

PowerPoint Guides, Tips, and Help

Microsoft's PowerPoint application is a powerful tool for creating multimedia presentations. With clip art, fancy fonts, animations, charts, graphics, sound, and an array of dazzling color schemes, it is all too easy to make the equivalent of a Hollywood flop and lose your message in the medium.

Here are some basic thoughts that might help you create effective presentations.

KEEP IT SIMPLE

- * Use only one message per slide. If you have more than one message, add a slide.
- * Limit the amount of text on each slide - no one wants to read a New York Times article during your presentation.
- * Use only elements that add to the content of the message. Use graphics that clearly support your message. Good graphics can significantly add to learning, bad graphics can confuse and distract your audience.
- * Maintain a consistent design with regard to colors, font styles, and graphics.
- * You might use a formal typeface like Palatino and a symmetrical layout for a serious issue or you could use a casual font like Comic Sans and an asymmetrical layout for a lighter topic.
- * Have a beginning, a middle and an end. Tell your audience what you are going to tell them, tell it, and then summarize it.

Try this - Write your last slide first - if you don't know where you are going, it is unlikely you will be able to get there. Plan your conclusion first; know what you want to convey. Make the rest of your slides lead to and support the final result.

Guidelines for Creating Presentations

Brainstorm

- * Who is the audience
- * What do they know about the material
- * What do you want them to learn
- * Where will the presentation take place & under what conditions

Slide Design

- * Each slide should address a single concept
- * Slides should follow a logical progression, each building on the other
- * Use no more than six lines of text on any one slide
- * Use upper and lower case text, NOT all caps
- * Choose a color appropriate to the mood you want to convey
- * Avoid using too many colors (maximum of 5)
- * Use photographs to help the audience relate slide information to real world situations (keep in mind that if you use an outside source it is under copyright and permission to use it must be granted)

Color

- * Dark Blue to project a stable, mature message - has a calming effect
- * Red or Orange to trigger excitement or an emotional response
- * Green to make audience comfortable
- * Yellow to get audience attention quickly (more so than any other color)
- * Gray to promote the idea of "quality"
- * White to project honesty/sincerity
- * Black is not appealing to most viewers

To keep an audience focused, use dark colors for background and lighter colors for text and illustrations. The eye is naturally drawn to lighter areas and lighter and warmer colored objects appear closer than dark objects.

Template Galleries

- Microsoft Office Template Gallery
<http://officeupdate.microsoft.com/templategallery/>
- Presentation Pro <http://www.presentationpro.com/>

FAQs

- A Bit Better - PowerPoint FAQ
<http://www.bitbetter.com/powerfaq.htm>
- Steve's PowerPoint FAQ <http://www.rdpslides.com/pptfaq/>
- PowerPoint for Macintosh Frequently Asked Questions
<http://support.microsoft.com/support/macpowerpoint/faq/>

- PowerPoint for Windows Frequently Asked Questions
<http://support.microsoft.com/support/powerpoint/faq/default.asp>

Tutorials

- PowerPoint in the Classroom <http://www.actden.com/pp/>
- The University of Arizona Health Sciences Center
<http://www.ahsc.arizona.edu/phoenix/media/pptutor.htm>
- Boston College
http://www.bc.edu/bc_org/tvp/ars/documentation/PP/PP.shtml