

PowerPoint Presentation Guidelines

PowerPoint presentations are meant to highlight and emphasize key points in a memorable, concise and meaningful way while the speaker engages the audience. The following provides information on how to create effective PowerPoint presentations to engage audiences, maintain interest, and successfully get your message across.

Developing Your Presentation – How To Avoid Information Overload

- **Presenting a small amount of the most important information is often more effective than trying to present too much information.** Audiences can retain smaller amounts of concise information easier.
- **Reveal bullet points one at a time.** Displaying bullet points all at once puts the audience ahead of your message. Control the flow of information so you and the audience are on the same page.
- **Avoid paragraphs, quotations and complete sentences.** If you have to include a quote or a paragraph, do not read it from the screen.
- **Do not read directly from a slide.**
- **Limit text slides to no more than two in a row.** Avoid more than 6 words per bullet and no more than 6 bullets per slide. If you have a lot of information, consider providing a handout with a summary of the main facts you want people to remember.

Designing PowerPoint Slides – How To Keep it Simple

- **Focus on simple design basics and avoid technological effects such as fades, swipes, flashing text and sound effects.** This can be distracting to the audience and may not function correctly depending on the computer.
- **Match your design to your purpose.** Be consistent by using the same colors, fonts and template throughout the presentation.
 - Try to stick to two font families.
 - Dark text on a light background is the easiest to read. If you must use a dark background, be sure to use the lightest text and increase the font size.
 - Use your own photographs. Real photos provide a cleaner, more professional look.
- **Size matters.** Make sure text and graphics are large enough for people to see. Never say, “I know you can’t read/see this but...” and proceed to explain what is on the screen. To help the audience understand your point, enlarge the data or part of the image you want them to remember.
- **If using an animation, make sure it has a purpose.** Animations can be great tools to use when showing the progression of research.