



**Council on Foundations
Faculty Guidelines for Virtual Presentations**

An Effective PowerPoint Presentation

Keys to Success:

- Make a powerful first impression
- Grab their attention with an interesting fact, a short story, a provocative question, relevant quote or a joke.
- Tone and fluctuation of your voice are key. The participants can't see you so you must use your voice to keep them interested.

Golden Rule #1: Keep PowerPoint Slides Concise

Reading the slides makes little use of the advantages of a digital presentation. When presenters read content verbatim, attendees are left thinking that they could have read it from a paper page, eliminating the need of a presenter.

PowerPoint slides are meant to be talked to and provide a brief overview of what will be presented. Slides are a great a tool to keep the presentation and audience on track and provide a flow of information in an organized, consistent way. If too much information is presented in the slide, the audience will start reading the slides and stop listening to what is being said in the presentation.

Keys to Success:

- **Number of slides.** A 10-minute presentation may consist of 8-10 slides while a longer, 30- to 60-minute program might include 35 slides or more. Use just enough to get your key points across. Use supplemental handouts to share other information.
- **Avoid typos and other grammar errors.** A quick proofread of the presentation will help you catch errors. Read the presentation out loud. Any funny-sounding or awkward phrases usually stand out.
- **Use short bullet points.** Short phrases are better than complete sentences. Never write a paragraph. Keep in mind that PowerPoint slides are meant to guide the audience; they are not meant to be read word-for-word.
- **Less is more.** Paraphrase slides and elaborate on bullets. Fewer words per bullet point results in more white space and makes for attractive slides. Size text appropriately.
- **Use text effects wisely.** Bolding or italicizing can emphasize key points, but don't go overboard. Minimize use of colors, transition styles, etc.
- **Uniformity is key.** For example, if every word is capitalized in the title of one slide, do the same on the next. Consistent headings and font styles make for a clean presentation.

Golden Rule #2: Be creative

In addition to keeping PowerPoint slides concise, remember that your audience will vary. You will have visual learners as well as auditory. Use pictures, graphs, maps to convey your message while capturing the audiences visually. Text heavy presentations are boring and the audience's attention spans will wonder if they don't feel engaged. You can also add short videos and comics that stress the key points and/or to infuse humor.

Keys to Success:

- **Use Polling** - Polling engages the audience and allows them to see how their answers compared to their colleagues in real time. Polling can occur prior to the introduction of a key idea as a way to better understand your audience and tailor the presentation accordingly. Polling can be used to see if the audience understands key ideas by posing scenarios and then questions to the audience. Polling can also be used as a pre-test to measure your audience's current knowledge with a post-test at the end of the presentation to see if their knowledge has changed based on your interaction with them.

Keep in Mind...

Use the Notes Feature

The notes section provides the ideal spot for the elaboration on the points shared in a PowerPoint. It's also a good way to keep you on track during a presentation to ensure you cover your main points. The notes section is not visible when the slides are presented in slide show mode.

Repeat Key Points Three Times - in Three Ways

Repeat key points to the audience **three times** throughout the presentation using three methods of delivery. This ensures that the key points are retained by the audience. Typically five key points are made in a workshop that is two hours in length. Introduce key points early in the presentation; provide an interactive activity in the middle of the presentation to help illustrate the points and then bring them up again in a final quiz or exercise meant to review the workshop material. Supplemental resource materials provide a fourth option for delivery.

Provide Supplementary Resource Materials

Handouts that help illustrate your points, or engage the learning by aiding an exercise, can increase retention of the key points and provide additional information not covered in the presentation. A list of web sites, books or articles that give more detailed information is helpful. Choose handouts that give examples, go into more detail on one key point, one side of the argument or the general topic.

End with a Review Quiz

End a presentation with some sort of simple quiz to make sure that the key messages are being retained. This quiz would count for one of the three illustrations of the key points. The quiz could be multiple choice, true or false or could be a case study where the audience must identify what is incorrect.

Give Audience Something Tangible to Take Away

Audience members might appreciate a hard copy of the presentation with room to take notes and jot down questions. In addition, provide any other supplemental materials that support your main idea. The more resources your audience can walk away with, the more they will feel your presentation was worth their time.

Encourage Attendees to Ask Questions

Allow adequate time for Q & A during the webinar. Attendees will be more engaged if they have the opportunity to pose questions during the webinar. Options for asking questions can be after each slide, during specific times of the presentation or at the end of the slide presentation.

Sample PowerPoint Design:

- I. **Introduction.** The introduction is where you set the tone and the theme. Before you begin your presentation, be sure your audience knows what to expect. Tell them how they will benefit from listening to your presentation.
- II. **Outline of agenda.** Help them to understand and picture the structure of your material. List all points you plan to cover. Begin with the most important topics.
- III. **Present your Key Idea.** Decide what it is you would like to happen as a result of your presentation and explain your key idea first. It will serve as a framework for further explanations.
- IV. **Content.** Begin to break the content around your key idea into segments with supporting details. Make your presentation visually appealing. Support your presentation with activities directly related to the information being presented – polling, Q&A, role-play, point-counterpoint, etc.
- V. **Recap each section.** Recap at the end of each section before you proceed to reinforce the key idea and provide clarification.
- VI. **Make transitions to next section.** Let everyone know you're about to go to a new topic.
- VII. **Wrap-up.** At the end of all the components, wrap up by restating the entire key idea, hitting the major take away points.
- VIII. **Conclusion.** Bring together all the elements of your presentation by reviewing the highlights. Finish with emotional statement of the key idea you wish to convey. Charge the audience with implementing one change as a result of your presentation.

For more information on PowerPoint, visit <http://office.microsoft.com/en-us/powerpoint/>.