

PowerPoint - 10 Dos and Don'ts

Here are 10 ways to use PowerPoint to help make your presentation look brilliant.

1. Hold Up Your End With Compelling Material

Simple and engaging can build eye catching slides and graphics. Keep in mind that the audience has come to hear you speak and not merely stare at images tossed onto a screen. You are creating slides to support your presentation.

2. Keep It Simple

The most effective PowerPoint presentations are simple. Remember the 6x6 rule – When creating a PowerPoint slide, you should display a maximum of six words per line and no more than six lines per individual slide.

Charts that are easy to understand and graphics that reflect what the speaker is saying. The most effective charts are pie charts with 3 or 4 slices and column charts with 3 or 4 columns.

3. Minimize Numbers In Slides

Don't overwhelm your audience with too many figures and numbers. Instead consider using a graphic or image to convey the point.

4. Don't Parrot PowerPoint

One of the most prevalent and damaging habits of PowerPoint users is to simply read the visual presentation to the audience. It can make even the most visually appealing presentation boring. PowerPoint works best with spoken remarks, rather than mimic. You have to make eye contact with your audience.

5. Time Your Remarks

Never talk on top of your slides. Give the audience a chance to read and digest the slide then follow up with remarks that broaden and amplify what is on the screen. Each slide should take 3-5 minutes to deliver.

6. Give It A Rest

It is okay to let the screen go blank on occasion. Not only can that give your audience a visual break but also effective to focus attention on the speaker as well as allow for group discussion or question and answer question.

7. Use Vibrant Colors

A striking contrast between words, graphics and the background can be very effective in conveying both a message and emotion. Maintain a consistent color scheme throughout the presentation. Make sure the text can be seen clearly and no smaller than 24 points.

8. Import Other Images And Graphics

Don't limit your presentation. Use outside images and graphics for variety and visual appeal, including video.

9. Distribute Handouts

Some speakers prefer handouts to be distributed at the end of the presentation so that the audience is focused on them instead of reading a summation of their remarks.

Others prefer that the audience have a copy so that they can keep track of the presentation as well as jot down notes.

10. Edit Before Presenting

Never lose the perspective of the audience. Once you finished drafting the slides, assume you are one of the audiences listening to your remarks as you review them. If something is unappealing, distracting or confusing, edit your slides.

Every presentation should have a title slide and that it relates to the presentation content. Your final slide should provide a recommendation or summary.

Avoid using a single bullet or more than 5 bullets per slide. Don't use more than 2 levels of bullets. Use consistent wording in bulleted text and begin each with the same part of speech.