



**PDHonline Course G293 (3 PDH)**

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# **How to Give Effective PowerPoint Presentations**

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# How to Give an Effective PowerPoint Presentation

*Lee Layton, P.E*

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## Introduction

PowerPoint is a presentation program that is included in Microsoft's Office suite of programs. Since its introduction in 1990, PowerPoint has become the most prevalent presentation program on the market. Today, PowerPoint presentations are used in just about every area of modern society including civic clubs, classrooms, business meetings, weddings, churches, and even funerals.

The PowerPoint program has a remarkable array of features to enhance a presentation and has revolutionized speaker presentations. Prior to PowerPoint most visual presentations used viewgraphs (overhead projector slides), 35mm slides, or flip charts. The ease with which a presentation can be put together using PowerPoint is amazing. However there is a downside to PowerPoint – which is poorly done presentations.

PowerPoint has made it easy to put together presentations, but that doesn't mean the end result is a good presentation. Anyone who has sat through a 100-slide PowerPoint presentation that featured an endless number of bulleted points or paragraphs along with fancy transitions will understand the downside of PowerPoint.

The purpose of this course is to provide some guidance on how to use PowerPoint more effectively in presentations. This is not a "how to" course on how use the features of PowerPoint, although a few specific features are explained, but it is a course on how to use the features of PowerPoint to the best advantage. This course assumes that the user has a basic mastery of PowerPoint and wants to make better use of the features of the program.

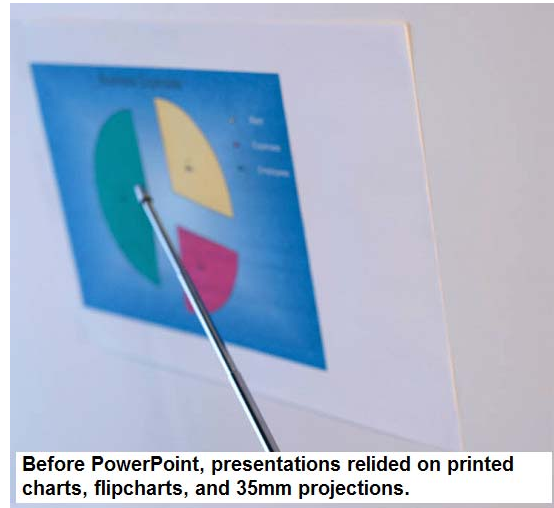
The course is based on the opinions of the author, who has made hundreds of presentations, many of which have surely induced a deep sleep among at least a few participants!

In this course, we will review a few of the common problems found in many PowerPoint presentations and how to use the rich features of PowerPoint as an aid to making presentations without allowing the features to distract from the presenters story. The ultimate goal of this course is to help the reader hold the audience's attention while presenting his story. The story may be presentation to make a business case to upper management, to venture capitalist, or it may be to describe a particular topic to a civic club. Whatever the occasion, the presenter is trying to persuade the audience and PowerPoint is a powerful tool to aid in storytelling.

The layout of the course begins with a brief overview of PowerPoint and then looks as how text is used in presentations, followed by color, graphics, and animation. In addition, we will study effective slide layouts, use of audio-visual equipment, and how to make the actual presentation performance more effective.

## I. Overview

PowerPoint actually began as a program for the Macintosh computer in 1987. The original program offered only black and white and simple drawing tools and was designed by a company known as Forethought. Shortly after Forethought released its first version of PowerPoint (version 1.0) Microsoft bought the company and acquired the rights to PowerPoint. It wasn't until 1990 that Microsoft released its first Windows compatible version of the program. PowerPoint 2.0 was not only compatible with both Windows and Macintosh platforms, but it also introduced many of what we think of today as standard PowerPoint tools such as bullets; drawing fills, and spell checking capability.



Before PowerPoint, presentations relied on printed charts, flipcharts, and 35mm projections.

Although the earliest versions of PowerPoint were marketed as stand-alone programs, since the introduction of Microsoft Office 2003, PowerPoint has been an integral part of the Office suite of products. As a component of the Office suite, PowerPoint has inter-operability among the Office products allowing 'cut' and 'paste' operations from Word and Excel as well as other programs.

One of the attractive features of PowerPoint is its ease of use. It has a simple yet powerful interface that allows even novices to quickly produce a presentation. And there are many powerful features that experienced users can exploit to make even better presentations.

The basic functions of PowerPoint allow the user to develop slides with text, color, graphics, transitions, and animations. The term *slide* is a reference to the old slide projector technology that preceded PowerPoint and is still used to describe an individual view in PowerPoint. In fact, you will still find references to a *deck of slides*, which is a reference to a presentation made from viewgraph overhead projector slides.

**Note: The features discussed in this course are based on Microsoft PowerPoint 2003, though most features and procedures are the same or very similar in other releases of the program.**

## II. Text

Text is the backbone of a PowerPoint presentation so it is important to know how to make the best use of text in a presentation. The most important text issues are the type of font to use, the size of the font, and proper grammatical use.

### Font Types

Fonts can be categorized as either serif fonts or sans serif. A *serif* is a small flair on the ends of the letters that make printed words more readable. Look at the following box which shows both a sans serif font, in this case it is Arial, and a serif font, such as Times New Roman. The Times New Roman font has flairs on the tops and each side of the bottom of the legs of the “M”. If you will notice, a *sans serif* font such as Arial does not have flairs, but instead has straight extensions of the legs of the “M”.



The serifs make printed words easier to read, but can

make text on computer screens and projected text more difficult to read. For computer screens and projectors, a sans serif font should be used. Here are a few of the popular sans serif and serif fonts,

Font Options	
Sans Serif	Serif
Arial	Times New Roman
Tahoma	Courier
Verdana	Garamond

Verdana is a popular font for websites and is also a good choice for PowerPoint presentations. Serif fonts may be used in PowerPoint, but they should be restricted to titles or very large and brief bullet points.

### Type Size

Once a font is selected, the next step is to select a font size. The font must be large enough for the text to be readable by everyone in the audience. Let's look at a few font sizes. Fonts are

described in points. In typography a point is 1/72 of an inch. Therefore, a 72-point font is one-inch tall and a 36-point font is 1/2 inch tall. However, electronic fonts are affected by the resolution of the computer screen, so a 72-point font may not be 1-inch tall on the computer display. Based on the resolution of the screen used in developing this course, a 72-point font is about 3/4 of an inch tall. Listed below are a few common point sizes.

### Examples of Font Sizes

This is 12-point type

This is 16-point type

This is 24-point type

This is 36-point type

This is 48-point type

This is 72-point

A common question is “how large of a font should I use?” The answer is the font needs to be big enough! Of course the question then becomes, “how big is ‘big enough’”? Several methods have been suggested to answer this question.

#### “Five foot” rule

When designing a presentation on a computer a very simple approach to determine how a particular font size will appear in the actual presentation is to just push back from the computer screen about five feet and see how it looks. Just put your foot on the edge of the desk at the computer screen and push your chair back by extending your leg. From this distance a PowerPoint slide on a typical screen will look about the same as when projected on a screen in an average size meeting room. Obviously this method is very unscientific and there are plenty of

reasons why it is not sufficient such as different screen sizes, different meeting room sizes, etc, but as a general rule of thumb the five-foot rule is a good test.

### Room-Screen Ratio

A more scientific approach to determine a font size is the *room-screen ratio* test. To use the room-screen ratio test divide the depth of the room by the diagonal projector screen size (in feet). The resulting ratio is the minimum font size that should be used. For instance, if a room is 50 feet deep and the screen size is 4-feet diagonally, then the smallest font size to use is,

$$\text{Font} = 50 / 4 = 12.5 \text{ points.}$$

For a 100 foot room with a 4-foot projection screen, the minimum font size should be  $100/4$  or 25 points.

### Painter's Rule

The "Painter's Rule" comes from the sign painting profession. Sign painters say that to be readable the text on a sign should be at least one inch tall for every 10 feet from the target audience. Applying this rule to a PowerPoint projection, the projected font should be at least 1" tall for every ten feet to the viewer. So if a last seat in the room is 50 feet from the projection screen, the font should appear at least five inches tall on the screen.

The painter's rule is probably the best method for consistent results. The problem is that this procedure does not define a font size since it is based on what is actually projected onto the screen, and even a 12-point font can be large on the screen if the projector is at a sufficient distance from the screen.

A combination of the Room-screen ratio approach and the painter's rule will yield consistently good results.

### Room Size

Some presenters use the following simple relationship for minimum font sizes.

<u>Number of seats</u>	<u>Font Size</u>
<50	24-point
50 – 200	28-point
>200	36-point

This approach assumes that the projector screen size is appropriate for the room and is only a rough rule of thumb.

### Minimum Font size

Another consideration is to select a minimum font size. The minimum font size should be no smaller than 24-points, with 28 to 36-points the preferred font size for the body of the slide.

While we are talking about minimum font size we should mention the ratio of the title font size to the body text font size. A good relationship is to set the body text font size at about 80% of the title font size. Here are some good title-to-body text size pairs,

### Title-to-body text size pairs

#### Title Font Size

28-Point

36-Point

44-Point

72-Point

#### Body Text Font Size

22-Point

28-Point

36-Point

60-Point

### Font Style

The four most popular font styles are regular, **bold**, *italic*, and underlined. A bold style can work for titles and the body text provided an appropriate font is selected. Some fonts are hard to read in bold style such as, **Extra Bold Albertus**. Likewise, italics can be hard to read on the screen and should be used sparingly. Italics may be used with large clean fonts, but it is generally best to avoid italics. Never use underlined text in a PowerPoint presentation. Underlines make the text very difficult to read and can be mistaken for a website URL.

### Grammar

The rules of sentence structure should be somewhat disregarded when using PowerPoint bullet points. When using bullet points, complete, grammatically correct, sentences are difficult to read and can be distracting for the audience. Instead, bullet points should be comprised of short, key words for emphasis. In fact, if a bullet point is a grammatically correct sentence, it is probably too long.

Nothing is more distracting than poor spelling and grammar in a PowerPoint presentation. The message of a presentation is easily lost when spelling and grammatical errors are in the



presentation. Care should be taken when using the spell checker utility. “There” and “their”, “an” and “and”, as well as many other combinations will pass the spell checker utility. One of the best ways to check spelling and grammar is to let the presentation “sit” for a few days before the final review and editing. Looking at the presentation “cold” will give the presenter a fresh perspective.

Capitalization also requires special consideration with PowerPoint. Presentations generally look better when title capitalization is only used for the title. The body text should have normal capitalization. See the example on the right. The major words in the title are capitalized. In the body though, capitalization follows normal capitalization rules.

Titles, sentences, and bullet points should rarely, if ever, use all capitals. There are some cases where it is good for emphasis, but generally it is considered to be the equivalent of shouting and is difficult to read.

Do this,

“This is Good Title Capitalization”,

and not this,

“THIS IS NOT APPROPRIATE TITLE CAPITALIZATION”.

In most cases punctuation is not necessary and may be distracting. Avoid periods, exclamation marks, and question marks. Remember, if it is a grammatically correct sentence it is too long!

## This is Title Capitalization

- This is Not Correct Body Text Capitalization
- This is the correct body text capitalization

### III. Color

The use of color is important in PowerPoint presentations because it can help convey meaning and help influence attitudes. A well selected color scheme can help the audience understand the emotions behind a presentation. On the other hand, a poor color scheme can make a presentation look like a clown act at a circus! Hopefully the following guidelines will help you convey the right message without the use of the clowns. To understand the use of color we need to first look at how colors are defined.

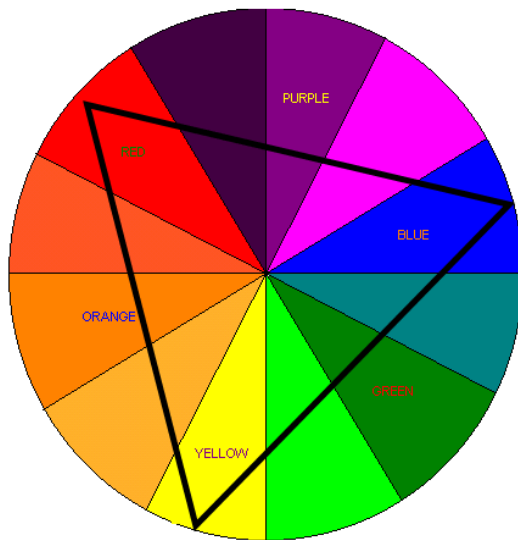
#### Color Theory

The color circle shown below is commonly called the “color wheel” and is comprised of 12 colors, or *hues*. The 12 colors are known as the primary, secondary, and tertiary colors. There are three *primary* colors: Red, blue, and yellow and they are arranged in a triangle on the color wheel. Combining each of the primary colors will form another color such as red and blue, which form the color purple. Likewise, blue and yellow form green, and yellow and red form orange. These colors: Purple, green, and orange are called *secondary* colors.

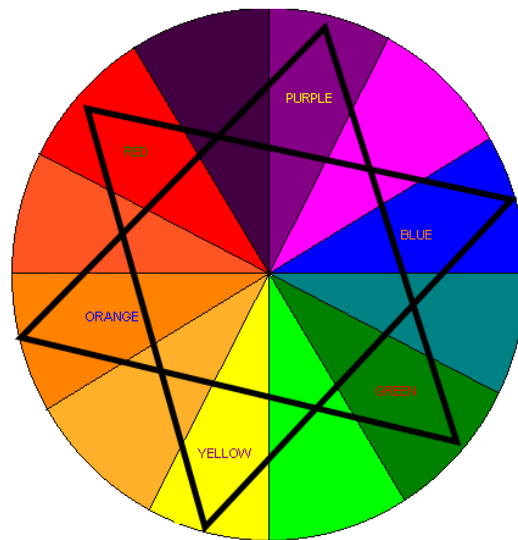
**Color Wheel**



## Color Wheel - Primary and Secondary Colors



**Primary**  
**Red - Blue - Yellow**

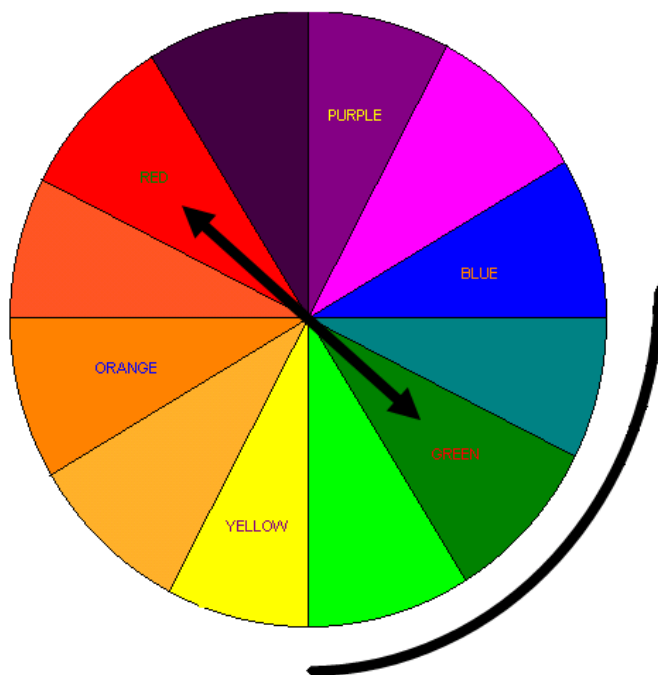


**Secondary**  
**Purple - Green - Orange**

The secondary colors can then be used to form additional colors. For instance, combining the primary color, blue, with the secondary color, purple, forms the color pink. These color combinations are called *tertiary* colors.

The color opposite another color on the wheel, for instance, the colors red and green, are called *complementary* colors. Likewise, blue and orange are complementary colors.

## Complementary and Analogous Colors



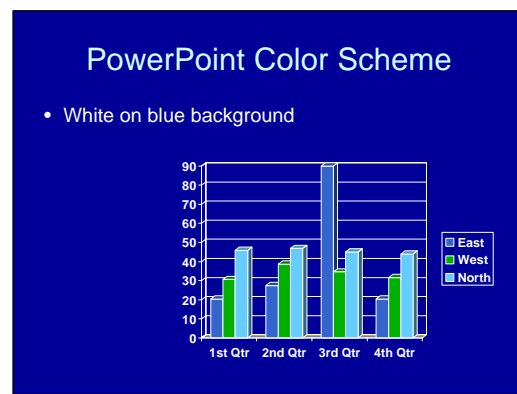
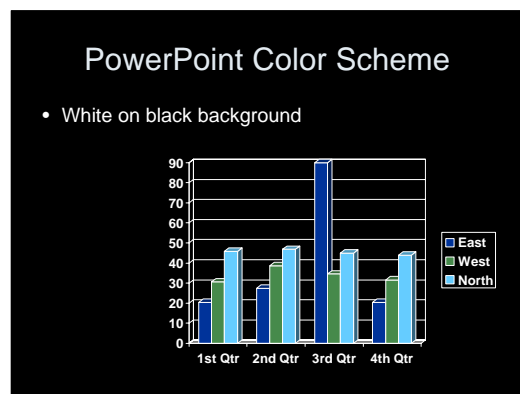
Adjacent colors on the color wheel are called *analogous* colors. For the color green, the analogous colors are aqua and light green.

The 12 basic colors can be modified by using varying degrees of white and black to create hundreds of color combinations. Adding white to a basic color is called *tinting* the color. Adding black to a basic color is known as *shading* the color. Tints lighten colors and shades darken colors. Tinting and shading is referred to as the *color values* of a color. Pink is a tint of red and brown is a shade of orange.

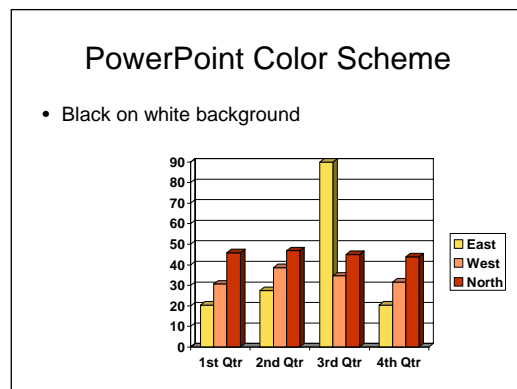
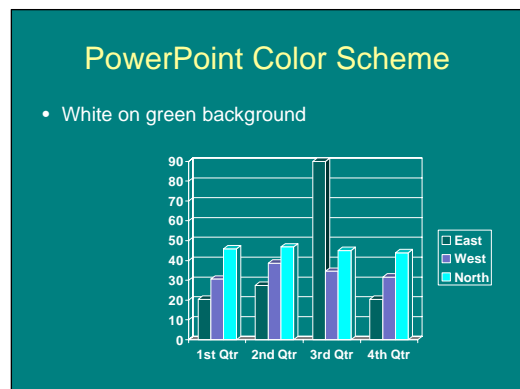
## PowerPoint Color Schemes

PowerPoint has several built-in color schemes. Most of these schemes have excellent color choices. Look at the following four selections from PowerPoint. The first uses white text on a black background.

The second scheme has a blue background. The title is in a light blue color and the bullet points are in white.



In the next scheme, the background is a blue-green, with yellow for the title and white for the bullet points. The final scheme simply uses black text on a white background.



Custom color schemes can be designed in PowerPoint. The custom color schemes allow the user to select a background color, text colors, shadows, accents, fills, and hyperlink colors. To design a custom color scheme in PowerPoint 2003 follow these steps,

Select **Format > Slide Design**. In the task panel on the right select **Color Scheme** and then at the bottom of the task panel select **Edit Color Scheme**. At this point the user will be given the option of editing the color formats. The colors selected will be the default for all slides in the presentation. The edit options include,

Background. The background color will be used in both the title block and the text boxes.

Text and Lines. Select the color for all text exclusive of the title box text.

Title Text. Select the color for the title text.

Shadows. This is the color for shadows around text when special formatting is selected.

Fills. Fills is the color for Auto shapes as well as other shapes.

Accent. Accent is the color for accents.

Accent and Hyperlink. This is the color for hyperlink text.

Accent and Followed Hyperlink. This is the color for the hyperlink after it has been selected.

Whenever possible try to use the generic PowerPoint color schemes.

### Use of Color in PowerPoint

The proper use of color can have a dynamic effect on a PowerPoint presentation. Be careful though that the colors elicit the desired feelings. Blue and greens imply calmness. Green can mean “go” or “environmentally friendly”. Red is a passionate color and a danger color (traffic stop signs). Red and yellow are also urgent colors. Brown is somewhat boring. The colors should also match the topic. Black implies authority. Green generates positive feelings and stimulates interaction.

A presentation should include no more than four colors, the background color and three other colors. Be consistent with the use of colors in a presentation and use either tints or shades of the colors for emphasis.

Cool colors make the best backgrounds. Generally the right side of the color wheel makes good backgrounds. Warm colors are on the left side of the color wheel. Once a color is selected – either warm or cool – then the color range can be extended by selecting analogous colors. Another technique is to select a broader range of a color by varying the tint or shade. Avoid using yellow as a background because large areas of yellow can be irritating to the eye.

Light colored backgrounds can create glare and make it difficult for the audience to see the slide. Shades of blue and green are popular background colors. Avoid “hot” colors such as red, orange, and yellow.

One way to provide more contrast between the background color and the text is to use a complementary text color. A light colored text is easier to read on a dark background than on a white background. Complementary colors contrast each other and create a dynamic effect.

When used together analogous colors create a harmonious effect and have a tendency to unify the slide because they are a creation of the adjoining colors.

Black text on a white background provides a strong contrast that many find easy to read. Some people find the extreme contrast between a white background and black text distracting. While red and yellow are not good background colors, they are well suited for text. Yellow text on a dark background such as either black or blue is especially effective.

These are some good color combinations,

Good Color Choices	Poor Color Choices
White on Purple	Green on Red
White on Black	Red on Yellow
Yellow on Purple	Green on Yellow
Red on Black	Light Green on Green
Orange on Blue	Red on Green
Light Blue on Blue	Yellow on White

The use of color can enhance memory retention. The *Von Restorff Effect*, named after Hedwig Von Restorff, says that an item that is somehow differentiated in a group of similar items will be remembered better in both the short term and long term than undifferentiated items. Therefore, using color to emphasize an item will aid in memory retention. See the slide on the right.

When using color in graphs the intensity should increase as you move to the bottom of the frame (darker colors on the bottom and lighter colors are you move up the y-axis of the graph.)

**Red makes it memorable**

**Red makes it memorable**

**Red makes it memorable**

Many people have some degree of color blindness, so the colors in a presentation may not have the intended benefit. In some cases it may be difficult for a color blind audience member to differentiate between a background and the text. To minimize problems with color blind audience members, it is best to avoid color combinations such as blue-green, red-green, brown-green, blue-black, and blue-purple.

## IV. Graphics

Good graphics are a key to a memorable presentation. Research says that humans encode visual and verbal information simultaneously, but using different parts of the brain. To take full advantage of the brain's capability we need to provide both visual and verbal stimulus.

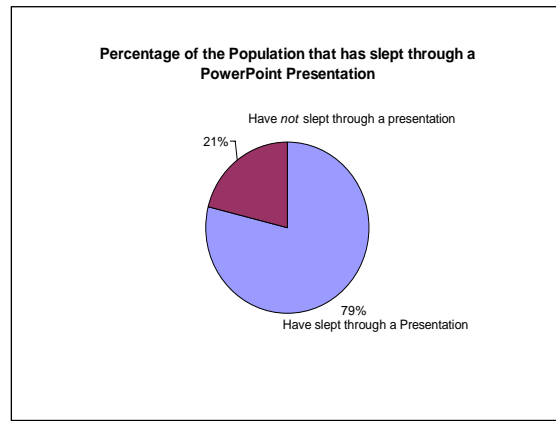
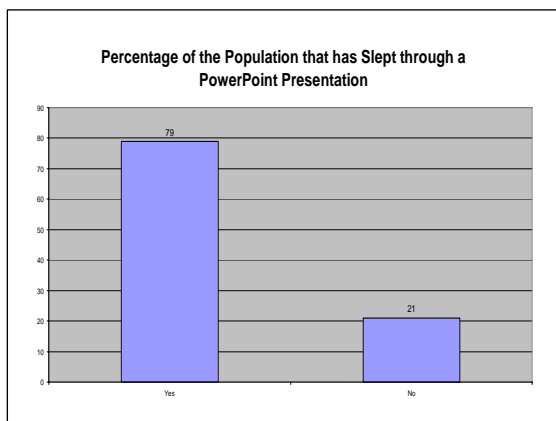
In this section we will look at the file formats that are used for PowerPoint graphics, how to apply graphs including bar charts, line charts, and pie charts, and the types of images to use in PowerPoint presentations.

### Graphs

Graphs are useful in presentations for explaining data. They can be created in PowerPoint or imported from Excel. In most cases it is easier to build a graph in Excel and import it into PowerPoint. Common graphs include Line charts, Bar charts, and Pie charts. Line charts are best used to show data trends. Bar charts are well suited for high-low comparisons. Pie charts are good for showing percentages of a whole.

#### Pie Chart

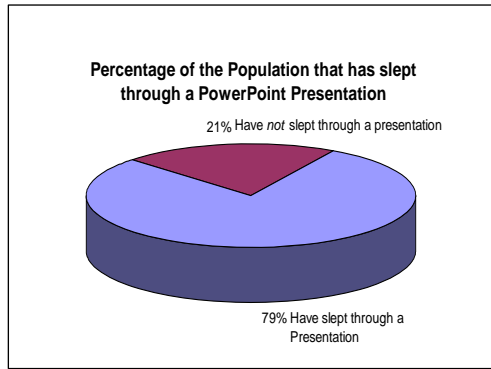
Look at the next two slides. The slides present the results of a (fictitious) survey concerning the percentage of people who have fallen asleep during a PowerPoint presentation. The first slide shows the results using a bar chart. The next slide is a better approach where the data is presented in a pie chart.



To further emphasize the “have fallen asleep” answer, see the next slide. In this example, the pie chart is shown in a three-dimensional layout and the chart has been rotated about 30 degrees to emphasize the “have fallen asleep” answer.

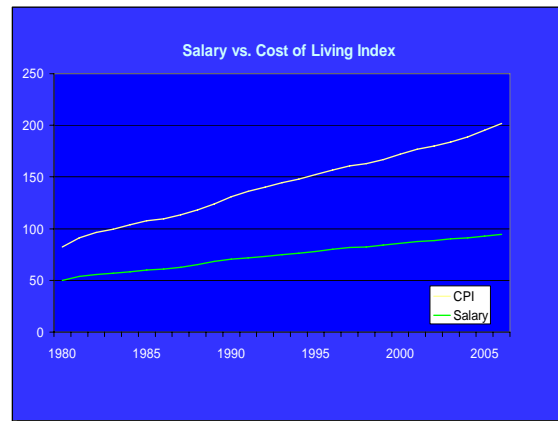
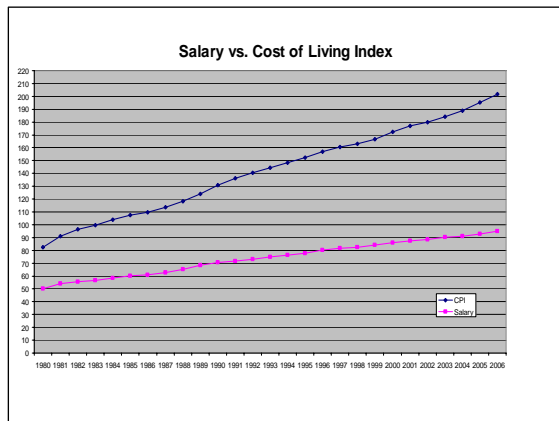
In either the traditional pie chart view or the 3-D view, the ability to rotate the chart is a useful feature to emphasize a key piece of data.

Again, use pie charts to represent percentages.



### Line Charts

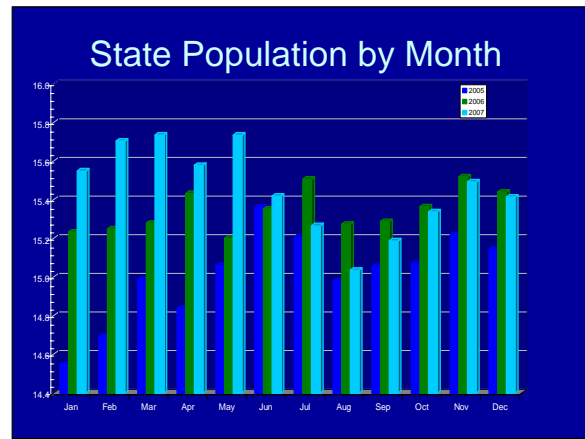
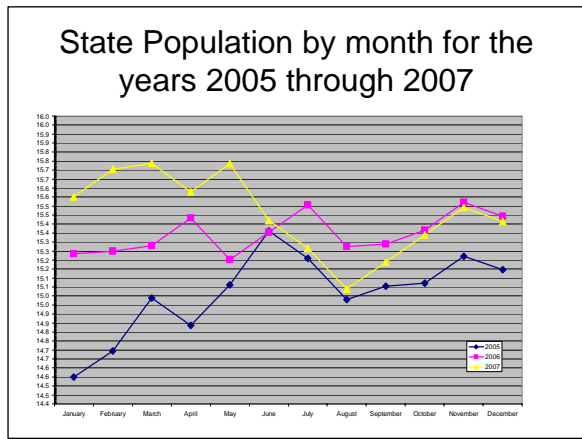
Line charts are best used to describe data trends. A good example is the change in the Consumer Price Index as compared to the change in salaries during the same time period. Consider the time period from 1980 through 2006. In the first graph we have the change in the Consumer Price Index graphed along with an engineer's salary for the same time period. The first graph is very difficult to read because of the y-axis gridlines and poor choice of colors. The second graph is easier to read with fewer x and y-axis gridlines and tick marks along with the elimination of the individual year reference points.



### Bar Charts

Discrete data should be represented in bar charts. Consider the following data about the population of a certain State for the years 2005 through 2007. The point of the data is to compare the State's population variability on a monthly basis. The first slide shows the data in a line chart format. The second graph has the data in a bar chart format, which shows what the presenter wanted to explain – the monthly variability in the State's population.





## Use of Images

Research says that a visual presentation is five times more likely to be remembered than a presentation using bullet points alone. A picture is worth a thousand words – if it is the right picture!

In the past, clip art was widely used in print brochures and other visual media. Many PowerPoint presentations also use clip art as visuals. There is really no compelling reason to use clip art when photographs are so easy to acquire and insert into PowerPoint. The accompanying slide has a clip art version of a hydroelectric dam and a photograph of a hydroelectric dam. The photograph will hold the audience's attention much longer than the clip art.

With the advent of digital cameras it is easy to find a suitable photograph for most presentations. There are public domain images available on the Internet as well as many lost cost professional images that can be downloaded and inserted into a PowerPoint presentation. The images shown in these examples are from the generic clip art package included with PowerPoint.

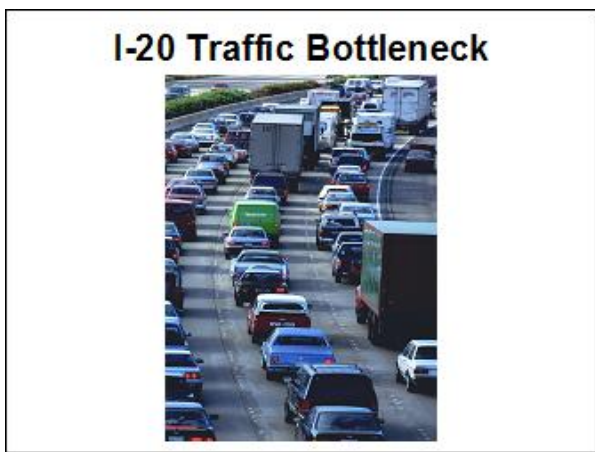
Images should be used to reinforce the presenter's point. For instance, consider the visuals for a presentation on how a company is helping the environment by reducing smokestack emissions. The first image shown below does not help promote the company's image as environmentally friendly even though it is certainly relevant to smokestack emission.





The second image (shown above) is a much more positive visual image for the company's environmental stewardship program.

A mistake that is sometimes seen in PowerPoint presentations is the use of a visual image that is not relevant to the subject matter. See the two images below where the presentation is about traffic congestion in metro Atlanta.



The slide on the left is a good visual when discussing traffic congestion. The slide on the right might seem like a good visual for a bottleneck, but it is not a good visual for traffic congestion. You might say that the same complaint could be made about the previous example about environmental stewardship where leaves were shown instead of a smokestack. However, in the previous example the subject was about smokestack emissions and not smokestacks, so a "green" image is appropriate.

### Graphic File Formats

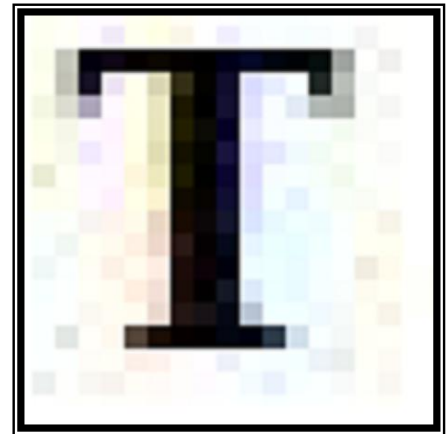
There are several types of graphical file formats including BMP, JPEG, GIF, TIFF, and PNG. The file formats differ in file size, compression, and color types. Some of the types are better suited for photographs and others are better suited for text and drawings. Let's look at a few of the common graphic file formats and their applications.

### BMP

Bitmap, BMP, is the standard Microsoft Windows file format. Bitmaps tend to be rather large files. A BMP file has a 24-bit bitmap image and is the standard format for PC Paintbrush. It has a fixed palette of colors that may not transfer correctly to other formats. BMP is known as a *lossless* format because the image is not degraded due to compression. BMP is an older format and somewhat archaic compared to the newer formats available, but is still good for PowerPoint backgrounds and graphics. BMP is not the best choice for photographs because of its limited color palette.

### JPEG

The Joint Photographic Experts Group, JPEG, format uses compression to minimize the size of the file. JPEG is a “lossy” format so every time the image is saved some image quality is lost. JPEG supports 24-bit color and is a good choice for photographs. Because of the lossy nature of a JPEG it is not a good choice for text and graphics where sharp lines are present. The lossy format leaves *artifacts* on the image such as in the graphic shown on the right.



### GIF

Like JPEG, the Graphics Interchange Format, GIF, is a lossy format because of compression. GIF files are not as small as JPEG's, but they still offer reasonable compression and small file sizes. GIF's do not lose image quality every time the file is saved. They are limited to 8-bit color though, so GIF's are not a good choice for photographs. GIF's are best suited for text, graphics, and drawings.

### TIFF

The Tagged Image File Format, TIFF, is complex file format with a large file size. It supports many file formats including 8-bit images as well as 24-bit images. It has a lossless compression format. TIFF is commonly used for high quality printing and is not generally used for PowerPoint images.

### PNG

One of the newer file formats is the Portable Network Graphics, PNG, which uses a lossless compression technology. It supports 24-bit and 48-bit color and the compression is better than GIF files. PNG is good replacement for both the GIF and the JPEG file format. PNG is relatively new and is not readable by some of the older programs and web browsers. PNG does not leave JPG type artifacts.

## V. Animation

PowerPoint has some very good animations features – most of which should not be used. Many of the animation features used by presenters are gimmicky and tend to distract from the presentation instead of enhancing the presentation. There are a few animation features worth mentioning though. In this section we will look at PowerPoint animation schemes, custom animations, transitions, and action buttons. We'll start with the most widely misused feature – transitions.

### Transitions

There is very little reason to ever use transitions. They come across as gimmicks and either distract or aggravate the audience. If you have sat through many presentations you have probably seen transitions in use. Transitions allow the presenter to “fly” text onto the screen from the left, right, up, and down, as well as other special effects. There are very few reasons where a transition enhances a presentation.

One transition that can be used effectively is called the “newsflash”. This transition spins an object onto the screen like newspaper news flashes were spun onto the screen in old movies. Since this is a somewhat accepted presentation style in can be used effectively to emphasize a point. The “newsflash” transition is added by selecting **Slide Show -> Transitions -> Newsflash**.



### Animation schemes

Animation schemes include features such as “appear”, “highlights”, “dissolves”, “fades”, etc. “Appear” is commonly used in presentations to allow one item to appear on the screen at a time. This allows the presenter to discuss each item without allowing the remaining items to distract the audience. In practice, “appear” schemes may actually be distracting since the audience will be wondering what’s next. A better approach is to use the “highlights” animation scheme.

#### Appear Feature

- This is point number one

#### Highlight Feature

- This is point number one
- This is point number two
- This is point number three

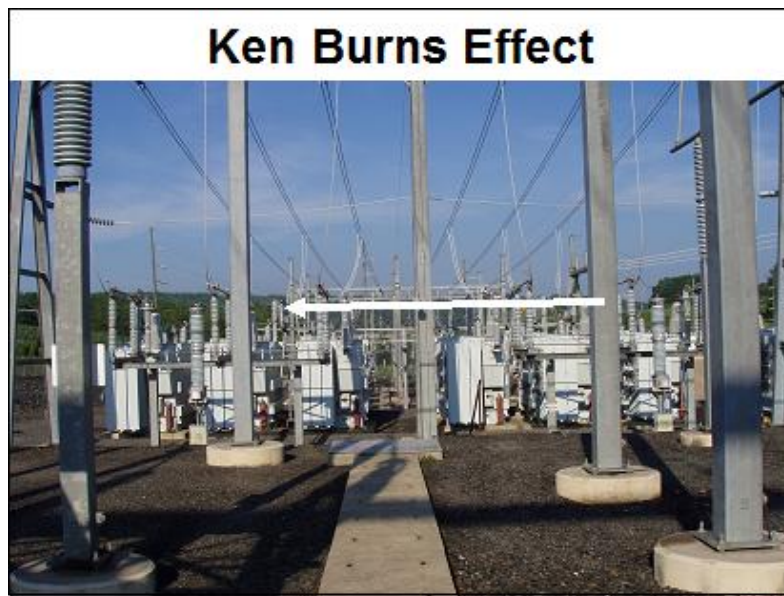
With the “highlights” feature, all of the bullet points appear on the screen at once, but only the bullet point being discussed is highlighted. As the presenter ‘clicks’ on a point, the previous point becomes lighter and the point under discussion is highlighted. This approach allows the audience to see all bullet points and allows the presenter to emphasize the point under discussion.

The “highlight” feature is activated by selecting **Slide Show > Animation Schemes > Highlights**.

### Custom Animations

The custom animation feature of PowerPoint can be used to replicate what is known as the “Ken Burns Effect”. Ken Burns is the director of several well known documentaries such as *The Civil War* and *Baseball*. Ken Burns used slow panning and zooming effects to bring still photographs to life. This feature can be replicated in PowerPoint using custom animations to pan and zoom in on a particular item in a photograph. The effect gives the appearance of motion to a still photograph, which can hold the audience’s attention. This feature is accomplished in PowerPoint by using the custom animation features of *grow/shrink* command and the *motion path* commands.

To create the effect a photograph is first loaded into a slide in PowerPoint.



Next, select **Slide Show > Custom Animation > Add Effect > Emphasis > Grow/Shrink**. Then set the degree of growing (or shrinking.) A good ‘grow’ setting is 150%. The speed of the animation should be set to ‘very slow’. The effect can be tested by pressing the **Play** button. This animation gives the appearance of zooming in to a spot on the image.

The next step is to create a lateral motion path. To do this select, **Slide Show > Custom Animation > Add Effect > Motion Paths > Line**



Then, place the cursor at the desired starting and ending points on the photograph (this is a little tricky to get just right and may take some adjusting.) The program will place line with the beginning and ending points. The speed should be set to ‘very slow’. Test the effect by pressing the **Play** button.

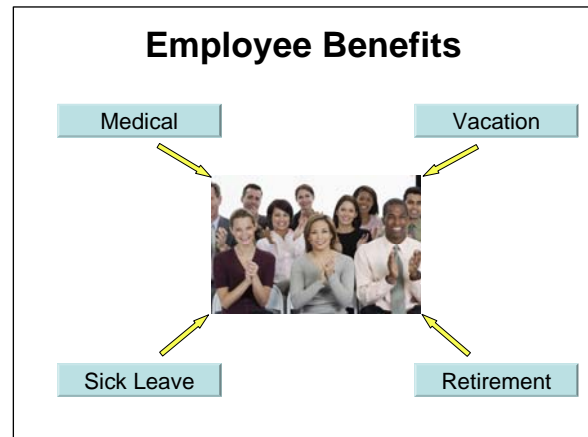
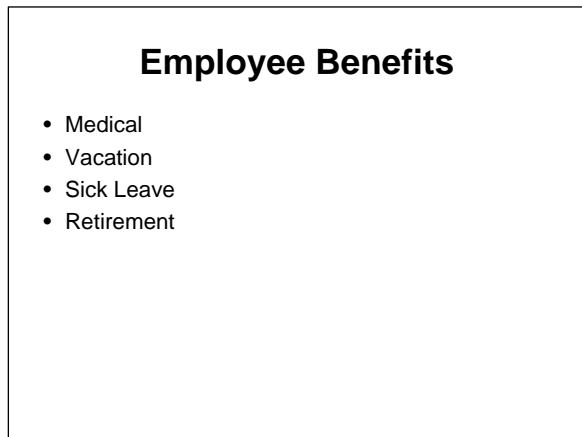
Finally, the two animations need to be integrated. To combine the animations, select the second animation and then select > **Start with Previous**. Now the animations should move seamlessly by zooming in and moving laterally to the desired location on the photograph.

It takes a little ‘tinkering’ to get just the right effect, but the effort is worth it.

### Action Buttons

Another useful animation feature is known as “action buttons”. Action Buttons are essentially hyperlinks to other parts of a presentation. This will make the presentation appear more interactive and can be used to allow the audience to participate in the direction the presentation takes. For example, a Human Resources manager may need to give a presentation to an employee group about employee benefits. The typical presentation might begin like the slide shown on the left below. In this slide are four bullet points with the key items the HR director plans to cover. The remaining presentation would then cover these items in detail.

A better approach for this type of presentation might include using Action Buttons as shown in the slide on the right below.



The action buttons are actually hyperlinks to specific slides in the presentation. Using actions buttons will allow the HR director move through the presentation in the order that the employee’s prefer as opposed to a fixed presentation. Action buttons are found under the “Slide Show” menu and are easy to setup so the process will not be described here.

## VI. Slide Layout

Basically a PowerPoint presentation will consist of text, tables, charts, and images. The goal is to integrate these features to make a seamless, coherent, attention getting, presentation. The use of bullet points, numbered points, and how text and images are presented are critical to the success of a presentation. In this section we will look at bullet points and slide readability.

### Bullet Points

Bullet points are what you might call the “backbone” of a PowerPoint presentation since they are found in virtually every PowerPoint presentation given. Invariably you will need to use bullet points in a presentation. These guidelines will help you use bullet points to your advantage.

1. Only use bullet points when necessary. Is there another way to present the information without a bullet point? A photograph or image perhaps?
2. Bullet points should not be used as an outline of the presentation. The bullet points should convey specific information (e.g. “Sales are up 12%”, instead of “Sales results”).
3. Bullet points should not be a ‘laundry list’ of things you need to do in your presentation. The slide on the right is an example of a ‘Laundry list’ bullet point presentation. Laundry list type items should be on the speakers notes of items to cover, but should not be listed on a slide. Another example of “laundry list” bullets is one word bullets. One word bullets look like a grocery list such as “milk, bread, eggs, etc.”

The image shows a slide titled "Laundry Lists" with a bulleted list of five items: "Introduce Executive Vice President", "Explain purpose of presentation", "Introduce new product", "Explain benefits of new product", and "Ask for Questions".
4. In some cases, numbered items should be substituted for bullet points. A numbered list should primarily be used when a sequence is being explained, such as the steps necessary to perform a task. For instance, the steps necessary to change the oil in your car should be listed as a numbered list. Items to check during routine car maintenance should probably be listed in bullet point form. An exception is if you are trying to emphasize a plan such as “12-Point Maintenance Plan”.
5. Use action buttons when possible. Even if the buttons are not hyperlinked for interactivity, the buttons will give the presentation a better look.

## Slide Titles

Slide titles should be descriptive of the content of the slide. Too often the title of a slide looks like a heading out of an outline or the title of a chapter in a book. For instance, a title of a slide reporting the financial results could say,

**Financial Results FY2006**

But a better heading might be,

**Net Income up in 2006**

The point is to make the title descriptive of the slide's contents and create interest for the audience. In the case shown above, the second title emphasizes the financial results of the company by saying the net income is up in 2006 instead of the somewhat boring former slide that just says "Financial Results FY2006".

## 666-Rule

While the number 666 is considered by some to have satanic connotations, it is a good rule to prevent hellish presentations! The purpose of the 666-rule is to help the presenter to remember to limit each slide to no more than about six bullet points and to limit each bullet point to no more than six words. Furthermore, a presentation should not be longer than about six slides without some type of visual for the audience. Remember,

1. No more than six bullet points to a slide.
2. No more than six words per bullet.
3. No more than six slides without.

Applying the 666-Rule can help to keep presentations readable and interesting.

## Readability

A common problem in PowerPoint presentations is graphics and tables that are virtually unreadable by the audience. If a table or chart is used in a presentation, the numbers must be readable from every seat in the audience. If they are not, the presentation should be adjusted to make the presentation readable. Simplifying tables and using callouts are effective means to make presentations more readable.

### Simplify Tables and Charts

In the example shown below, the monthly population is shown for a State for the years 2005 through 2007. The table on the left shows the exact population, which results in an 8-digit number – and a mass of digits.



State Population			
Month	2005	2006	2007
January	14,548,988	15,234,566	15,550,231
February	14,694,478	15,249,801	15,705,733
March	14,988,367	15,280,300	15,737,145
April	14,838,484	15,433,103	15,579,773
May	15,061,061	15,201,607	15,735,571
June	15,362,282	15,353,623	15,420,860
July	15,208,659	15,507,159	15,266,651
August	14,980,530	15,274,552	15,037,651
September	15,055,432	15,289,826	15,188,028
October	15,070,488	15,366,275	15,339,908
November	15,221,192	15,519,938	15,493,307
December	15,145,087	15,442,338	15,415,841

State Population (millions)			
Month	2005	2006	2007
January	14.5	15.2	15.6
February	14.7	15.2	15.7
March	15.0	15.3	15.7
April	14.8	15.4	15.6
May	15.1	15.2	15.7
June	15.4	15.4	15.4
July	15.2	15.5	15.3
August	15.0	15.3	15.0
September	15.1	15.3	15.2
October	15.1	15.4	15.3
November	15.2	15.5	15.5
December	15.1	15.4	15.4

Contrast the slide on the left with the slide on the right where the State population is shown in millions. In this form the population values are 3-digit numbers making the slide much cleaner and easier to read without any significant loss in accuracy.

I know you can't read this but...

In a presentation, anytime you hear someone say "I know you can't read this but..." then there is something wrong with the presentation. The slide shown on the right is the balance sheet for a company. The presenter is trying to call attention to the total assets of the company, which is nearly impossible to read on this slide.

An option is to use *callouts* to call attention to a specific piece of information. The slide below is the same balance sheet as shown in the slide above, but the total assets column

Balance Sheet (000's)		
	Year Ending	
	2006	2005
<b>Assets</b>		
<b>Current Assets</b>		
Cash	2,480	1,800
Accounts Receivable	24,400	22,750
(less reserve for doubtful accounts)	(1,000)	(1,000)
Inventory	27,000	27,900
Prepaid Expenses	600	450
Other Current Assets	7,000	4,800
<b>Total Current Assets</b>	<b>60,480</b>	<b>56,750</b>
<b>Fixed Assets</b>		
Long Term Investments	350	300
Land	4,500	4,500
Buildings, Equipment, Fixtures	81,250	87,500
(less accumulated depreciation)	(18,750)	(14,500)
<b>Total Net Fixed Assets</b>	<b>39,350</b>	<b>37,750</b>
<b>Total Assets</b>	<b>99,830</b>	<b>94,300</b>
<b>Liabilities</b>		
<b>Current Liabilities</b>		
Accounts Payable	9,000	8,550
Notes Payable	7,600	9,150
Accrued Expenses	4,500	5,400
Taxes Payable	2,550	2,250
Interest Payable	1,800	1,800
Current Portion of Long Term Debt	900	0
<b>Total Current Liabilities</b>	<b>26,350</b>	<b>27,150</b>
<b>Long Term Liabilities</b>		
Long Term Debt	18,600	19,500
Other Long-Term Debt	2,400	2,250
<b>Total Long-Term Liabilities</b>	<b>21,000</b>	<b>21,750</b>
<b>Shareholder's Equity</b>		
Common Stock	3,000	3,000
Additional Paid in Capital	11,550	11,550
Retained Earnings	37,830	30,800
<b>Total Shareholder's Equity</b>	<b>52,480</b>	<b>45,400</b>
<b>Total Liabilities and Equity</b>	<b>99,830</b>	<b>94,300</b>

Balance Sheet (000's)		
	Year Ending	
	2006	2005
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**Total Assets** 99,830 94,300

has been expanded to make the actual numbers readable. A callout allows the presenter to give the audience the 'feel' of the actual document (you can basically tell where the total assets are found on the balance sheet) while also allowing the audience to read the actual values.

### Fresh Fish

There is a classic story told in journalism school about eliminating unneeded words in a story. The example given is about a fish merchant in a busy seaside fishing village. The merchant's store has a sign above the store that says "Fresh Fish Sold Here". The journalism professor asks his class what one word is unnecessary in the store's sign. The students say the merchant could eliminate the word "Here". After all, where else would the fish be sold? The professor then says, "Now that 'Here' is gone, are there any other words you can eliminate?" After a brief period of reflection, the students answer "you might eliminate 'Sold' since the purpose of the store is to sell fish." The professor then says "What about the word 'Fresh'? What other kind of fish would a seaside merchant in a fishing village sell?" "So", the students responded, "the sign should just say 'Fish'?" "Not at all", says the professor. "The word 'Fish' is unnecessary too. The merchant should just hang a plaque of a fish above his store!"

The point of this story is to eliminate as many words as possible and to use visuals in presentations whenever possible. The visuals may be photographs, images, tables, charts, graphs, etc. This makes the presentation cleaner and easier to comprehend.



Consider the following two slides. The slide on the left is a textual report of the financial condition of a company. A PowerPoint slide should almost never have a paragraph of text unless it is a direct quote needed for emphasis or historical accuracy (e.g. the preamble to the Constitution of the United States would of course be shown in its complete form.)

#### Financial Results

For 2007 sales were up 8% compared to the disappointing sales in 2006, where sales were virtually flat. Operating expenses increased 12% in 2007 as compared to the slight decrease of 3% that occurred in 2006. The resulting net income for 2007 was therefore down 5%, compared to the 2006 net income, which was up 10%.

#### Financial Results

2007		2006	
Sales	8% ↑	Sales	0% ⇔
Expenses	12% ↑	Expenses	3% ↑
Net income	5% ↓	Net income	10% ↑

In this case, a better approach is to give the highlights in the PowerPoint slide and the presenter should then expound on the results as necessary. The slide on the right is a brief synopsis of the company's financial results without the wordiness of the slide on the left. From the slide on the right, the audience can tell at a glance that the company had improved sales in 2007, but had a

reduction in net income because of rising expenses. It is also easy to see that in the prior year sales were flat, but the company controlled expenses better and had a positive net income.

## VIII. Presentation Tips

This section has a few tips on how to prepare for the actual presentation. This includes having the projector set up and working correctly with the presentation, preparing for the unexpected, and having an abbreviated presentation ready.

### Projector Woes

One of the biggest fears when using PowerPoint is a connectivity problem between the computer and video projector. And rightfully so, because many times connectivity is the weak link in getting a presentation onto the screen. While every computer/projector combination may be different, here are some basic guidelines that may help allay these fears.

The first step should be to make a connection between the projector and the computer with both devices turned off. After the devices are connected, turn the projector on first. Then turn on the computer. As the computer boots up it will send a signal through the cable to the projector to negotiate the display settings. Many projectors have an “A” input and a “B” input. You may have to cycle the projector through its settings to get the image to display on the projector.

The display function on the computer keyboard may have to be toggled to make a signal connection with the projector. The key strokes will differ depending on the computer, but it will be similar to the function key “FN” and “F8”. Both keys must be pressed simultaneously. The correct function number usually has a display image on the key or it may say “CRT/LCD”, etc. Be careful to not continually press the function keys trying to get the connection to work – this may cause the computer to cycle through the options. Instead, press the function keys and give the computer a second or two to sort out the connection.



Here are a few other computer tips,

1. Make sure the computer power settings are set to “always on”.
2. Ensure that a laptop is running on AC power and not the battery.
3. Turn off screen savers.
4. Turn off programmed functions such as virus scans, etc.
5. Make sure all other applications are turned off.

And finally, remember to not panic. No matter what you do, some days a computer-projector connection is just not going to work!

### The Blank Screen

A neat feature of PowerPoint is the ability to quickly blank the presentation from the audience's view using either the "W" or "B" key during a presentation. You should always have your presentation set up and running with the projector prior to the actual presentation. The problem is that at some meetings, such as a civic organization there will usually be a dinner or other activities before your presentation. You do not want your presentation projected during these activities. To avoid this problem, set up the show and then press the "B" key on the keyboard. The PowerPoint presentation will go blank, but will still be running. Pressing "B" again will return to the presentation.

This feature is useful during the presentation too. If there is a pause for questions, or if the presenter wants the audience to focus on what he is saying, he can press the "W" button for a blank white screen, or the "B" for a blank black screen, which will force the audience to direct their attention to the presenter. When the presenter has made his point pressing the appropriate button again will resume the presentation.

### **Company Logo**

Many companies have a master template with their logo in the corner of every slide. The presenter's company logo should be shown in a beginning and ending slide. However, it should not be on every slide in the presentation. A logo on every slide is distracting to the audience.

Another item to consider is at the end of the presentation, after the final company logo slide, there should be one or two blank slides. Otherwise, if the presenter clicks past the logo slide, the PowerPoint "back room" will be shown. It will look more professional for the presentation to remain in the slide show form.

### **"We're about out of time..."**

Anyone who has given a presentation with a panel of others speakers has probably experienced the "we're about out of time announcement" just prior to giving their presentation. The result can result in a fast rush through the slides to finish the presentation before the allotted time is up. Anything faster than about 30 seconds per slide is going to make the audience anxious and will certainly distract from the presentation. There are two approaches to deal with the abbreviated time.

One approach is to know your slide numbers and be able to jump to specific key slides. A feature of PowerPoint is the ability to key in any slide number during a presentation and, by pressing ENTER, jump right to that slide. Know where your key slides are and just jump to the most important slides.

A more refined approach to the time problem is to have an alternative presentation ready to deliver. This is easy with PowerPoint by using the Custom Shows feature. To access the custom shows, first open the presentation in PowerPoint and then go to **Slide Show > Custom Shows > New**. At this point all of the slides in the presentation will be listed. Just click on the key slides to include in the custom show. Now when the need arises just select the custom show and give an abbreviated presentation.

### **“In conclusion...”**

The conclusion is probably the most important component of any presentation. Unfortunately many presenters waste this opportunity to summarize their key points and make a lasting impression. Something like the slide on the left is a common ending for a PowerPoint presentation or the presenter may use a giant question mark as the ending to his presentation. Instead, use the last slide to call the audience to action or to reinforce the message of the presentation. The slide on the right is meant to encourage the audience to act about a Federal government funding proposal. It is much more effective than a horse's posterior.

#### **The End**



#### **Before you sleep tonight...**

- Call your county commissioner
- Write your congressman
- Tell a co-worker

The closing of a presentation doesn't have to be a slide either. The best closing may be to turn off the PowerPoint (use the “B” key) and tell the audience a story, give a quote, or do something to make the presentation memorable for the audience.

## Summary

In this course, we have reviewed a few of the common problems found in PowerPoint presentations and how to avoid problem presentations. We also looked at many of the rich features of the PowerPoint program that can be used to aid in making quality presentations.

The suggestions presented in this course are based on years of experience in making PowerPoint presentations. By using color wisely, developing clean visuals, and using text appropriately a speaker can develop effective – and stunning – presentations.

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