

General Design Tips for PowerPoint Presentations

Below are some general rules of thumb to help you make your PowerPoint presentations look more professional.

Audience and Message

- ❑ *Who* is my audience? *What* do I want to share? *How* will I share the message? PowerPoint? Web page?

PowerPoint Design Tips

GENERAL DESIGN

- ❑ Try to limit colors in the slide template to 3. Muted shades help color photos pop. Avoid gradients.

If more template colors are necessary for charts or graphs:

Use darker/lighter shades. Be aware of color combinations that are problems for people with color blindness, such as the red/green combination.

- ❑ Screen shots should fill the entire slide.
- ❑ Try to stay under 40 words a slide.

FONTS

- ❑ Use common pre-installed computer fonts to avoid surprises when displaying presentations.
- ❑ Limit fonts to 3 per slide and 5 total for the entire presentation.
- ❑ Make sure the size of the font is readable and there is good contrast between the font and the background.
- ❑ Minimize use of wide scripts and italics; they are hard to read.
- ❑ Avoid slide text in all capital letters.
- ❑ Never use a font smaller than 18 points for body text or 24 points for a header.
- ❑ A “safe” recommendation is Tahoma 40 point titles, 32 point subtitles and 28 points for text/bullets.

HEADINGS

- ❑ Limit headings to 3 or 4 words.
- ❑ Sans serif fonts (Verdana, Tahoma, and Arial) are easier to read from a distance.

For subheadings or other text:

Some designers prefer to include serif fonts (Times New Roman) to add difference between the text and the header. Remember to be consistent and don't add too many fonts.

BULLETED LISTS

- ❑ Don't use bullets past 3 levels.
- ❑ Keep the bullet font the same size at each level to look more professional.
- ❑ Use numbers when indicating a process with sequential steps.

GRAPHICS AND INTERACTIVITY

- ❑ Avoid free clipart. Go ahead and purchase graphics. It saves time and money and looks more professional.
- ❑ Use graphics to emotionally engage the audience and to organize data graphically—think infographics.
- ❑ Avoid slide transitions. This technique is dated and distracting.
- ❑ Minimize animations.
- ❑ If you link to videos, use one per slide.

Presenting PowerPoint

Don't read the slides. Have handouts if you want to share more information. Test the presentation to avoid surprises and practice, practice, practice.

General Design Tips for the Web

Web design is ever changing. With the need for displaying web pages across multiple devices, there is a trend in web design toward minimalism. Simply put, minimalism removes page clutter so your message is more clear. Below are some current thoughts on web trends to help you enhance your content.

Audience and Message

- Who is my audience? What do I want to share? How will I share the message? PowerPoint? Web page?

Web Design Trends

GENERAL DESIGN

- Embrace responsive design. Responsive design means that your web page will resize to the appropriate device. This is a more minimal design layout so content is key on mobile devices. WordPress and many design tools such as Captivate include responsive design templates.
- Use your “whitespace.” Whitespace doesn’t need to be white, it just needs to be an open area free of menu links, animations, and loads of graphics so the user can focus on the content.

FONTS

- The current trend is to use fonts much larger than before. Designers share that 18 point fonts should be the minimum size for the smallest text on a page and then you should size up from that for the headers. Be sure to choose a font that scales well so that it will resize nicely on small screens.
- Try scaling your chosen font to 11 points to see how it reads on a mobile device.
- While thinner or bolder more “modern” fonts with kerning (which allows adjustments to spacing between letters) are popular for titles, many designers still like Verdana or the Helvetica web font (from Adobe) for text.
- If you choose to use web fonts (those not installed on a viewer’s computer), try not to use more than 2 font families in order to minimizing download time.

CONTENT

- Use style guides to promote consistency.
- Use the bite, snack, meal approach to entice users to dig deeper into your content.
- Use headings to allow users to navigate through the content more easily. This is especially helpful as more designers are opting to remove sidebar menus and promote scrolling.

GRAPHICS AND INTERACTIVITY

- Hero images are oversized banners at the top of a web site and extend the width of the screen. The idea is to create an image on the Home page that quickly summarizes what your web site is about and engages the viewer on an emotional level.
- Images should be high quality but optimized to download quickly. While the hero image should be the exciting emotional entry to the web site, other graphics should be *meaningful* and support the needs of the content. Examples are infographics or charts and graphs.
- Minimize animations and avoid automatically starting sound when embedding video clips. This is distracting and is considered “clutter.” Stay tuned, however, as animations may make a comeback!
- Use color strategically. There is a psychology of color. Notice that nursing web sites often consist of soothing pastels instead of dramatic colors such as black and yellow.
- Don’t use Flash. More sites are using HTML5 for animations, and HTML5 doesn’t require a plug-in for playback.

Web Trends

Web trends change frequently. A great place to start on your research is:

<http://www.awwwards.com/>