



THE FIRST RULE OF POWERPOINT IS TO THROW OUT ALL THE RULES OF POWERPOINT.

I think there are a number of golden rules for all presentations in addition to the hundreds of others you can find on the Internet. **Most of these do not apply ONLY to PowerPoint presentations – they apply to all presentations and speeches in general.**

1. Get set up early and preferably have time and the opportunity to vet the facility first.
2. If you don't have to use PowerPoint, DON'T.
3. If you DO have to use PowerPoint, don't start with the first slide. Don't start with the first slide. Don't start with the first slide.
 - a. Start with a "focus slide". I prepare it in Word and copy/paste it into the first PowerPoint slide. There is an example of this at the end of this commentary.
 - b. The second slide is Black. Leave this on while you start your presentation.

(More on the Black Slide later. I think the use of a Black screen is critical to PowerPoint presentations.)

4. Gain the attention of the audience with your presence, voice or a startling statistic or statement, before you even think of moving beyond your second slide – the Black one;
 - a. This first use of the Black screen enables you to introduce the topic verbally with people looking at **YOU**, and not the screen. PowerPoint must only be an aid.
 - b. By using a Black Slide you don't have to wait for the data projector to warm up – it is "on" but not displaying a distracting slide while you are commencing your presentation. The following black slides in your presentation are used to enable you to first make a point with the preceding slide, and then by moving on to the Black slide, the audience's attention is directed at **YOU** while you elaborate on the point.
 - c. You create a slide Black in my version of PowerPoint by: right click on the slide>background>select the arrow under background fill>select black>apply.

5. Prepare the PowerPoint presentation first. Where ever you are going to have a Black slide, enter the text - BLACK SLIDE. Then put in any notes on this slide that you may want to use for this point. When YOU have finished the presentation, save it with “with notes” added to the file name. Then save it again with the file name only. Edit this second file by making every BLACK SLIDE into a black background. This is the file you will display in your presentation. The first file “with notes” is the one you print for notes to use during the presentation.

6. The lap top must be placed in full view of the presenter to remove the temptation to turn around and look at the screen – this is a NO NO. And it happens all the time! Do not turn you back to the audience.

7. If you wish to have say, five points on a slide, prepare the slide with the five points. So it may have a heading and then:

- Point 1
- Point 2
- Point 3
- Point 4
- Point 5

Copy and paste this slide four times to give you five consecutive identical slides. Delete points 2 – 5 on slide one, so the audience only sees the heading and point one. Move to the second slide and delete points 3 – 5 and also alter the font of point 1 to grey.

This leaves point 1 on the slide, but directs the audience attention to point 2 as it is in black font. On the third slide, delete points 4 and 5 and alter the font of points 1 and 2 to grey and proceed the same way with slide four. Slide 5 only has point 5 in normal font and 1-4 are grey.

They will progress like this:

Slide 1	Slide 2	Slide 3	Slide 4	Slide 5
Heading Point 1	Heading Point 1 Point 2	Heading Point 1 Point 2 Point 3	Heading Point 1 Point 2 Point 3 Point 4	Heading Point 1 Point 2 Point 3 Point 4 Point 5

8. And now that you have done this, ignore the rules of five or six or seven points to a slide – one is good. Three slides with four points are much better than one with 12 points.
9. Pictures (real ones – not clip art) are better than lots of text. And use VERY simple charts.
10. Or avoid charts – perhaps rather than present another boring hard to read detailed all singing and dancing bar chart to demonstrate a 25% increase in some important business measure; you could say something like, “We have had an increase in sales of 25% which is like getting 15 eggs to the dozen.” Or we have reduced operating expenses by 25% which is the same as hiring 6 extra sales people operating at 100% efficiency on day one.” Surely this is better than yet another boring chart

11. Font: Keep the font simple and it is best to use **HUGE FONT**.

12. Resist the temptation to use the sexy transitions between slides. They distract the audience. Your message and the way YOU present it is what is important.

13. Don't hand out notes (for any presentation) until AFTER you have finished presenting.

The mission is to keep the audience's main focus on the speaker - you. PowerPoint is an aid and should not be the main focus of the presentation. Too many speakers try to hide behind PowerPoint. Many speakers actually use PowerPoint as their notes and this is obvious and is really sad!

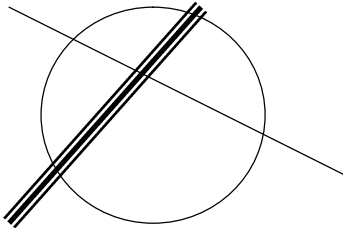
I was presenting at a conference some years ago and the key note speaker and I were the only two of eight speakers who did not use notes. Several were wedded to their PowerPoint presentations and were left high and dry when the data projector failed. I mean failed – smoke and all! It was terrific. I loved it. Mercifully, there was no provision made for a second data projector. Again: It was terrific. I loved it!

If you feel the need to use PowerPoint to distract the attention from you, join Toastmasters International. Or perhaps you have come to realise that skills in communication is the common trait of the overwhelming majority of leaders in all activities in our community.

That is another good reason to seek out any assistance you can get. There will be club that meets near where you work or live. Find one from this link.

<http://reports.toastmasters.org/findaclub/>

If you don't have or recognise the need for such assistance, practice, practice, practice, practice Record a video of your presentation so you can see how you present – you will be your hardest critic.



Example of Focus Slide

Yours sincerely
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John Colebatch has been involved in Human Resource consulting and Executive Recruitment for 21 years. John has also been active in Toastmasters International for 13 years and has demonstrated his communication skills by his level of achievement in Toastmasters including twice competing at the highest level of contest in District 70.