

POWERPOINT PRESENTATIONS

General Tips:

Presentations are difficult to develop because you are often trying to summarize a complex research project in a very short period of time. Generally, you will have less than 20 minutes, no matter how complex or long the project is.

- Do not try to include too much information in a presentation. Provide the key information. The question and answer period will give you an opportunity to elaborate on items glossed over in the presentation.
- Be sure to handout paper copies of any tables or detailed information that you wish to present. Numbers are sometimes better understood and remembered by an audience if they have a copy to refer to. Do not forget to include the full reference/ contact information for the project on this handout.
- Remember to look at the audience rather than focusing exclusively on your notes or reading off the screen. Putting your head down or reading off a screen tends to reduce the impact of what you have to say. Look people in the eye. They will feel more involved in your presentation.
- Be prepared for AV problems. Handouts are helpful if there is a problem with the projectors.
- Be sure to explain the meaning of any acronyms or jargon the first time you use them. Not everyone in your audience will be familiar with your topic.
- If you make a mistake do not overdo correcting yourself. The audience does not know what was supposed to happen so they are unlikely to notice that anything is amiss.
- Avoid turning your back to the audience whenever possible.

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- Be sure that the words on your slide are readable; font size should range between 26 and 36 points.
- Use dark colors on light backgrounds or vice versa. The more contrast the easier it will be to see at the back of the room.
- Do not use more than six bullets per slide. Do not use more than about six words per line (or bullet). This will make the slide difficult to read and comprehend.

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- Slides are meant to supplement and enhance your presentation. Do not read from the screen. It is okay to summarize the slide without mentioning everything listed on it.
- The use of images (i.e. pictures or charts) can be very effective; however, text that is written over an image is difficult to read. Place titles or notes on top or underneath the image.

Speakers should have a strong voice/ character and should not have a tendency to: talk too much, stray off course, or ramble.

Speakers must be familiar with all phases of the project (NA) so they can answer questions and troubleshoot in the event that the presentation suffers from technical difficulties.

Another good quality is the ability to multi-task: speak, make eye contact, adjust for late arrivals or early departures, and follow notes.

Be sure to practice appropriate movement styles: hand gestures, walking or stationary delivery, and entertainment quality (monotone lectures are ignored).

Graphics and Colors:

Step I: Decide on a Color Scheme

If creating your own background maximize contrast between the background and the text. Also, you must select one or two highlighting colors.

If using a template offered by Powerpoint, be sure to select one that is not too busy or common. You may need to adjust the color scheme.

Sometimes the slides are so pretty that no one pays attention to the content.

It is important to use color but also to exercise self-control.

Tip: Create one slide and try it out in a room that will have the lighting that you anticipate at the location you will be speaking at.

Step II: Getting Organized

Prior to developing the presentation you must:

- Clarify sections *a priori* (natural breaks in material) – who will speak
- Decide on speaker changes if you are using more than one person to present the results. Generally, use 1 change in speakers per every 15 minutes. In addition, you need to decide: who will answer questions, and how the slides will be changed (advanced).

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- ❑ Get familiar with the AV equipment and how to fix common issues. However, always be prepared for AV problems.
- ❑ Determine whether handouts are required for tables or complex figures.

Step III: Developing the Content

Contrary to popular belief PowerPoint slides are only used too:

- ❑ Outline main points
- ❑ Supplement/ enhance presentation with examples, details you do not have time to review (i.e. detailed list of stakeholders), and discussion piece (i.e. images/ figures).

The typical presentation is organized around three parts:

1. Standard Introduction
2. Body of Presentation
3. Standard Conclusion

1. Standard Introduction. Presentation introductions generally include 6 components:

- a. Introduce Speaker(s)
- b. Project Title
- c. Funding or Acknowledgements
- d. Format of presentation (outline)
- e. Announce how questions are to be handled
- f. Draw attention to handouts & their purpose

2. Body of Presentation. The body of the material should be clearly divided into sections. Try using a break page, change in color, or header/footer to inform your audience that you have moved into a different section of the report. Be sure to maintain an even pace with the slides (unless breaking to cover something in detail), if you dwell too long on one slide you will lose your audience. Cover the main points only. Try pausing and changing tempo to keep your audience interested.

3. Standard Conclusion. The conclusion includes a summary statement and ends with a final slide containing contact information. In this final slide, you can draw attention to a source for more info (i.e. forthcoming article/ report). Keep this slide up as you answer questions.

The layout of each slide is also important. Some rules of thumb follow:

- Use 26-36 point font
- 6 by 6 rule: only 6 lines/bullets and about 6 words per line/bullet.
- Use text layout boxes to isolate examples.
- Balance the information on the page so as to avoid dead space or overload of one area.
- Change format occasionally to keep interest.
- Take advantage of graphic lines.

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- Use animation (use sparingly). (Different versions of PowerPoint work differently and your animation may backfire)

Tip: Write text in word processing & plan slides on paper ... then create PP.

Step IV: Delivering the Message

Follow these general rules when presenting your materials:

- a. Avoid turning back to the audience
- b. Do not read from slides / notes
- c. Ask questions to engage (op)
- d. Strategically use repetition
- e. Do not upstage speakers
- f. Look at your audience

Step V: Final Preparations.

Remove Slides: consolidate material to eliminate unnecessary slides, and create handouts (Important slides/ tables / details / or complicated examples).

Settle logistic issues:

- Clarify sections *a priori* (natural breaks in material)
- Use 1 change per 15 minutes
- Decide on how to change slides
Presenter (smart mouse or touch)/ group member/ timed
- Be prepared for AV problems
- Decide who will answer questions

Save the presentation on different disks (CD and Fbppy), email if possible to the person organizing the meeting or panel. Print a paper copy of the speaker's notes and a few copies of the presentation just in case. If time and resources permit, you may want to generate acetates as a backup (overhead slides).