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Tips for creating and delivering an effective presentation

Applies to: Microsoft Office PowerPoint 2007

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Tips for creating an effective presentation

TIP	DETAILS
Minimize the number of slides.	To maintain a clear message and to keep your audience attentive and interested, keep the number of slides in your presentation to a minimum.
Choose a font style that your audience can read from a distance.	<p>Choosing the right font style, such as Helvetica or Arial, helps to get your message across. Avoid narrow fonts, such as Arial Narrow, and avoid fonts that include fancy edges, such as Times.</p> <p>To learn more about how you can use pre-designed theme fonts in your presentation, see All about themes, Quick Styles, cell styles, and background styles.</p>
Choose a font size that your audience can read from a distance.	<p>Choosing the right font size helps to get your message across.</p> <p>NOTE The following measurements indicate the size of a font on your computer screen, not projected on a screen for your audience in full screen mode. To enable full screen mode, on the View tab, in the Presentation Views group, click Slide Show.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • A one-inch letter is readable from 10 feet. • A two-inch letter is readable from 20 feet. • A three-inch letter is readable from 30 feet. <p>To learn more about how you can use pre-designed theme fonts in your presentation, see All about themes, Quick Styles, cell styles, and background styles.</p>
Keep your text simple by using bullet points or short sentences.	<p>Use bullets or short sentences, and try to keep each to one line; that is, without text wrapping.</p> <p>You want your audience to listen to you present your information, rather than read the screen.</p> <p>Some projectors crop slides at the edges, so long sentences may be cropped.</p> <p>You can remove articles such as "a" and "the" to help reduce the word count on a line.</p>
Use art to help convey your message.	Use graphics to help tell your story. Don't overwhelm your audience by adding too many graphics to a slide, however.
Make labels for charts and graphs understandable.	Use only enough text to make label elements in a chart or graph comprehensible.
Make slide backgrounds subtle and keep them consistent.	<p>Choose an appealing, consistent template or theme that is not too eye-catching. You don't want the background or design to detract from your message.</p> <p>For more information about using themes, see Apply a theme to your presentation.</p>
Use high contrast between background color and text color.	<p>Themes automatically set the contrast between a light background with dark colored text or dark background with light colored text.</p> <p>To learn more about how you can use themes to automatically set a visually satisfying contrast level, see All about themes, Quick Styles, cell styles, and background styles.</p>
Check the spelling and grammar.	To earn and maintain the respect of your audience, always check the spelling and grammar in your presentation.

Tips for delivering an effective presentation

TIP	DETAILS
Show up early and verify that your equipment works properly.	Make sure that all equipment is connected and running.
Don't assume that your presentation will work fine on another computer.	Disk failures, software version mismatches, lack of disk space, low memory, and many other factors can ruin a presentation.

If the computer that you plan to give your presentation on does not belong to you, make sure that it has adequate disk space so that you don't have to present from a CD.

Turn off screen savers, and make sure that you have the appropriate files and versions of software that you need, including Microsoft Office PowerPoint.

To ensure all files are accounted for when you copy them to a CD or network drive and carry them to your presentation location, see [Copy a presentation to a CD, network, or local disk drive](#).

Verify that the projector's resolution is the same as the computer on which you created your presentation.	If the resolutions don't match, your slides may be cropped, or other display problems can occur.
Turn your screen saver off.	Keep your audience focused on the content of your presentation.
Check all colors on a projection screen before giving the actual presentation.	The colors may project differently than what appears on your monitor.
Ask your audience to hold questions until the end.	Questions are an excellent indicator that people are engaged by your subject matter and presentation skills. But if you save questions until the end of the presentation, you will get through your material uninterrupted. Also, early questions are often answered by ensuing slides and commentary.
Avoid moving the pointer unconsciously.	When you are not using the pointer, remove your hand from the mouse. This helps to stop you from moving the pointer unconsciously, which can be distracting.
Do not read the presentation.	Practice the presentation so that you can speak from bullet points. The text should be a cue for the presenter rather than the full message for the audience.
Stay on time.	If you plan a certain amount of time for your presentation, do not go over. If there is no time limit, take less time rather than more to ensure that people stay engaged.
Monitor your audience's behavior.	Each time that you deliver a presentation, monitor your audience's behavior. If you observe people focusing on your slides, the slides may contain too much data or be confusing or distracting in some other way. Use the information you learn each time to improve your future presentations.