

Design Tips

5 Design Principles to Optimize your PowerPoints Based on Brain Research

1. Use only one message per slide
2. Avoid showing sentences and talking at the same time – short bits of text and an image (use PPT for what it's supposed to be)
3. Size (what our brain focuses on: moving objects, signaling colors, contrast, big objects), the most important part of your ppt should be the biggest
4. Contrast: Use contrast to steer focus (dark background, your eyes relax; speaker is biggest object and most contrast rich. Why is that important? Speaker is the presentation.)
5. Objects:

Adapted from *Speechworks.net*

How to Avoid “Death By PowerPoint”

David JP Phillips, TEDx Stockholm Salon, <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=lwpi1Lm6dFo>

Here are a few tips to ensure that your PowerPoint doesn't detract from your presentation:

- **You** are the most important visual aid. Don't use slides that take too much attention away from you.
- **Pictures have impact.** The best slides show photographs that the audience can quickly grasp.
- **Keep bullets to a minimum.** Don't overwhelm your audience with bullets. If you're going to have text in your slides, then keep the bullets to a minimum.
- Use the speaker notes and provide any take-away information as **handouts**. Complex diagrams or charts are illegible. Usually, these slides are up and gone in seconds.

Real Leaders Don't Do PowerPoint

When you have to use PowerPoint, use it sparingly and to your advantage. Keep it in its place, so it doesn't upstage you.

Remember, when you're presenting information, **you** - your body, clothes, actions, gestures, facial expressions, and demeanor - **are the most important visual aid**. And you - not the slides - are the media and the message. Everything else is and should be secondary. - Adapted from *Real Leaders Don't Do PowerPoint, How to Sell Yourself and your Ideas*, by Christopher Witt.

3 Simple Guidelines for Animation

Adapted from *Presentation in Action: Animation*

We've all been in the audiences of far too many presentations that unleash all the bells and the whistles of Power Point animation with a frenetic, pyrotechnic display that challenges a Fourth of July celebration or a night at Disneyland.

That such excess happens is no surprise. The many options in the pull-down menus and ribbons of PowerPoint animation are as fascinating as are all the many joystick and button options on the keyboard or controller of a computer action game. Slide Transition alone has **58 effects grouped into 5 categories, with 3 speed options for each**. They cry out, "Try me!"

Uncontrolled, they can cause the **loss of the game** for the presentation.

Three simple, overarching guidelines will bring your presentation to life and, more important, bring clarity, if not tranquility, to your audiences.

1. Make the direction of your animation **left to right**. When your audience sees images move from left to right, it will feel natural and pleasing to their eyes-and make them more receptive to you and your message.
2. Use motion to express the action in your message. If you want to show rising revenues, have your animation move from the bottom up. If you want to send a negative message, reverse direction and move your images right to left.
3. Allow your audience to **absorb** your animation. The sensitive optic nerves in your audience's eyes cause them to react involuntarily to light and **motion**. The instant your animation starts, all their attention suddenly shifts to the screen and **away from you**. Because they are so focused on the animation, they **don't hear anything** you're saying, nor do they **see what you're doing**; Therefore, whenever you introduce animation, stop speaking, turn to the screen, and allow the animation to complete its full course of action.

References

Books

- *Teach Yourself Visually Office 2016*, by Marmel, Elaine J.
- *Clear and to the Point, 8 Psychological Principles for Compelling PowerPoint Presentations*, by Kosslyn, Stephen Michael
- *Microsoft Office 2019 Step by Step*, by Lambert, Joan
- *PowerPoint 2016 for Dummies*, by Lowe, Doug
- *Presentations in Action, 80 Memorable Presentation Lessons From the Masters*, by Weissman, Jerry
- *Real Leaders Don't Do PowerPoint, How to Sell Yourself and your Ideas*, by Witt, Christopher

Articles

- 5 science-backed ways to give better presentations (even if you hate public speaking)
<https://www.cnbc.com/2017/08/07/5-science-backed-ways-to-give-better-presentations-even-if-you-hate-public-speaking.html>
- Bright Carbon resource library: <https://www.brightcarbon.com/resources/>

Videos and Training

- PowerPoint for Windows training: <https://support.office.com/en-us/article/powerpoint-for-windows-training-40e8c930-cb0b-40d8-82c4-bd53d3398787>
- <https://support.office.com/office-training-center/PowerPoint-tips>
- <https://edu.gcfglobal.org/en/powerpoint2016/getting-started-with-powerpoint/1/>
- Visualization tips video: <https://www.brightcarbon.com/resources/visualisation-tips/>