Presentation & PowerPoint Tips

Please know that these are suggestions that will help you look your best while presenting and will help the audience receive your message.

A PPT should be used as an aid to your presentation; you and your material are the center of the presentation. Remember that the audience came to learn something new from you. Use the PPT as a tool to outline your message for the audience.

A good outline for public speaking is:

1. Tell them what you're gonna tell them.
2. Tell them.
3. Tell them what you told them.

What does this look like in a presentation? Start your presentation with an overview statement such as, "Let's take a look at the objectives of this presentation." Then make sure that you present those objectives. Start your conclusion with a statement such as, "In closing, let's review the objectives that were covered and the take-away points of this presentation." You may think that this is too elementary for your audience, but don't be fooled. If the audience walks away with a clear understanding of your material, then you have been successful!

How to get started by Dale Carnegie Training®:

- Consider the amount of time available and prepare to organize your material.
- Narrow your topic.
- Divide your presentation into clear segments.
- Follow a logical progression.
- Maintain your focus throughout.
- Close the presentation with a summary, repetition of the key steps or a logical conclusion.
- Keep your audience in mind at all times. For example, be sure data is clear and information is relevant.
- Keep the level of detail and vocabulary appropriate for the audience.
- Use visuals to support key points or steps. Keep alert to the needs of your listeners and you will have a more receptive audience.

Here are some tips for the visual part or the PPT portion of your presentation.

1. **Let's start with FONTS.**
    a. For titles you can use serif fonts (i.e. Times New Roman, Georgia, Courier) 44 font size is recommended
    b. For text use sans serif fonts (Arial, Tahoma, Univers). 28 font size is recommended as a minimum; 32 works well for those in the back of the room.

2. **Now that we have fonts, let's talk about TEXT.**
    a. A good rule of thumb is to not put more than **SIX lines** on a slide and no more than **SIX words** per line. The audience reads the slide before you speak, don't distract them with a slide overflowing with text. Remember the saying, "Less is more."
    b. Phrases are effective, not sentences. If you use sentences on your slides, you have nothing to add and will not come across as an effective speaker. Use phrases as signals to remind you about the supplementary comments you will add.
    c. If you want to emphasize a main point, put it on the screen by itself and let people read it.

3. **Backgrounds and having fun with color.** Selecting a background and color scheme depends on several things such as the audience you are addressing, the lighting of the room, and the message you are trying to convey. Here are some general tips for you.

a. Use colors in moderation. Avoid yellow font.
b. Dark backgrounds with light text do not work well with dim lighting; this can make the audience sleepy.
c. When using lighter backgrounds arrange heavier colors, such as blues and greens, at the bottom graduating upward to lighter colors. Avoid plain white backgrounds.
d. Photos can make for entertaining backgrounds, but steer away from busy photos.

4. **Keep graphs and charts simple.** Avoid too many colors, words, clutter and too many bars.
   a. Use graphs to show trends.
   b. Use tables to show specificity.
   c. When data becomes complicated, consider a series of graphs or tables to depict the information. You may consider handouts.

5. **Graphics, pictures and video clips can add some life to your PPT.**
   a. Place graphics off to the side.
   b. Make sure that they are relevant.
   c. Use a variety.

6. **Sound effects do not sound so good.** Sounds are usually a distraction and are rarely seen as an effective aid to a presentation.

7. **Remember to review vocabulary of technical terms.** Your audience may be unfamiliar with the topic or vocabulary. Take the time to explain the terminology in your presentation.

8. **How many slides do I need anyway?**
   a. A good rule of thumb is to take the number of minutes you have to present and divide by two. A 30-minute presentation should have approximately 15 supporting slides. Think I'm crazy? Remember "Less is more" and your audience will thank you for it.
   b. Don't panic if you don't tell the audience everything in one shot. There is nothing wrong with leaving them wanting more. Challenge yourself to get rid of unnecessary information!

9. **Who are you looking at?** Relax and remember to speak to the audience, not to the PPT. If you give eye contact, you will reel them in.

10. **Want more? Here are some resources for you:**

- http://www.toastmasters.org/
- http://www.west.asu.edu/achristie/powerpoint/howto/
- Penrose, John M., Raspberry, Robert W., Myers, Robert J. (2004). *Business Communication for Managers: An Advanced Approach (5th ed.). South-Western.*