Creating and Making an Effective Presentation

The following guidelines are intended to assist you in creating an effective visual presentation using Microsoft PowerPoint.® For assistance in actually constructing the "slides" themselves, please refer to the *Help* section of your software.

Before you begin, organize your material into its most salient points. Remember that the purpose of your "slides" is to *emphasize* these key points. Done correctly, they will help your audience retain the information or images you intend. Think about the topic you were given. You want to *educate* your audience; think about what they may already know or not know to identify the information you need to provide.

All presentations have a beginning, middle, and end or conclusion. The beginning, or introduction, is intended to grab your audience's attention. Remember everyone in the room was doing something else before you got up to speak, so you will want them to refocus their attention on what you have to say. This can be done simply with a declaration of what you are going to talk about, or it can be a more dramatic or humorous opening that draws everyone's eyes and ears to the front of the room. If you use a dramatic or humorous opening, make sure *it relates to the rest of your talk*. Don't feel pressured to begin with a joke – a quick overview of what you will be talking about can be just as effective at refocusing the audience's interest.

The middle part of your presentation is where your salient points are presented. Don't try to provide too much information. With rare exception, you should not have more slides than the number of minutes you were asked to speak. Most people tend to spend about one minute per slide. But if you have complex slides that require explanation, have fewer slides to remain within your time limit. For teenage and adult audiences – don't just read your slides. They can read what's on the screen – tell them more, or help them interpret what they are seeing (graph or picture). For a younger audience, you should have very few words – mostly pictures.

The conclusion is your last opportunity to impart information. You can quickly summarize your key points, or just restate the most important point. Remember, the most likely thing your audience will remember is the last thing you say.

When talking to an adult audience about energy education topics, the following may be helpful:

- To most members of the public, "gas" means gasoline. To be clear, use the term "natural gas," not gas. And if you discuss gasoline, call it gasoline, not gas, to further make the distinction clear.
- Your message will be more relevant if you can show how oil and natural gas are related to their daily life – not just that they need it, but how it helps them. Without oil and natural gas, most people wouldn't be able to provide for their families, maintain their standard of living, get where they need to go, etc. Read the article in the September 2004 *Journal of Petroleum Technology* by Andrew Cober for ideas.

Following are a few guidelines to help in the construction of your presentation:

- Limit the information on the slide to a single point or idea --- no more than 5 lines. Keep slides simple with plenty of open space.
- Use action words to reinforce ideas and phrases rather than complete sentences.
- Use "powerful" titles that communicate the point of the slide, not just its contents
- Use contrasting colors for text and backgrounds. Most slides that will be projected using an LCD projector look best using a dark blue background and white text. Yellow text can be used for emphasis.
- Avoid ALL CAPS, or use them for the Title only.
- Use capital and lower-case letters for body text.
    - DO NOT USE ALL CAPS FOR BODY TEXT.
    - DO NOT USE UNDERLINES.
        Both are very distracting and difficult to read.
- For data presentation, use
    - Bar charts to compare data;
    - Line graphs to show trends;
    - Box charts to illustrate makeup or organizations or processes;
    - Pie charts to emphasize the relationship of parts to the whole; and
    - Photographs to illustrate realism.
- Use landscape orientation.
- Use a san-serif font such as Arial, Arial Rounded, Helvetica or Tahoma.
- Use the Font Sizes and Colors appropriate to the size of the room you will be speaking in:
    For a large room:
    - Titles: 38 – 44 pt., Yellow or White;
    - Subtitles: 22 – 36pt., White or another light color; and
    - Body Text: 26 – 34pt., White or another light color.
    - Figure labels, captions: 20 – 24 pt., White
    For a smaller to medium-sized room:
    - Titles: 28 - 36 pt., Yellow or White
    - Subtitles: 20 – 24 pt., Yellow or White
    - Body Text: 18 – 20 pt., White or another light color
    - Figure labels, captions: 16 -18 pt., White
- Do not put your company name or logo on your slides.
- Credit the sources of any statistics or other data you use.

Good Slide Characteristics

- **Simplicity**

- **Strong color contrast**

- **No more than six lines**

    - ◆ Large, readable type

BAD SLIDE CHARACTERISTICS

Slides become difficult to read when you try to cover too much material on one slide.

Text that is too small or a font color that does not provide enough contrast from the background will not project clearly.

ALSO, BODY TEXT IN ALL CAPS IS MORE DIFFICULT TO READ THAN CAP AND LOWER-CASE OR INITIAL CAP BODY TEXT.

The use of underline for emphasis can crowd line spacing and make your material difficult to read. It is better to use color for emphasis.

Using no more than six lines on a slide with no more than six words per line is recommended. Plenty of open space around words is needed for slides to be clearly legible when projected on a screen.

Simplicity and conciseness are keys to good slides.

Remember, do not put company names or logos on your slides!