

# PowerPoint/Keynote /Slides Do's and Don'ts

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When making a presentation many people focus on the slides as the main part of their presentation. In fact, the most important part of the presentation is the presenter. If his or her presentation skills are not up to par, it doesn't matter how good their slides are. Slides are meant to be a backup to highlight key points the presenter is making. Therefore, to enhance your presentation skills we recommend the following tips when putting together your slides:

1. **Show conviction, passion and enthusiasm.** Develop a good PowerPoint or Keynote program, but make sure your spoken remarks are compelling. Don't use PowerPoint/Keynote as a crutch.
2. **Keep it simple.** Don't have too many words or graphics. Ask yourself, "Do I really need to have everything up on the screen?" Have no more than 5 words per line and no more than 5 lines per slide.
3. **Watch use of numbers in a slide.** If you want to highlight a statistic in PowerPoint or Keynote consider using a graphic or image to convey the point.
4. **Check fonts.** Test the slides in advance by going to the back of the room to make sure everyone can see them. In most cases the ideal font size for a title is 36 to 40. The font size of the body should be no less than 24. Be careful of stylish fonts that may distract the audience or be hard to read. Arial, times new roman and veranda are some good fonts to use. Use plenty of white space with charts and graphs that will aid in understanding.
5. **Don't read PowerPoint.** Make eye contact with the audience. Highlight key words in your talk and make sure you don't read everything on the slide.
6. **Time your PowerPoint/Keynote Slides.** Make sure your talk coincides with what is on the screen. Let the screen go blank when you finish a point.
7. **Use a remote 'clicker.'** Instead of going to the computer each time you need to change a slide the remote clicker will allow you to go forward or backward on your slides from anywhere in the room. As a result there are less distractions and the flow is much smoother.
8. **Use a laser pointer.** Be sure to use a laser pointer instead of trying to refer your audience to a particular place on the slide presentation. Trying to point to a particular area of interest without the use of a laser pointer appears unprofessional and disorganized.
9. **Use contrasting colors.** Contrasting colors between words, graphics and background can be very effective in conveying a message. However be careful not to use the color red too

often. The Federal Law Enforcement Training Center advocates using more pleasing colors as opposed to the color red. This has been proven to incite anger among individuals. Also, sometimes the use of bright colors can be advantageous to your presentation and at other times they may not. Remember, you should be the focal point of your presentation, NOT your slides. If the colors are too distracting, it can take away from your presentation.

10. **Use other images and graphics.** Use your own pictures and other graphics, images and videos. Avoid overuse of clip art. The images can look unpolished, unprofessional and can distract from your presentation.
11. **Minimize animation.** Flying text and complicated slide transactions can drive the attention of the audience away from your presentation. Help your participants stay focused on the message by using a minimum amount of slides with a minimal amount of words and animation. They came to see and hear you and not a special effects show.
12. **Provide handouts at the end.** Unless you are delivering a training program where it is imperative that people follow along, distributing handouts at the end will make sure people listen to you. Handing out the slides prior to the session only impedes the message you are trying to get across. Give participants pen and paper prior to the session so they can write notes in their own words.
13. **Keep changing your PowerPoint/Keynote slides.** Change your slides to focus on the needs of the audience. It is good to have all your slides in one file and then add and delete them as appropriate to tailor it to each audience.
14. **Test your visuals.** Are they easy to read? Simple to follow? Do they convey your point? Get rid of anything extra. Make sure they are relevant.
15. **Practice.** Go over your presentation with the slides you are going to use. Your talk and the slides need to be seamless as you don't want to break the momentum.
16. **Don't overuse it.** We mentioned this earlier however it bears repeating. Don't use PowerPoint or Keynote as a crutch. And don't overdo it. For example in a 50 minute presentation there should be no more than 25 slides.
17. **Be prepared to blackout slides when necessary.** Sometimes during your presentation it is a good idea to black out a particular slide when you are speaking. This will take the audience's attention away from the slide and place it back on you.

Arnold Sanow, MBA, CSP (Certified Speaking Professional) is a speaker, trainer, coach and facilitator. He is the author of 6 books to include, "Get Along with Anyone, Anytime, Anywhere" and "Present with Power, Punch and Pizzazz." He was recently named by successful meetings magazine as one of the top 5 best "bang for the buck" speakers in the USA. [www.arnoldsanow.com](http://www.arnoldsanow.com) --- [speaker@arnoldsanow.com](mailto:speaker@arnoldsanow.com)

