

Don't forget the Point!

Effective Presentations with (and without) PowerPoint

With the advent of electronic presentation software, lecturers have many more tools at their disposal than ever before. By using these tools in conjunction with the traditional guidelines of public speaking, lecturers can optimize efficiency in delivering their message to any sized audience.

WHAT MAKES AN EFFECTIVE PRESENTATION?

Think back to a time when you attended a lecture or presentation that really impressed you. What were the key factors in making it successful? Was the speaker engaging? Did he maintain eye contact? Did he have a sense of humor?

Now think back to a time when you attended a lecture that seemed an utter failure. Was the speaker cold or boring? Did he use overly technical jargon? Did he seem uncomfortable with the material? Factor the answers to these questions into the preparation process for your own lecture.

PREPARING FOR YOUR PRESENTATION

- **Know your audience.**
 - How big is the group?
 - Why are they there?
 - What do they know?
 - What do they expect?
 - How might they react?
- **Know your key points.**
 - How will you organize your presentation? Will you use questions, stories, jokes, or something written on the board to get your audience involved?
 - Tell the audience what you are going to tell them.
 - Tell them.
 - Tell them what you told them.
- **Have your materials ready. These may include:**

• Flip Charts	• Photos
• Videos	• Slides
• Props	• Maps
• Transparencies	• Charts
• Models	• Graphs

- **Master your delivery.**
 - Build rapport. Find a common ground with the audience.
 - Use humor when appropriate.
 - Encourage audience participation.
 - Be confident. This comes from experience. Audiences can smell fear.
 - Vary your tone.
 - Enunciate.

BENEFITS OF PRESENTATION SOFTWARE

- **You can create:**
 - Transparencies (for venues that don't have digital technology).
 - Speaker notes.
 - Audience handouts.
 - Presentation notes.
- **Provides design templates.**
- **Allows multimedia integration.** Use with caution! Sometimes this doesn't work. Try it but have a backup plan or make sure to test it out beforehand.
- **Is adaptable to many situations and venues.**
- **Utilizes colors and fonts for interest.**

ELECTRONIC PRESENTATION COMPONENTS

- **The Message.** What are you trying to get across to your audience? This is the single most important component of your presentation.
- **The Design and Layout.**

CONTENT AND DESIGN GUIDELINES

- **Keep titles strong and clear.**
- **Limit titles to two to five words.**
- **Use only essential words or phrases in your slides.** Use more expansive language in the verbal presentation (stories, examples, etc.).
- **Use outline format whenever possible.**
- **Speak don't read.** Do not make audiences read a lengthy passage of text on screen.

- **One main idea on each slide.**
- **No more than six words per line.**
- **No more than six lines per slide.**
- **Bullet lists:** Use consistency (in voice and grammar), brevity, and clarity.
- **Use simple fonts.** Remember type is to be read, so don't draw attention to the font.
- **Punctuation:** use formatting instead of punctuation for emphasis.
 - Keep parentheses to a minimum.
 - Avoid quotation marks, use indentation, hyphen and a name instead.
 - Avoid underlining.
 - Avoid abbreviations and acronyms unless you are sure your audience will understand them.
 - Capitalization: use sparingly for emphasis, titling, etc.
- **Color.**
 - Use light type and graphics on dark background for projection.
 - Be sure contrast level is strong.
 - Check projected colors to see if they differ from monitor colors.
 - Do not use too many colors.
- **Balance.**
 - Titles can be left-aligned.
 - Bullet points are ALWAYS left-aligned.
 - Titles can be centered.
 - Bullet points are NEVER centered.

- **Transitions and animations.**

- Don't overdo it! This can be very distracting.
- Use fast transition speed.
- Use one effect repeatedly.
- Change effect only for new presentation segments.

DELIVERY TIPS

- Stand to one side of the screen. Make sure they are listening to you.
- Face your audience, not the screen (using notes or taking an occasional glance back is alright).
- Familiarize yourself with the software.

SUMMARY

- Make slides on topic, simple and bold.
- Don't make the audiences read.
- Keep points concise.
- Keep font sizes large (site specific).
- Use graphics and visual effects wisely.
- Preview slide show with projection.
- Ask yourself: what is the purpose for displaying this information?
- Save your presentation as a Powerpoint Show (file extension .pps) ■

Based on the Graduate School seminar "Don't Forget the Point! Effective Presentations with (and without) PowerPoint" by Sherry Clouser, Center for Teaching and Learning. To view this seminar in its entirety, visit <http://www.grad.uga.edu>.