10 Points about PowerPoint

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Here are ten suggestions that will help you to improve your PowerPoint presentations.

1. **PowerPoint should organize and enhance your talk, not BE your talk**.Its function is only to summarize your talk or to show images, diagrams, or charts.Period.

2. **Less is more**.Use key words and simple diagrams.Your audience has about three minutes per slide to understand both your slide and your talks, so keep it simple with 3 to 5 bulleted key words under a heading.Complex diagrams and charts will take longer, so don't expose your audience to more than about 15 slides an hour.Edit your final slide presentation mercilessly.

3. **Assume your audience is literate**.You don't need to read your slides out loud, but keep the font size at 16 point, or bigger, with sans serif font like Arial, so everyone can see the text easily from anywhere in the room.Do not put tables or exhibits with a lot of numbers in small font that is hard to read.

4. **Special relationships are crucial**.Center the most important points at the top of your slide with sub-points indented beneath them in a smaller font.Balance all elements on the page with equal amounts of empty space surrounding them for easy reading.

5. **Color fonts**.All color has mood and style, so consider its effect on your theme.Color can highlight an important point or completely obscure text.Dark text on a light background is the easiest to read.

6. **Graphs summarize**.Bar graphs provide easy-to-grasp visual data.Think twice before you use doughnut (circle) or radar charts in a PowerPoint presentation.

7. **A little animation goes a long way**.Flying phrases spiraling in from the left side of your PowerPoint slide seems like a lot of fun the first time, but the fact is that they distract viewers and slow things down.Keep your animation simple and use it to focus audience attention to your point and not to distract them.

8. **Clip art is cute but often vacuous**.Instead find a photo that adds useful information to your topic.Digital photos may be scanned or easily acquired from the Internet by right-clicking any Web image and choosing *Save Image As*.

9. **Trial runs save you embarrassment**.Be prepared to make sure all the hardware connections are working before your talk.Check your font size and color from the back of the room and turn off your computer's Sleep or Save Energy mode so the screen doesn't suddenly go black during the talk.

10. **<u>Give the audience a copy.</u>** PowerPoint handouts with space provided for note-taking allow your audience to engage in thinking about what you are saying instead of frantically trying to copy the text from the PowerPoint screen. Give PowerPoint handouts to everyone in the audience at the beginning of your talk. Also, it is a good idea to handout any tables and charts that are hard to read.