

## Tips for Developing PowerPoint Slides

PowerPoint can be a great way to enhance your presentation, if done right! Following are some guidelines to assist you in creating a dynamic, interesting presentation for your audience.

### Keep it Simple to Enhance Readability

- Limit the amount of information on each slide, breaking down complex content into simpler, easier-to-read slides.
- Use clear and concise wording: phrases and key words convey content better than complex or lengthy sentences.
- Maintain the same grammatical structure on each slide for parallelism; for example, begin phrases or sentences on a slide with the same verb form or tense.
- Avoid the use of too many different fonts, colors, charts, or varied spacing for consistency.
- Design your slide to make it easy for the audience to grasp your topic and purpose.
- Use variety in the layout of your slides as too much symmetry can be boring and stymie readability. For example, an occasional 'two content' slide or a 'content with picture' slide among the standard layout helps to maintain audience interest, encouraging the audience to stay focused on the content.

**TIP: All design elements and wording as well as the slides themselves are a supplement to, not a substitute for, the presentation OR the speaker!**

### Include a Visual Theme but Avoid Templates

- **Be consistent:** Develop a consistent visual theme throughout your presentation for a professional look.
- **Be original:** Since your audience expects a presentation tailored to them, generate excitement about your topic and content by making your presentation distinctive and relevant to your audience rather than using a PowerPoint template that has been used and seen by audiences countless times.
- **Be unique:** Many templates are not that great so brand yourself as a professional by creating your own template to ensure that your PowerPoint is not considered just another cookie-cutter or prepackaged presentation.

**TIP: If you develop your own background template and save this PowerPoint file as a Design Template (.pot), you will have it among your MS templates for future use!**

### Write for Greater Visibility to the Audience

- Some general rules of thumb for writing and font sizes:

<b>Charts:</b>	Titles: 3"
	Subtitles: 2"
	Other Text: 1.5 pt
<b>Slides:</b>	Titles: 24-40 pt
	Subtitles: 18-24 pt
	Other Text: 14 - 18 pt
<b>Handouts:</b>	Titles: 16-18 pt
	Subtitles: 14 pt
	Other Text: 11-12 pt

- Make the wording easy to read by avoiding sentences or lines that are too long and wording that is written in too small font size. The more words you use, the smaller the words are and the harder they are to see.
- Use good spacing to draw attention to the points by adding spacing before and after sections, paragraphs, key content areas, etc...
- Use professional word choices and language to enhance your credibility and demonstrate your knowledge of the subject matter.
- Write clearly, concisely, and succinctly to convey your message effectively.
- Choose headlines that are connected to the content below it.
- Use a company logo, either yours or your customers - as an effective design element on slides.
- Complement the text with photos from an organization's website when designing slides about that organization.

**TIP: As you develop your slides, be selective as you don't need to include everything on your visuals. Too much detail on slides or too busy slides make them hard to read. Include just the essentials or key points, as this keeps the audience attentive and engaged, wanting to know or learn more from you, the speaker!**

## Use High Quality Graphics and Design Elements

### CLIP ART

- Avoid the use of PowerPoint clip art or other cartoonish art as it undermines the professionalism of the presentation. Not all PowerPoint art is cartoonish, but use carefully and judiciously.

### SPACING

- Use spacing before and after headlines, sections, and key content areas to emphasize the information.

### BULLETS

- List information with bullets rather than numbers; limit the use of numbers to the order of elements or step-by-step instructions.

### HIGHLIGHTING

- Use highlighting effects - bold, italics, etc..., with consistency and restraint.
- Avoid underlining more than a few words, especially when letters drop below the line; the descenders such as p, q, g, and y easily blur the text when underlined.
- Avoid too many bordered elements as they cause clutter and detract from the message.
- Avoid the use of too many typefaces or too much variety in fonts, colors, style, spacing, or highlighting that clutter the slides and make them look amateurish.

### FONTS

- Use serif, sans serif, but not decorative script for most of your presentation text.
- Avoid typefaces that are too close together or too small that cannot be read in the back of the room.

### TRANSITIONS AND ANIMATION

- Restrict the use of transitions and animations as not to overwhelm the slides with the dazzle of technology that can take away from your message.

### COLOR

- Experiment with color as it adds to the design elements, but avoid red-green combinations because they are hard to see.
- Choose darker backgrounds on slides because they project better and are easier on the eyes, with blue backgrounds being the best.

**TIP: When developing your slides, use restraint and be consistent in applying design elements to create a competent and professional image of you as a public speaker!**