

# Effective Presentation

## TIPS TO ELEVATE THE EFFECTIVENESS OF YOUR POWERPOINT

PURPOSE. INTENT. AUDIENCE. CONNECTION. LOOK. FEEL. IMPACT.

Consider the following questions as you establish your purpose for giving a presentation:

1. Is it to inform or educate about a subject?
2. Do you want to persuade or convince the audience of something?
3. Are you trying to illustrate a new idea or present supporting data?

More than likely you are looking to accomplish at least one, if not all of these goals. The purpose of a presentation is *why* you are preparing it, the intent is *what* information you are trying to communicate to your audience. For example, you are tasked with making a presentation to a Board of Directors, they would like to know your marketing strategy for a particular health campaign. Your purpose for the presentation is to showcase your marketing strategy, however the presentation itself should communicate the look and feel of your marketing campaign in such a way that it connects your content to your audience.

## TIP #1: TELL A STORY

Stories are used to connect us as a society; they allow us a framework for establishing commonality and community. Stories inspire and captivate us in a unique way. As you develop your presentation, consider your audience. What could be done to build a rapport with them? What aspect of your presentation would ensure that your content impacts the audience on a personal level? How could your information or product impact their lives?

An excellent resource is the book *Resonance* by Nancy Duarte, one of the foremost presentation professionals in the United States. Check out her company's website, [www.duarte.com](http://www.duarte.com) (<http://www.duarte.com/work/>), to see examples of some of their award-winning presentations.

## TIP #2: LESS IS MORE

Take a minute and think about some of the most boring presentations that you have seen. What about each one was so difficult to endure? One of your top answers is probably that the presenter read all the text off of every slide. Other roadblocks might have been the color scheme, font size, text placement, or the lack of visuals.

Garr Reynolds, in his book *Presentation Zen Design* says, “The goal is to make visuals that support our message in a manner that is easiest for our audience to understand, revealing our message in the clearest way possible.” (p.27).

As you create your presentation, challenge yourself to simplify each slide. Consider which decisions would make the most impactful statement about what you are trying to convey. Realize that it is not necessary to include massive-amounts of text (especially word-for-word text of your talking-points) on each slide. Rather, the slide should be used to visually enhance the message you will be presenting.

Here are some basic guidelines:

1. Fonts should be simple and readable
2. Font size must be big enough for all in the room to see.  
(If you have to shrink the font-size significantly, there is probably too much text)
3. There should be a high contrast between the fonts and the background.  
(Either light text on a dark background or dark text on a light background)
4. Images should be simple and it should be clear what they relate to.  
(If you saw the image alone, would you be able to guess what was being discussed?)
5. Use a complementary color-scheme.  
(For assistance with color schemes, visit the [Kuler](#) website)
6. Limit the use of animations.
7. Only use a capital first-letter for words in a title.

## TIP #3: LET YOUR DATA SPEAK

The look and feel of your presentation dictates how well your audience will remember the information. If your slides are organized poorly or contain too many bullet points, it is difficult for the audience to pay attention. Your data (statistics, numbers, percentages, etc...) should be showcased in such a way that the audience will be able to take away the key points of your presentation. Thomas (2011) writes, "...the audience can ONLY read your bullet points or listen to you (as the presenter). They CAN NOT do both. The more text on the screen, the less your audience is listening to the information you are presenting."

If you are concerned with how to minimize the use of bullet points, lists, etc... and would like to find more creative ways of illustrating your data, check out Jon Thomas' blog, [If No Bullet Points in My PowerPoint, Then What?](#).

### ADDITIONAL RESOURCES :

Duarte, N. (2010). *Resonate: Present visual stories that transform audiences*. Hoboken, NJ: John Wiley & Sons, Inc.

Duarte, N. (2008). *slide:ology: The art and science of creating great presentations*. Sebastopol, CA: O'Reilly Media.

[Kuler](https://kuler.adobe.com). (2008). <https://kuler.adobe.com>

[Presentation Zen](http://www.presentationzen.com) [Blog]. (2011). <http://www.presentationzen.com>.

Raynolds, G. (2009). *Presentation zen design: Simple design principles and techniques to enhance your presentations*. Berkeley, CA: New Riders Press.

Reynolds, G. (2008). *Presentation zen: Simple ideas on presentation design and delivery*. Berkeley, CA: New Riders Press.

Thomas, J. (2012, January 01). [20 best PowerPoint presentation design posts for 2012](#) [blog post]. Retrieved from <http://www.presentationadvisors.com/best-powerpoint-presentation-posts>.

Thomas, J. (2011, October 19). [If no bullet points in my PowerPoint, then what?](#) [blog post]. Retrieved from <http://www.presentationadvisors.com/no-bullet-points-in-powerpoint>