

15 Powerpoint Tips

plan your workshop for one/two/more! Limit the amount of text you place on each slide amount bullet points the slides must compliment the learning/message, not be the message think like a designer do not use cartoonish clipart avoid overuse of powerpoint smartart graphics use simple themes vary the layout of your slides strictly limit the use of animated text use a remote use the 'B' key read books on the effective use of powerpoint/keynote be brave



Plan your workshop.

Ask yourself what is the best way to get the message/learning

across. If the answer is a slide then use one/two/more! If the answer is something else - activity, discussion, role play, brainstorm, group work then use this - **don't just use slides because you can!**

Story before slides. When building your slides, start by building your story. Do this away from the computer. I use either a whiteboard or large pieces of paper to map out the 'flow' of the session and how slides will fit in with this.

Strictly limit the amount of text you place on each slide (and make what you do use big enough to read). Some people think fewer slides is better but not if that means densely packed text that is too small to read. Each slide is free so why cram it full? How much text? Half a dozen words per slide would be about right - really! Provide a separate handout with the details.

Avoid bullet points. This is the same rule really as my last point! I just wanted to make sure I got the point across. NEVER, fall for the temptation when in a hurry of simply copying bulleted text from workbooks and pasting it into slides. It will be quick but it won't lead to an interactive and interesting workshop.

The slides must compliment the learning/message, not be the message. Learners cannot read and listen at the same time. Therefore reading your slides to learners will NOT assist learning! So my point here, DO NOT turn around and read your slides! Don't! Ever!



Think like a designer!

Consider the font type, colour and size. Is there consistency throughout the

slideshow? How are you laying out the slide? Is it visually appealing? Are the colours you're using easy to read? Is the text large enough to read? My suggestion is to look at TV ads! Look how they are laid out, their use of colours (and lack of bullet points).



Do not use cartoonish clipart, what does it add (distraction). If you need an image to support a

point, use real images, you can download many images from [Microsoft's](#) clipart page. Just make sure to only use 'photos'. These are free, the quality OK but for better images consider sites such as [iStockphoto](#), not free but well-priced and excellent quality. There are other good sources of images but check whether they allow you to copy them and/or pay royalties. But I don't mean to include photos just for decoration. They are there only to support your message, sometimes the slide should simply be a few words, nothing else!

Avoid overuse of Powerpoint SmartArt Graphics. Yes, they do make the job of creating diagrams and charts very simple BUT if your slide deck is full of these they quickly lose their impact.

Use simple themes. Powerpoint/Keynote provide a range of themes to choose from. My advice is always to use the simpler themes. Your aim is to communicate your message, not decorate slides with distracting backgrounds.

Vary the layout of your slides. Powerpoint and Keynote have a default layout. Heading at the top, text below. There is no reason to use this layout for all your slides, in fact you shouldn't! Lay your slides out the way you want, not how powerpoint tells you to!

Strictly limit the use of animated text. It doesn't help learning, it distracts from it. I remember once watching a presentation with text zooming onto the slide

accompanied by the sound of screeching brakes. Not good (unless it was used just once to a tyre fitting business or auto company, but just once!)

Use a remote. Don't be tied to your laptop. You should be able to move about during the workshop. If you don't use a remote you will feel tied to the laptop (or find yourself rushing back to change slides). I use a Kensington remote presenter. I like it because it's small, simple to use and only has the buttons you need.



Use the 'B' key! I know many people know that if they press the B key on the keyboard during a

Powerpoint or Keynote presentation the screen will go black - but I still find people who don't know this! It's important not to leave slides showing after you have used them. Don't just leave them up for no good reason, press the 'B' key (or the 'W' key if you'd rather the screen turn white!

Read books on the effective use of powerpoint/keynote such as the excellent [slide:ology](#) by Nancy Duarte or [PresentationZen](#) by Garr Reynolds. Both these books provide a great basis for effective powerpoint design (with a great emphasis on design)

Be brave enough to try new ideas, it's worth it!