
- Let the picture or graphic tell the story. Avoid text.
- 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.

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.
- 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.
- 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

- 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 Presentation

Pre-Talk Preparation

- Plan to get there 30 minutes early to set up and test the equipment.
- Dress appropriately for your audience.
- Turn off your cell phone and remove loose change and/or keys from your pockets.

Participant Resource Materials:

- Are required for submission consideration.
- If your submission is accepted, resource materials are due to ADEA by January 30, 2011.

Opening:

- Jump right in and get to the point.
- Give your rehearsed opening statement; don't improvise at the last moment.
- 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 and regularly scan the room.
- Use natural gestures.
- Don't turn your back to the audience.
- Don't hide behind the lectern. Walk across the stage or through the aisles.
- 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 respond that you will talk individually after the program.
- 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. If you are allotted 15 minutes for a presentation, prepare 8 – 10 minutes worth of speaking materials.

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 and solicit feedback.
- 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:

- 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.
- Thank attendees for their participation.

Adapted from PowerPoint Presentation Advice

Mike Splane –© 2006

Bad PowerPoint Slide

EXAMPLE: ALLIANCE SCORECARD TEMPLATE

Alliance:
American Management Association

Date:

	Revenue	Projects	Product Development
Revenue and Strategy Performance	Actual revenue is at plan YTD. Expected new opportunities are not as great as initially projected; no new market opportunities have been identified for future joint development as of this time.	No variance to revenue plan. Based on initial discussions, two potential new markets were anticipated based on this alliance; those have not materialized, which will cause future revenues to be well below projected levels.	Continue to execute on the plan. New product opportunity discussions need to be initiated with marketing and product development members of alliance team to ascertain why new products aren't being generated as projected.
Project Performance	Execution against existing products is progressing per plan. However, smaller to develop new ideas for future market opportunities appears to be having a snag as idea generation lags behind expectations.	Initial proposals slated for five new product prototypes to be speed as of the current quarter. To date, only one has been identified, and both appear to be basic updates of current version.	Project management aspects of new product development appear to be in line. It is likely that there is one defining prioritization process for speeding up development of new products by both companies. One People and Team Performance for additional actions to be taken.
People and Team Performance	Synergies between the two organizations (marketing and development) appear to not materialize. Performance on most recent financials indicates that these groups did not consider each other's activities at sharing information and following up.	Initial projections assumed that marketing and development would reach greater levels of synergy at this point. Current financials suggest that both parties to follow through on new product development process.	The major issue here appears to be that marketing and product development forums are not prioritizing follow-up activities. Next steps to create new projects. It appears that either initial projects are being so-product in favor of others or less. Alliance manager will have to discuss this with marketing and development group leaders, as well as with alliance counterpart to coordinate additional actions.
Portfolio Performance	This alliance has not yet delivered the new products that were anticipated. The key factor is that marketing and product groups are not fully buying into the prospect of effectively creating joint products. It is clear that unrealistic assumptions may have been made of these groups.	Initial assurances from marketing and development groups were that they would support new product development, but it appears that they have deemphasized these projects in favor of internal ones. This tendency is problematic, especially as indication of future alliance support.	Greater understanding of buying from all stakeholder groups needs to be tested during the negotiation stages of any alliance. Additionally, budgets and resource requirements for these groups need to be properly estimated in order to assure proper follow-through on key projects.
Overall Assessment	On track with revenue, but longer-term opportunities appear to be significantly behind projections.	No current variance to revenue projections, but lack of new product development activity causes us to anticipate revenue shortfalls 9 to 18 months out.	Additional discussion is needed with marketing and product development groups to determine how to accommodate additional product development. Determine why these groups are not actively participating.

Headline font too small, inconsistent style and color difficult to read.

Too much information included.

Inconsistent font styles.

Red text not easy to read.

No slide number.

Bad PowerPoint Slide

Gray background = boring and hard to read. Will not print well.