Guidelines for Developing Effective Slide Presentations

Most presentations consist of three main components:

- Content
- Visuals
- Delivery

Content

Know your material. No matter how great your presentation looks, nothing can make up for poor content. The best way to write good content is to know what you are writing about. What is your message? What key information do you want your audience to remember at the end of the presentation? How do you want your audience to feel during the presentation? Answers to these questions should drive your content and how you present the material. Presentations should include visual aids that help get your message across to an audience. Visual aids should not be the message. The presentation should focus on key points to emphasize your message and to remind the audience of those key points.

Visuals

Visuals consist of how the presentation looks and feels. This includes fonts, background, slide layout, slide transitions, animation, photos, graphics, sounds, and many other visual aspects of the presentation.

Fonts

- Avoid fancy fonts.
- Choose simple fonts that are easy to read.
- Avoid script fonts.

Guidelines for Developing Effective Slide Presentations, *cont.*

- Sans serif fonts are clearer.
- Serif fonts are busier and more difficult to read on screen.
- Italics fonts are difficult to read on screen.
- Bold or normal fonts are clearer to read on screen.
- Font size should be readable from anywhere in the room.
- Do not use fonts smaller than 28 point size.
- Font sizes usually range from 28 to 48 points.

Guidelines for Developing Effective Slide Presentations, *cont.*

Text

- Do not use multiple fonts and styles—limit to two.
- Try to keep text to no more than six lines per slide.
- Spell-check and proofread.
- Use text to convey only key points.
- Avoid capitalization of ALL letters.
- Use high contrast color for font compared to background.
- Avoid long sentences.
- Avoid abbreviations and acronyms.
- Use color instead of underlining to emphasize words or key phrases.

Pictures and Graphics

- Graphics should enhance content.
- Limit to two graphics per slide; do not clutter the slide.
- Maintain balance to the slide.
- Make sure images are in focus.
- Refrain from using too much stock generic clipart.
- Choose appropriate graphs and diagrams.

Colors

- Use contrasting colors.
- Use complementary colors.
- Use light on dark more than dark on light.
- Keep the color scheme consistent throughout the presentation.

Sound

- Sound effects may be distracting.
- Only use sounds when necessary.

Guidelines for Developing Effective Slide Presentations, continued.

Numbers

- Use numbers for lists with sequence.
- Use bullets to show a list without:
    - Priority
    - Hierarchy
    - Sequence

Be Consistent

- Differences may imply importance.
- Use surprises to attract not distract.
- Differences draw attention.

Transition

- "Appear" and "Disappear" are better.
- "Fancy" transitions can be distracting.
- Use other transitions only to emphasize certain slides.

Tables

- Keep it simple.
- Use clear headings and labels.
- Keep layout consistent.

Guidelines for Developing Effective Slide Presentations, *cont.*

Delivery

Think about the message and prepare for the presentation. Remember these tips for giving an effective presentation:

- Visualize yourself giving the presentation.
- Practice your presentation in front of peers and ask for feedback.
- Engage your audience.
- Use key points throughout your presentation.
- Time your presentation.
- Speak clearly and comfortably.
- Never memorize your presentation.
- Make sure your presentation will run on any computer.

Guidelines for Developing Effective Slide Presentations, *cont.*

References

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