Great PowerPoint Presentation Tips

When speaking at a conference or a seminar, it is important that your presentation convey professionalism. A PowerPoint presentation can be used to visually represent your material. The presentation should be polished and consistent throughout. The visual presentation should supplement your speech, not distract or detract from your oral presentation. Rarely should PowerPoint be used without an accompanying explanation of the slides.

Presentations are an integral and important part of any business. Whether designed for training purposes, introducing new products, or discussing corporate hierarchy, PowerPoint presentations serve a valuable purpose in both the business world and in the educational fields. In order to maximize a presentation's impact, it needs to be polished and well executed.

The following tips can help you in taking your PowerPoint presentation to the next level:

1. Design
Match the template's theme to the topic that you are speaking about. If you are unable to locate an appropriately-themed template, use a generic template that contains professional quality graphics and images. If graphic design is not your forte, use professionally-created PowerPoint design templates to add a level of professionalism to your presentation. There are a number of websites that offer royalty-free design backgrounds and layouts that will help reduce your preparation time and provide you with a stylish presentation.

2. Consistency
The graphic design and background theme should be consistent on all slides throughout your presentation. The graphics, color schemes, fonts and font sizes should remain consistent on all slides in the presentation.

3. White Space
Use white space to draw attention to important bullet points contained on the PowerPoint slides. Too much text on a slide is difficult to read and will dilute your message. Keep your slide text to a minimum.

4. Contrast
In order for the audience to discern the text contained on the slide, be sure to contrast the colors used in the presentation. That way, the text will be easy to distinguish from the background. Avoid using colors that blend into the background or that are difficult to see such as yellow.

5. Easy To Read
Use a font size and style that can be easily read. While fancy typefaces may be attractive, they can also be distracting and difficult to read. There are a lot of acceptable fonts for presentation such as Arial, Tahoma or Calibri. Other easy fonts to read are Sans-Serif fonts. The fonts used in the presentation should be large enough to be seen from the audience, and a minimum font size of 32 is usually recommended. Dark text on a light background is typically the easiest for audience members to read.

6. Do Not Just Read Slides
When presenting an oral narrative to accompany the slides, avoid simply reading the text from the PowerPoint slides to your audience. Use your time to effectively explain and elaborate on the information contained on the slides. The intent of PowerPoint is to highlight specific topics in order to enhance a verbal presentation and not to duplicate it.

7. Add Effects
Polish your presentation and add basic transition effects between the slides. Sometimes a tasteful fade can really polish a presentation, adding another level of professionalism. But be careful not to overly-complicate the presentation with fancy transitions, which can be distracting to your audience. In order to keep the focus where it should be, minimize the use of transitions and animations *within* the presentation.

8. Quality Graphics / No Clipart
Use quality graphics and images to enhance your presentation. Avoid using stock clipart that is out-dated or that loses quality when scaled to a larger size. Most presentations are projected on a large screen, which can cause pixelated graphics to lack clarity and look very unprofessional.

9. Bullets
In the presentation, use bullets as talking points. Avoid crowding the PowerPoint slides with too much text. Use bullet points to highlight specific points and then elaborate on those points with your oral presentation.

10. Modern
Later versions of Microsoft PowerPoint support three-dimensional graphics, which adds depth to a presentation. If upgrading is within your budget, consider using the latest version of PowerPoint.

11. Include URL / Logo
If you are presenting a business presentation, be sure to include your website URL on all slides. The URL can be included subtly and unobtrusively in the bottom-right or bottom-left corner. By including your URL on each slide, your identity and brand will be passed along as well if the slides are later printed and circulated to others.

12. Test The Presentation
It is important to actually test your presentation visually on a projector and screen if possible rather than testing it only on a computer monitor. The projected visuals appearing on large screens can often be drastically different than they appear on a computer monitor, especially if cheaper or less-powerful projectors are being used. For example, text and background colors may look just fine on the computer monitor, but may not be nearly as visible and readable when projected to a large screen.

Use the above tips to maximize the impact of your PowerPoint presentation!