

Creating the Perfect Presentation

Some very effective tips and ideas for Keynote & Powerpoint presentations.

"ON THE SCREEN"

Too many words

Your preso should only have the core of the message on the slide, so the audience gets the info from **you!**

6 X 6 Rule

A good rule of thumb: **MAXIMUM 6 lines (bullets) per page & 6 words per line.**

Timing

Regardless of how well you know your topic, you should always rehearse your timing so you don't have to rush through slides.

Bullet Entry

Bullets should come in one at a time, so the audience listens to the speaker instead of reading the screen and moving ahead.



Watch the crowd

Attention spans vary. Allow for a stretch or coffee break, or include an interactive activity.

Fonts

Use fonts that are at least 24 point in size. If you are unsure, stand about six feet from your monitor to see if it's viewable.

Color Scheme

In Keynote & PPT, most color schemes are predetermined, professionally coordinated colors, so try not mess around with them too much! Also, make sure that you're using contrasting fonts and backgrounds.



Images

Whether you are using a picture or clip-art, you should always make sure the image is **very** high quality and save a copy of the image in a file along with your preso. Very few clip-art images are high enough quality to make your show better, so use them sparsely (if at all)!

Handouts/Sharing

It's usually a good idea to have handouts for the audience (as long as you're not selling out stadiums!). Otherwise, you could at least post the preso to a website or a blog to share and get feedback from those interested.

Multimedia

A good, short Quicktime movie or video clip can make your preso much more interesting, but always make sure it will work if you change computers.

Transitions

Always add them in, but try to stick with only a few types of transitions, and make sure you consider your audience (Kindergarten vs. College)

Sound

A well-placed sound clip can enhance your preso, but stay away from repeating sounds (with bullets or transitions).



"YOUR COMMUNICATION SKILLS"

"Bueller, Bueller, Bueller..."

Your communication skills can make the difference between a great preso and a bomb:

Rehearsal time...

When you do practice out loud (and you should) just like you will be doing the real presentation, your confidence will increase and your poise will be much better.

Physical movements...

Take two or three steps at the same time; do not take one step at a time. Why? You look like you are doing the shuffle as you step back and forward in one place (or nervously pacing). When you take several steps from point A to point B, you look confident.

Pause to emphasize points...

You should always pause between your sentences. You want your audience to take in what you've said. When you are discussing a key point in your talk, say it slower, look at people and pause at the end of the point.

**Did you know...
A blue whale's tongue weighs more than an elephant?**

Try starting your preso with an unusual fact or statistic.

A good place to start:

<http://www.greatfacts.com/>

Knock Knock...

Add humor (if you can). Some situations will not allow for it due to the audience or topic. However, most presos would be much less painful if a good, topic-appropriate joke is added in. Also keep in mind that not all of us are as funny as we'd like to be. Test your material on a friend or coworker to check for duds.

Always make eye contact...

Try not to scan the audience, but move your eyes smoothly and steadily around the room, looking at each person in the audience for 3-5 seconds at a time. Guard against: darting eyes, and looking at just one or two people

Memorize...

The last thing you want to do is stumble through your preso. Take some time to commit to memory the majority, if not all, of your info. You don't want to stop and read from your notes, it makes for a choppy talk, and you look unprepared!

Involve your audience...

Numerous brain research studies have shown that learning best takes place if the learner is involved in the process through something interactive.

Do a room check early...

Run through the equipment in your room and make sure things are working properly at that moment (see have a back-up plan).

Have a back-up plan...

When (not if) something goes wrong, make sure you've got a "Plan B". If the power doesn't go out, the projector or computer will freeze, batteries will run down, sound won't work.

Did you know Abraham Lincoln used Powerpoint? Check this out:

www.norvig.com/Gettysburg/index.htm

Know the "B" key...

By pressing the "B" key on the keyboard during your preso, you can make the screen go blank. This is helpful if you need to move away from the topic on the slide or if you need a moment of undivided attention.

Keep it short...

Minds wander and attention spans vary, so if you have 30 minutes, plan to finish in 25 minutes. By doing so, you can leave room for questions at the end and make sure the audience doesn't have more of you than they want (no one likes being held over late, it messes with schedules!).

A wireless clicker can free you from the chains of the laptop, so make sure that you've got access to one!

