

Presentation Suggestions

Space

Use the venue to create an atmosphere that supports the presentation. Consider where you position yourself and how you will relate to the audience. Arrive early to adjust the space to meet your needs.

Focus

Fully commit to the task and believe (or appear to believe) what you are saying. If you lose interest so will the audience. Never apologize (“I should have...” “I forgot to...” “Sorry this isn’t funnier.”).

Pace

Vary the rhythm and timing of your movements and delivery.

Discovery

Build spontaneity into your talk. If you are trying to figure it out, then so will the audience. Conversely, if you know all the answers in advance, the piece risks looking prepackaged.

Surprise

Just when the audience thinks it knows what's going on, the presentation takes a turn.

Mistakes

Things will go wrong. Don't panic or apologize. Incorporate the mistake into the work and move on.

Humor

A little humor goes a long way to humanizing both you and your subject.

Voice

Let who you are show through in the presentation.

Props

Help the audience see your ideas. Use images and objects in unusual ways.

Time

If you have 10 minutes, time yourself to make sure that you stick to the time limit.

Framing

Remember to have a clear beginning and ending.

Practice

Run through your presentation to smooth out the material. Practice in front of a friend.

Through line

What is it that you want to relate to the audience? Remain focused on the through line.

PowerPoint

Think of PowerPoint as a simple means for projecting images. Use these images to enrich, compliment and advance your topic. Use images to generate:

- Engaging visuals
- Creative metaphors
- Points of contrast (between images and your words / between images)
- Humor

Suggestions

Show the visuals and speak the words. Use imagery to keep the audience engaged and curious to know what you will show next.

Creative presentations invite us to participate in building the story—making connections between words and images, uncovering metaphors. Audience members enjoy using their imaginations and intellects in this process of discovery. As a result they actively engage in the presentation.

PowerPoint is not a teleprompter. Use index cards to outline your talk and remember what you are going to say. Note cards will help you to face your audience and maintain eye contact (instead of looking back at the screen).

Make sure that room is bright enough that the audience can see you (Godin*).

Avoid showing too many images in one slide. Also avoid garnishing slides with clip art.

If you must use words, use no more than six per slide (Godin). Make text easy to read (no smaller than 30 point Times) and use a dark background and light or white lettering.

Consider incorporating visual breaks into your talk where the screen goes black.

Create wordless sections of the presentation that use an image or sequence of images to tell the story.

Make sure to save your PowerPoint file in “Slide View” (and not slide sorter view or any other arrangement where viewer will see more than the first slide). You don’t want to give the whole presentation away in advance.

Don’t create presentations that try to double as written reports. Write a separate report or if you must include the text in the PowerPoint, write it out in the “Notes” window and hand out printouts of the slides and notes after the talk.

Distribute handouts to your audience after the talk. If you give them a handout at the beginning, they will read it and ignore you.

* “Really Bad PowerPoint (and how to avoid it).” Seth Godin. 2001
www.sethgodin.com/freeprize/reallybad-1.pdf