

Top Eight Rules for Creating a PowerPoint Presentation

1. Remember that *you* are the presenter, not PowerPoint. Use your slides to emphasize a point, keep yourself on track, and illustrate a point with a graphic or photo. Don't read the slides.
2. Don't make your audience read the slides either. Keep text to a minimum (6-8 lines per slide, no more than 30 words per slide). The bullet points should be headlines, not news articles. Write in sentence fragments using key words, and keep your font size 24 or bigger.
3. Make sure your presentation is easy on the eyes. Stay away from weird colors and busy backgrounds. Use easy-to-read fonts such as Arial and Times New Roman for the bulk of your text, and, if you have to use a funky font, use it sparingly.
4. Never include anything that makes you announce, "I don't know if everyone can read this, but..." Make sure they can read it before you begin. Print out all your slides on standard paper, and drop them to the floor. The slides are probably readable if you can read them while you're standing.
5. Leave out the sound effects and background music, unless it's related to the content being presented. If you haven't made arrangements with the conference coordinator before your presentation, your audience members might not be able to hear your sound effects anyway. The same goes for animated graphics and imbedded movie files. Your sounds and animated graphics will not be functional on the synchronized version of your webcast.
6. Sure you *can* make the words boomerang onto the slide, but you don't have to. Stick with simple animations if you use them at all. Remember that some of your audience may have learning disabilities such as dyslexia, and swirling words can be a tough challenge. These animations will not be functional in the webcast version.
7. Proofread, proofread, proofread. You'd hate to discover that you misspelled your company's name during your presentation in front of 40 colleagues, with your boss in the front row.
8. Practice, practice, practice. The more times you go through the presentation, the less you'll have to rely on the slides for cues and the smoother your presentation will be. PowerPoint software allows you to make notes on each slide, and you can print out the notes versions if you need help with pronunciations or remembering what comes next.