



Additional Presentation Guidelines

The following guidelines are excerpted from “Presentation”, October 30, 2003, The Writing Center at Rensselaer Polytechnic Institute’s web site at www.rpi.edu/dept/llc/writecenter.

Frame Your PowerPoint

The Introduction Your introduction must draw the audience's attention, identify your topic, and create expectations in the audience that you will satisfy in the course of the presentation.

Capture the audience's attention by connecting their needs/values/knowledge to your topic. Consider the following lead-ins to your presentation:

- an interesting fact, statistic, anecdote, etc.;
- an appeal to a common ground of understanding or experience between audience and speaker
- a narrative or story to draw the audience into your domain;
- an overview of your speech to provide audience with a rational framework.

Create expectations in your audience that you will fulfill in the course of the presentation.

- create and repeat an organizational structure or pattern.
- acknowledge and then answer questions you know the audience will want to have answered.
- introduce and then reference key terms throughout the course of the presentation.
- offer periodic overviews and then periodic summaries of material

Your introduction will be half of the framing devices needed; the other half is the conclusion.

The Conclusion An effective conclusion will develop naturally from the structure and content of the preceding material. A conclusion isn't simply a rewording of the introduction; the conclusion is a separate and

distinct part of your presentation and as such presents particular challenges for you to meet. In it, you need to:

- identify for the audience the most important point of the presentation
- connect with the framing context that you introduced in the beginning
- reaffirm the connection between the audience and the material presented

Match the tone of the final remarks to what you perceive is the audience's primary need. You might offer

- a summary of key points and/or sections of the presentation
- a personal anecdote
- a restatement of the problem and a brief summary of the solution
- a resolution of the shocking statistic
- an answer to a significant question

Select Visuals

Since most people rely heavily upon visual information cues, you can assist your audience by incorporating visual aids into your Power Point presentation. These help you to emphasize key points your audience will understand and remember. Choose these sparingly, otherwise they could become distracting.

Identify the purpose of your visual aid

- to clarify a key point
- to provide an illustrative example
- to model
- to summarize
- to entertain while informing

Select types of visual aids well matched to the needs of your audience with respect to specific portions of your presentation.

- table - good for presenting groups of detailed facts
- bar graph - can represent numerical qualities
- line graph - shows how one quantify changes as a function of change in another quantity
- pie graph - effective for depicting the composition of a whole
- diagram - similar to a drawing but relies upon symbols
- flow chart - means of representing successions of events
- organizational chart - usually depicts hierarchical arrangement

Critique your visual aid from the perspective of the audience's needs.

- Is it large enough to be easily seen or is it too small and detailed?
- Is the contrast/color effective or distracting?
- Does it clarify a difficult concept or introduce confusion?
- Is the visual aid necessary or superfluous?

Timing Before submitting your presentation to the Certification Evaluation Team, time your PowerPoint presentation to assure that it represents a sixty-minute program.

Handout The first page of handout you develop to accompany your PowerPoint Presentation should be a title page and the last page should list your Works-Cited.

A useful handout will state your thesis, include your key supporting points and your summary points.

Each page of the handout should be numbered and should reference the title of your presentation.

Speaker's Notes Include speaker's notes in the form of a script in your PowerPoint presentation. This script should be detailed enough to allow a fellow colleague to effectively present your material.

USING POWER POINT SLIDES

The entire concept of a successful PowerPoint

is based on using the visual medium to reinforce, underscore and support your presentation. It is this proven combination of factors that account for the widespread acceptance of slides as a learning tool.

- **Establish a prime objective.** You are giving your presentation for a reason. If you cannot define that reason in one sentence, your audience may not understand your presentation. Complete the sentence. "After my presentation, I want the audience to ..."
- **Knowing what to say is not the same as saying it effectively.** Particular attention must be paid to content of your slides. Picking chunks of copy out of your script or outline for slide copy is easy. But unless you edit this copy into meaningful, telegraphic slides that support your statements rather than repeat them, you're headed for an ineffective slide presentation.
- **Adding Slides.**
 - Reinforce every major point in your presentation with a title or graphic slide.
 - Paraphrase the copy but be sure to stay with the same general terminology.
 - Dramatize the most important major conclusions in your presentation with a title or special effects slide.

- Underscore all support, proof or demonstration points in your presentation with copy, photographs or charts.

■ **Consistency is important.**

- Consistency of color combination, graphic technique and writing style will allow your slides to continually build one on the other along with your speech. The audience will respond better and you will look more professional.
- Using a wide variety of color combinations and graphic styles will confuse the audience rather than keep them alert.
- Change colors or combinations only with a purpose... to differentiate sections within your presentation, of difference subjects within a longer, or multi-speaker presentation.

■ **Effective use of charts and graphs.**

- Use the correct type of chart for what you are trying to show.
- Be absolutely sure that the trend or relationship you are trying to show will be very obvious on the finished chart slide.
- Chart slides are really pictures. Graphic illustrations of the proof or point that you want your audience to accept. Keep your charts simple and they will do the job.
- Do not make the type size too small to be read from the back of the room.

■ **How many slides are in a good slide presentation?**

- A well-paced slide presentation should have a slide change every 20 seconds.
- Longer intervals between slides will slowly but surely bore and disinterest your audience.
- Read through your script or outline and determine the interval between slide changes.
- Add or subtract the proposed slides until the timing is right.

■ **Successful copy slides**

- Edit copy to a minimum.
- Don't tip your hand to reveal more information than needed. The audience will read ahead and not listen to what you are saying. (They can't help themselves.)
- If you must make several points in a slide, consider using a build-up.
- If you stick with the amount of copy that will fit on any of the forms, you will always be assured of great looking slides, with a balanced appearance and the highest level of readability.

■ **Dos and Don'ts for a successful presentation.**

- Memorize your speech, don't read it.
- Don't read slide content, as it is usually perceived as an insult to the attendees. Visuals should supplement or clarify what you are saying.
- Don't speak to the screen. If you want to draw the audience's attention to something, stop speaking, point to the item, then return your eyes to the audience and resume.
- Know the order of your slides and which one will come up next...you shouldn't have to look at the screen to find out.
- If you need to refer to a previous slide in your presentation, have an extra copy made and positioned where needed. Never try to reverse the projector.
- Be sure everyone in the audience can see.