

# Top 10 PowerPoint Tips

## 1. Start with your factual objective

Every presentation has a purpose. Before you start creating your PowerPoint, you need to know your purpose—the action you want your audience to take after your presentation. This becomes your factual objective. Everything you present is providing the information your audience will need to decide to take the action you want them to.

## 2. Know your audience

Presentations are never one-size-fits-all. You need to know your audience before you start working on your presentation so that it can be personalized. Here are some of the things you may want to know:

- What is their professional role?
- What is their title?
- Who will they be talking to about your presentation?
- What is their educational level?
- What is their experience?
- What is their level of expertise?
- What is their culture?
- What is their attitude about you, your product or your company?

## 3. Don't use PowerPoint to create PowerPoint

This may sound strange, but when you start with PowerPoint you can easily miss important information. For the same reason, pulling from other PowerPoint slide decks can also be a problem.

It's best to start by using concept maps or the Pyramid Principle developed by Barbara Minto, or story boards, to make sure you create the kind of presentation that influences and persuades.

## 4. Ditch your templates

Unless your template is simple and clean, you are better off starting fresh. Many templates can be distracting and can also constrain or get in the way of presenting the information your audience needs.

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## 5. Make it easy

When something is too confusing or takes too much brainpower we tend to give up. Unless we really need to understand something, we won't put in the effort. The easier it is for your audience to "get" your point, the more powerful your message will be. Use clear headlines and consistent color and type to help the audience understand what you are talking about.

## 6. Be culturally savvy

Different cultures have unique ways of taking in information. High context cultures like Japan prefer general contextual information over specific information. This means you will have a lot of information on each slide.

Also be aware that color has different meanings for each culture. For example, red means "auspicious" in China but means "stop" or "danger" in the United States.

## 7. Remember the Joy of Six

Avoid putting too many words or bullet points on a slide. In order to keep your slides easy to digest you should follow the rule of 6 x 6. Use no more than six bullet points and no more than six words per bullet.

## 8. Use images instead of words

In order to make your slides "sticky" go with compelling graphics. People tend not to remember your bullet points, but they will remember a graphic that shows the point you are trying to make.

## 9. Keep it visually simple

Use a single visual style. To keep your slides clear don't use more than two type faces and use icons, clipart or photography in a consistent way. Avoid animation—whizzing and whirling slides will only be distracting and will make it harder for your audience to understand your content.

## 10. Go blank

In the end, the speaker should always be more compelling than the slides. Giving the audience a break by going with a blank screen will give you the opportunity to speak without the distraction of the slides behind you. You can press the B key to have the screen go black or the W key to have the screen go white. This works both in PowerPoint or Keynote.