

POWERFUL POWERPOINT POINTERS

Love it or hate it, there are many opinions about PowerPoint. But, it's not the tool: it's how it's been used and abused. PowerPoint is an easy way for you to add impact and persuasion to your presentation. It's also easy to become boring and put an audience asleep.

HOW TO MAKE POWERPOINT PERSUASIVE!

PowerPoint (or any other presentation software, be it from Lotus FreeLance, Corel Presentation, or Macromedia Flash) is designed to help you tell your story with visuals. If you just use PowerPoint as text-only speaker notes, or as away to hide in the dark during your presentation, you'll lose. If all you want is text, you're better off just having notes in front of you and having your audience see you and connect with you in full lighting.

If you're willing to put some thought and time into your presentation, you can use PowerPoint to make your audience say, "WOW!"

10 + 1 MORE WAYS TO ADD PERSUASION TO POWERPOINT

When building your presentation...

1. Use Transition Cues

You'll look polished and persuasive when you build cues into your presentation that let you know what's next.

Put a period at the end of the last point on the slide. That way you know when you're at the end of the slide and you'll never look unprepared.

When you have a slide with content that continues on the next slide, put a series of dots - called an ellipsis... - at the end of the title so that you know to continue with the next slide. Don't use an ellipsis on the last slide of the series, so you know to conclude that segment with a mini summary and check for questions.

Use slide transitions consistently. Use the same transition from slide to slide within a section, and use a more flamboyant transition between sections. This trains your audience to know where they are in the order of the presentation. For example: Use a simple "wipe right" within a section, and an "uncover up" to introduce a new section. When you reduce audience confusion, you're more persuasive.

2. Grab logos and photos from their web

You already know how to do this, but probably don't do it regularly. Go to your prospect's website and swipe photos and logos to include in your presentation. You'll be more persuasive because your audience knows that you did some research and are including them in the picture.

When setting up your presentation...

3. Position the Projection Screen for Your Advantage

Most people put the screen in the middle of the presentation area. When this happens, the screen is the center of attention. Yet your audience isn't buying the screen, they're buying you. You gain the advantage and will be more persuasive when you put the screen off center to your right and then you can take center stage.

4. Fill the Screen

Adjust the projection screen and the projector to fill the screen. People are used to seeing a big-screen TV, and when the screen isn't filled, there's the psychological impact of "it's just not right." It's a small, but powerful way **for you to be more persuasive.**

5. Hide the Technology

I've learned a powerful lesson from Walt Disney: hide the technology so they can't see how you make the magic. Applying this concept to your presentation: set up the projector and computer before the audience arrives, hide the cords, and put the boxes away way.

When you have to jump out of the presentation to make some adjustment to your computer, cover the beam of the projector with the lens cap or a piece of paper or card. Do these things and you'll be more persuasive because your audience is never distracted by the technology?

6. Entertain Them With a Pre-show Program

You can entertain, inform, and persuade your audience with a repeating presentation before the program begins. Think back to the last movie you saw. You sat down with your popcorn before the movie started and watched a slide show that was advertising, trivia, and messages from the management. You can do the same thing with company trivia, communicate important messages, have a bio about you, preview the show, and persuade your audience before you even start your formal presentation.

7. Use Music

Music adds entertainment and sparkle to your presentation. It also gives you audience control. Play music as your audience walks in the room and when the music fades down, it's time for the program to begin. Play music during breaks and when the music fades

down, it's time for the audience to go back to their seat. Play upbeat music at the end of your program and your audience leaves the presentation delighted.

You can help set your audience's attitude with music. If you want them to be relaxed, play soft jazz, such as The Ripping tons. If you want them to be pumped up, play some swing (Squirrel Nut Zippers) or oldies rock. If you want them to be contemplative, play classical music, such as Invalid's Four Seasons.

You can play a CD through your computer. You can even create a play list using the built-in media player so that the music starts off easy and builds in excitement as you approach show time. A great alternative is to play mp3 files loaded on your hard disk. These files are much smaller than CD wave files, so they are a great way of assembling a list of music from various sources without having to carry around a bunch of CDs. Get details and free software from www.mp3.com. Or if you want to try the hippest way to get music, check out www.napster.com.

A note: most music is copyrighted and requires a license to play at a public performance for profit. As long as you're doing a private program, you should have no problems. To learn more about licensing, check out www.bmi.com, www.ascap.com, or www.sesac.com.

8. Take The Cue From Power Point

You can also use PowerPoint to cue your music, either from disk or CD. Just make logo slides with music cued to with the slide transition. (From the slide sorter view, right click on the desired slide, select transition, and then choose the music you want played in the sound panel.)

You can also use sound effects to reinforce your point and add WOW to your show. For example, if you want to emphasize a problem, play "oh no!" If you want to emphasize your service, play "I'm ready to serve you, human." A well-selected sound effect grabs your audience's attention, makes them laugh, and delights them.

In PowerPoint, you can insert a sound effect by right clicking on an element on your slide. Select custom animation. Select the effects tab and select your entry animation and sound.

Here are some great sources of sound effects: Check out www.wavcentral.com and www.wavplace.com for movie and TV clips. Look at www.thewavplace.com for sound effects conveniently listed in categories.

9. Fade To Logo

When you're not using the presentation, project your logo on the screen. It's a great way to strike up the brand. If you want to take a break, insert your logo in the presentation, and leave it up during the break. There's another way for you to pop up your logo, and I'll tell you about that in a moment.

10. Blackout During Interruptions

If you're interrupted, or need to take a question from the audience, go to a black screen. On PowerPoint, touch the "b" key to toggle between a black screen and your Presentation. You redirect the audience's attention to the program in a dramatic way when you come out of black back to the show.

11. Use A Wireless Mouse

A wireless mouse lets you escape from behind your computer and puts you center stage; right where you should be! There are two types of wireless mice: IR (infrared, like your TV remote) and RF (radio frequency, like your garage door opener). The IR version has to be pointed at the receiver connected to your computer while the RF version doesn't. I prefer the RF mouse because I don't can hide it and so the presentation becomes more magical.

There are several vendors of wireless mice. I recommend you check out Logitech's trackMan(r)Live! (Download the brochure at www.logitech.com/lang/eng/products/pdfs/TM_Live.pdf). This mouse looks like A remote control with a trackball and three buttons. It features a range of 30 feet, although I've used it at 80 feet with fresh batteries.

Also check out www.mindpath.com. This vendor features a RF mouse and a number of cool IR mice with buttons that you can use to trigger events or other programs.

BONUS: COOL SOFTWARE

Mindpath has a cool program that you can load on your PC that lets you do lots of WOW stuff in your program. You can get it free from www.mindpath.com/Fxdownloads/downloads.cfm. (When it asks what products you'll be using, select any of them, and proceed.)

You can assign keyboard keys to trigger events, such as wave files, or pop up your logo, or start another program for a slick demonstration, or put up a count-down timer to let people know when it's show time. There's lot's of great stuff that you can use, play around with it and have a good time!

YOUR MISSION SHOULD YOU CHOOSE TO ACCEPT . . .

Try three of these techniques in your next presentation. Watch how your show moves to a new level of impact on your audience.

Gio says, "Music and effects are the difference between a lecture and a show! And when was that last time you looked forward to a lecture?"

Bonus: with the pre-show program, you'll know that your computer and projector are working, and there will be no surprise when you start the show. Just make sure that you cover the beam of the projector before switching to your formal presentation.

Use two of these ideas in your next PowerPoint presentation, and note the reaction of your audience.

Expect to hear: "Wow, that was a very professional presentation." So Giovanni says, "Persuade with PowerPoint and be positioned as professional!"