



## Helpful Presentation Tips

### Designing a presentation in PowerPoint

1. Bullets are better than long sentences. The only exception is a direct quote.
2. Don't use acronyms that aren't well known. Your audience will be lost or confused. Or, they may feel dumb because they think they should know it. If you need to use an acronym that is important in your industry, make sure you explain it as you first introduce it and again a few minutes or references later.
3. Font size should be about size 24-32 for most of the text (headers should be bigger). Never use size smaller than 16, and 16 size should only be for footnotes. And remember to print out your presentation for handouts. Printing three slides per page is best for note taking, so make sure the text is legible.
4. If you find yourself saying "You can't read this slide, but it says..." then that means the slide is not effective. It's too small of a font, too crowded, or otherwise needs to be redesigned.
5. Don't use light or weird colors. Test your presentation on an LCD projector. You may have a graph that clearly has one bar teal, another blue and another green on your computer screen. But, they may be indistinct, or the teal may appear gray, blue, or green on the projection screen. Either change the colors so there is a clear difference on the screen, or at least, know to refer to the color as "gray", or "light", not teal.
6. Only use pictures that ADD something to the slide and presentation. Don't use clip art or stock photograph just because they're pretty or funny. Showing two people talking when you discuss your "direct sales strategy" doesn't really add anything. In fact, it takes away space on the slide. So, you either have to omit possible key information or reduce your font size more than optimal.
7. Keep it simple. PowerPoint has many features and options that are unnecessary. Just because you can doesn't mean you should. Don't use builds, let alone fancy animation, to introduce new lines or graphics. Using them makes it harder to navigate quickly and inevitably slows things down. Use one click per slide and have the whole slide appear. Effective speakers can still build the suspense without manipulating the slide show. If you use bullets effectively, it won't take the audience long to read the entire slide (which people have the tendency to do) and they'll still want (and need) to hear what you say to fully understand your message.



## Giving an effective oral presentation

8. Don't look at the screen. More importantly, don't talk to the screen. Keep your eyes and mouth towards the audience. Need a visual clue to remind you where you are in your presentation? Usually the laptop that is running the slide show is between you and the audience. Look at that to know what slide you're on. What appears on the lap top is the same thing that appears on the screen behind you. Every time! (With the possible exception of colors, which may get distorted. See #5 above.)
9. Expect problems with the audio/video equipment. The laptop may freeze. The projector may not work or light bulb may burn out. The remote to advance slides will stick or skip. Arrive early to test and practice. Bring handouts. Best case scenario, you pass them out after the presentation to reiterate your message or before the presentation so they can take notes. Worst case scenario, if the equipment fails, you can just use the printed presentation without hesitation. (Remember to use font size sufficiently large to make printed versions, usually three slides per page, legible for older eyes.)
10. Know and use simple keyboard shortcuts in PowerPoint:
  - To start a presentation slide show from the beginning, hit the "F5" button instead of finding the icon in the lower left or hitting View à Slide Show.
  - While in the slide show, the "Home" button will take you to slide 1 and the "End" button will take you to the very last slide.
  - If you want to go to slide 7, type "7" then hit the Enter button. Likewise, to go to slide 23, hit "2" "3" "Enter". You won't see the cursor or the numbers anywhere on the screen, but the appropriate slide will appear after you hit enter. This is especially helpful during Q&A when you know that a particular slide answers the question. Obviously, this also requires that you know your slides well enough to know exactly (or approximately) which slide says what. If you thought the relevant information was on slide 7, but you realize you went too far (i.e. you really wanted slide 6), just hit the back arrow to backup one slide.
  - If you want a blank or black screen, hit the "B". To view the slides again, hit the B again to return to where you were.
  - If you want to use the arrow pointer, hit the "A" button. This is much more effective and easier than a laser pointer!! Hit the "A" again to hide the arrow and continue with the presentation.