

EFFECTIVE PRESENTATION DECK DESIGN

PowerPoint, Prezi, and other presentation applications are a professional way to enhance your speech, if done right! The following guidelines will assist you in creating a dynamic, visually appealing presentation deck for your audience.

INCORPORATING GRAPHICS INTO A PRESENTATION

Use the appropriate graphic for your slides. Click [here](#) for the Center for Business and Professional Communication's Resources webpage for more information on the types and uses of graphics.

Be sure to interpret the slides for the audience rather than assuming the audience will understand your message or your content.

When speaking, introduce the slide as close as possible to the time when you will refer to it to prevent the speech from coming across as uncoordinated or badly timed with the slides.

Use charts sparingly and do not make them overly detailed as too much detail makes them hard to read.

Include a legend but make it easy for the audience to understand the information at a glance.

USE HIGH QUALITY GRAPHICS AND DESIGN ELEMENTS

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

Spacing: Use spacing before and after headlines, sections, 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.

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.

Fonts: 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. Use serif, sans serif, but not decorative script, for most of your presentation text.

Underlining: Avoid underlining more than a few words, especially when letters drop below the line; descenders, such as p, q, g, and y, easily blur text when underlined.

Borders: Avoid too many bordered elements as they cause clutter and detract from the message.

Color: Experiment with color as it adds to the design elements, but avoid color combinations that are hard to see.

Backgrounds: Choose backgrounds on slides that project better and are easier on the eyes, with blue backgrounds the best.



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DECK DESIGN GUIDELINES

GUIDELINE	HOW IT ENHANCES READABILITY
Limit information	Limit the amount of information on each slide, breaking down complex content into simpler, easier-to-read slides.
Be clear and concise	Use clear and concise wording such as phrases and key words to convey content better than complex or lengthy sentences.
Maintain parallelism for grammatical correctness	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.
Be consistent in fonts, colors, and design of visual elements	Avoid the use of too many different fonts, colors, charts, or varied spacing for consistency.
Design your deck for your audience and purpose	Design your slide to make it easy for the audience to grasp your topic and purpose.
Use variety in your layout to maintain interest and enhance readability	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.

TIPS FOR DECK DESIGN:

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!

When designing graphics, put the legend information on bars or slices to make the graphics and slide easier to read. This way, the audience does not have to guess about what the data mean!

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

ABOUT THE BUSINESS COMMUNICATION CENTER:

The BCC provides one-on-one and small group coaching to undergraduate and graduate students, supports the instruction of communication content in other courses, and offers Isenberg faculty and staff expert communications-related resources and assistance. The BCC works with other Isenberg faculty, the Chase Career Center, and student groups to customize our services and meet the needs of the Isenberg community.