

Beyond Bullets: Engaging Audiences with PowerPoint

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We need to connect to our audiences. Reading bullet points to them is not connecting.

Audiences come to us because we have:

- Solutions to their problems
- New ideas
- Entertainment
- Watching our presentation from the point of view of the audience, a key indicator of relevance is to ask WIIFM (What's in it for me?).
- If that question cannot be answered convincingly, then the content is likely not needed.

To help our audience focus on our ideas, we need to eliminate clutter:

- No jargon, no buzzwords
- No bullets
- No transitions, no animations
- Tell stories

To build content, we need to begin by **not using PowerPoint:**

- Start with outline of thoughts
- Sticky notes, Crayons, Whiteboard, Index cards
- Prepare remarks, then prepare slides
- This allows us to focus on flow, message, or the big picture
- Then choose images that reinforce, illustrate, or convey the idea or concept from our outline

Structuring content

- Cut ruthlessly
- Create and define goal
- Connect imagery to audience
- Stories, personal experiences

Imagery and colors help the audience

- Contrast

- Big images, one per slide, and cover the entire slide
- No text visible to the audience
- Add text to the slide for you, then cover the text with the image.
- Print the outline for your use (find the drop-down menu in the lower left-hand corner of the Print dialog):
 - File>Print>Print What>Outline
- Use the outline as the basis for a handout

Rehearse

- Necessary, as not having bullet points on the screen requires well-structured notes
- Necessary to have smooth delivery

Tell the story

- Not a recitation of facts

Speaking

- is for the ear
- Present, Pause
- Use short phrases and images

Rehearsal is critical

- Rehearsing in front of a group or a video camera is invaluable
- Rehearsing out loud will help to find rough spots
- My rough guide for rehearsal time:
 - Length of presentation times five
 - Allows you to appear effortless
 - Allows you to be relaxed because the content

The test of a good presentation can be answered with a question:

- Can I make the presentation without PowerPoint?

Nine steps to building an engaging presentation:

1. Believe in self
2. Open with a question
3. And pause
4. And listen
5. State the goal
6. Explain the importance
7. Return to the audience's needs
8. Summarize

9. Ask for action

The PowerPoint file used in my presentation, along with these notes, is posted:

Employee Training site>Technology Brown Bag Handouts

<https://infoshare.jccc.edu/communities/emptrain/technology/Technology%20Brown%20Bag%20Handouts/Forms/AllItems.aspx>

Note that some of my notes are hidden behind the images on the slides. This allows me to print the outline for every slide, without showing the notes to the audience. You can check this by viewing slides 14 and 20, and moving the image away from the slide background.

PowerPoint shortcuts:

- Black slide or use a blank slide to focus audience on you while running the presentation: B key
- White slide: W key
- Printing the outline gives you slide numbers. When the presentation is running, type the number of the slide you wish to go to, then press Enter to move to that slide.
- Need to hide a slide so it doesn't appear in the presentation? In Slide Sorter view, right click the slide and choose Hide Slide.
- To build a button on a slide to a web site URL, I've recorded a 5 minute video of the steps, viewable at:
 - <http://screencast.com/t/bgJTGsAk>
 - Please note that bandwidth conservation efforts in effect on the campus network may cause the playback to be slow, jittery, or low quality.
- Or you can follow these steps in PowerPoint 2007 for Windows:
 1. Choose the Insert tab.
 2. Click the Shapes button.
 3. At the bottom of the Shapes menu, find Action Buttons.
 4. Click an appropriate shape for the action.
 5. The menu disappears, and the cursor changes to a crosshair.
 6. Drag to create a button.
 7. When the mouse button is released, PowerPoint reveals a dialog to set the action for the button.
 8. In the Hyperlink drop-down menu, choose URL.
 9. Type or paste the URL into the dialog box, then press Enter, then OK to complete the button action.
 10. Drag the button to the desired spot on the slide.
 11. If necessary, right-click the button and choose Format Shape to change the fill color and line color.

12. Test by running the show, and clicking the button. Faster response is possible by having the web browser open and minimized.

Further reading:

- Garr Reynolds, *Presentation Zen*
- Nancy Duarte, *slide:ology: The Art and Science of Creating Great Presentations*
- Cliff Atkinson, *Beyond Bullet Point*
 - These books may be browsed online through Safari Tech Books Online through the JCCC Library:
<http://proquest.safaribooksonline.com/search>
Executing a search on the term “presentations” will show these three books on the first page of search results.
 - Sample slides using these techniques may be found in the Design chapter of Garr Reynolds’ book:
 - Chapter 7, page 165,
<http://proquest.safaribooksonline.com/9780321550163/ch01lev1sec1#X2ludGVybmFsX1ByaW50RmlkZWxpdHk/eG1saWQ9OTc4MDMyMTU1MDE2My9jaDA3bGV2MXNlYzYmaW1hZ2VwYWdlPTE3NA>
or <http://tinyurl.com/dzstdf>
 - Staff and Organizational Development has ordered the books for the training library.
- Lots of bad PowerPoint at slideshare.net