

EFFECTIVE COMMUNICATION WITH POWERPOINT

Presentation

If you just read your slides, you are putting PowerPoint between you and the audience and they will resent it. Instead, use the slides only as support for your presentation. PowerPoint is not a stand alone teaching resource.

Don't forget a winning delivery. Engaging your audience with eye contact and your overall energy is important. Know your main points and emphasize them with your voice and the amount of time you spend on them. If you need to see the slides, look at your monitor, not at the screen. This way, you don't turn away from the audience.

Do not darken the room too much. You will lose contact with your audience.

It is unwise to use PowerPoint as the only methodology in a class. It is best to integrate its use with other methods such as discussion, group work, hands-on activities, role-play, etc.

Hit the 'B' key to temporarily darken the screen if you want to get people's full attention for something that is not on the screen.

One idea per slide should be your goal. Do not add extra information that might dilute the message.

Give a lot of thought to correct sequencing of slides. You are telling a story. You need a beginning, a middle and an end.

Backgrounds

Backgrounds that are neither very light nor very dark can work well for both onscreen presentations and overheads. A very dark background is usually used with white or yellow text for contrast, but the result can be harsh. When you want to create a softer effect, use a mid-range green or blue or 2-colour gradient. However, be sure the text contrasts sufficiently with the background for good legibility.

When using images as backgrounds be sure that any text being used is clearly legible.

The whole PowerPoint slide show should generally have a consistent background and text colour scheme, where most of the slides have a certain similarity with each other.

As a general rule, do not use ready-made templates. They make it very difficult for you to put your own personal stamp on the presentation.

Text

Stick to 1 or 2 different fonts. Too many different styles are disconcerting to the audience.

Avoid using 'Times New Roman', it is not easy to read from a screen.

Headings should be at least 36 points and bullet points should be at least 28 points

Do not use all capital letters. It makes the text too hard to read. Do not underline words. Use bold, italics or capital letters for emphasis.

Try to avoid the use of full sentences.

Do not fill the slide. Leave some air.

Bullet Points

Limit your bullet points to 5 or 6 per slide, to ensure that your main points stand out.
Don't split bullet points between 2 slides.

Tables and Charts

Reduce your data in tables, charts or graphs to a minimum.

Animation

Do not animate everything on a slide. This will result in the audience being frequently presented with a blank screen, when moving from one slide to another.

Do not overuse animation, as it will distract from your message.

Try not to use animation formats where it takes a long time for the object or text to arrive and position itself on screen.

Attention to Detail

Check your spelling and punctuation.

Sound

Use sound effects sparingly.

Images

Pictures should relate to the message and help make a point.

Sometimes a slide with one powerful image can be far more effective than a slide full of text.

Do not use small items of clipart that need to be stretched. They will look grainy and unprofessional.

Avoid using cartoon pictures for demonstration purposes. Use Google Images, Flickr or other to locate high quality photographs.