Tips for Creating an Effective Presentation

PowerPoint presentations can move any lecture from "ok" to "exciting". Pictures, text, and sound can help the audience to remember the material better than when text is used alone. When a page of PowerPoint is filled with text, drawings, pictures, multimedia, sound bites, and more, the purpose of the slide is often lost to the audience. Remember the expression **KISS**: ***"Keep It Simple Silly!"*** Simplicity leads to great things, and this principle is directly applicable to the creation of PowerPoint slides.

Quantity of text per slide:

- Try to use the 7 x 7 Rule: Minimum of 7 lines with 7 maximum words per line
    - Quantity of words per slide may vary with the font, the font size, the material being covered, the types of transitions, and other factors
- Fewer words per slide = easier comprehension of the material by your audience
- Don't use full sentences – the audience will read the slide versus listen
- Bullets are intended as the presenter's notes as a reminder of what to discuss
- Short sentence fragments are acceptable
- **If using a dark background, use white font so audience can see and read the text from a distance**
- If using a light colored background (or white), use dark text

Using Backgrounds in a Presentation:

- Use simple backgrounds: solid colors, or perhaps a blend of two colors
- Still images can be inserted into the background for use in PowerPoint slides, but this practice should be used sparingly
- A large, dark picture in the background of the screen will steal the attention of the audience from the content provided in the foreground
- Ideally the background color should be lighter while the text should be darker

Tips for Using Text in a Presentation:

- Correct spelling and grammar are a <u>must</u> and AVOID CAPITAL LETTERS
- It is important to use a similar font type and size throughout the entire presentation
    - Changing fonts in each slide of a presentation is incredibly distracting
    - Use a standard font consistently throughout the presentation
        - Times New Roman, Arial, Currier New, Geneva, Helvetica, Verdana, etc.
        - These fonts display on the web more effectively
- Use font sizes of 28 point or larger with the "standard" font types listed above
    - You can use smaller font sizes if necessary, but do not decrease below 20 as the audience can't read it

- Titles on each slide can be a larger size than the body but consistent on every slide
  - Title font size = 32 and the body font size = 28 on each slide
- When a topic is complicated and material runs for many slides, it might be tempting to use expressions like "see previous slide" for a critical piece of information. This is highly discouraged as the reader doesn't always remember.
- Slang words should be treated carefully and not used unless absolutely necessary
- WordArt - not recommended as it distracts the audience from the main topic
  - Focus becomes on the "fun" graphic representation of the word or phrase
  - Use WordArt sparingly to keep your audience's attention intact

Tips for using Multimedia:

- Transitions can be used to introduce text to the audience. Some of the transitions are fast and attention gathering. Use as follows:
  - Transitions should be short, quick and consistent throughout a presentation
  - Transitions which vary from page to page (or the same page) can be distracting
  - Wild, circular transitions as well as transitions that "peek" before appearing (or disappearing altogether) should be avoided
- Movie Files:
  - Limit each PowerPoint page to one multimedia **movie** file per slide
    - Too much can distract the audience
- Music tracks (whole or partial)
  - Can occasionally be used to emphasize certain themes within the presentation
  - Use sparingly
- Multimedia Sound clips and sound bites:
  - Can be inserted at appropriate junctures
  - Sound bites should be used sparingly - an overabundance of sound bites can become tedious, somewhat predictable and often boring
  - To be avoided at all costs: any sound that plays at every transition of text
    - Hearing a drum roll, clapping, or some other sound continually sends the listener's attention into avoidance
- Pictures, clip art, and still images:
  - Can and should be displayed in PowerPoint including GIF, JPG, PNG, BMP, PCT, and others
  - Pictures should be kept to a minimum per page as too many pictures can result in a loss of the audience's attention