



DeYoung Consulting Services

Helping People Learn up to Their Potential

Remember the days of overhead projectors and transparencies?

PowerPoint software and new projection methods have done wonders for business presentations. But designing slides isn't necessarily simple. There are several decisions you need to make when creating a PowerPoint presentation: what size font to use; how many bullets on a slide; and, do you include graphics?

Here are a few things to keep in mind when creating your next PowerPoint presentation.

The purpose of the presentation—What are you presenting and why? This should set the tone for your presentation. There's no reason you can't infuse your talk with some humor, but think twice if you're presenting to a potential client.

The rule of six—The general rule is no more than six lines per slide and no more than six words per line. Of course there are exceptions to every rule, but be sure you don't overwhelm the slides with too many words.

Color combinations—Whatever colors you use, make sure they contrast, such as having light printing on a dark background or dark printing on a light background. For a different look, try black or green printing on yellow.

Font style—For PowerPoint presentations it's best to stick with sans serif fonts—those without a "tail." Try using Verdana, Trebuchet or Arial. If you want to use a second font for larger headings, then a serif font like Garamond or Times New Roman are good choices. Just make certain the two fonts look very different.

Font size—Font sizes should range from 24 to 45 point. If you'll be presenting in a big room, you'll want to use larger fonts (and put less information on your slides) than for a presentation in a smaller room.

Graphic elements—We've all seen slides filled with meaningless clip art. That doesn't mean you shouldn't use any graphics, though. Graphics should be used to complement the presentation. If you're presenting to a potential customer then a photo of your assembly line or a previous project might be appropriate. Charts and graphs can also give your audience an idea of a trend without using lots of statistics.

Unexpected issues—Don't be caught off-guard with technical issues. Bring a back-up of your presentation on a CD or jump drive. And, make sure you've practiced enough that you can present even without technical assistance.

If you need to update your PowerPoint training sessions, give me a call. I can review your content, jazz up your slides and improve the learning experience for both individuals and groups.

Karen DeYoung is principal of DeYoung Consulting Services, which provides quality learning experiences for individuals and groups. We develop training materials and activities that advance individual, team, and organizational learning. Our work is done with integrity, reliability, and accountability.

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