

BULLETS CAN KILL A GREAT PRESENTATION

10 Key Points to Avoid Boring Your Audience



written by Paul Clegg

From time to time

... a great many of us are asked to make a presentation and adding visuals, brings life to the content and inspiration to our audience.

It takes time, know how and experience to use visuals effectively, but let's start with 10 Key Points that Kill Presentations and bore your audience.

1. A projector too close to the screen, produces an image that's too small. Just because the venue placed your projector two feet from the screen doesn't mean you have to leave it there. Move it back until the images fill the screen. Then go check the view from the back of the room and see what others will see.
2. Images grip an audience, especially photos of people. Funny, serious, sad. A family photo in the centre of the screen can look isolated. Fill the screen, rotate for impact and movement, crop into part of the photo. Cropping can be as simple as dragging the corners until they sit outside of the presentation template. You can see the whole photo but your audience will only see what's on the screen when you hot play.
3. Fuzzy, low quality images. There are plenty of [free quality images on the net](#). You never have to use poor ones. How about being original. Take your camera with you everywhere and photograph your own stuff. One of my favourite sources of free images is Flickr, but don't fall foul of [copyright law](#). Fastest way to find images you can use commercially for free is on [Flickr Storm](#). Search box, advanced pull down menu so you can check copyright attribution then click search ... easy.
4. Get rid of bullet points unless you really want to kill your presentation or even the audience. I sat through a presentation recently with as many as 6 bullet points (actual sentences)! Guess what. Few people could see them, let alone read them, except of course the presenter ... who read every word (looking at the screen instead of his audience). Get creative with images and let them communicate the main point of each message. If you need to, add a single word or three at most.

If you really must use bullets, but no more than three to a page and one line per bullet.
5. White space gives clarity. Resist the temptation to fill every centimetre of space on the screen. White space let's your words breath when you want to provide clarity or impact.
6. Too many fonts on a page confuse the message as does too many colours.
7. Too many transitions between slides. The wonderful ways you can move images and text around make it tempting to show off this new technology. They're there to add interest and keep the audience gripped, but if they're overdone they lose their significance. Anyway, it's your job to keep your audience on the edge of their seats.

8. Get a good remote. You know, the device to move the slides on. And learn how to use it in advance. There's nothing more distracting than constantly moving to the laptop in order to hit the arrow keys.

9. Handing out stuff in the middle of your presentation or before the next person is about to speak. You must control what your audience is focused on. It's ok to get something in your audience's hands. Involving your audience is a powerful way for people to grasp an issue but it takes a lot more control and takes more time. You will need to allow more time if you want audience participation.

10 Timing. Don't overstay your welcome. You know how long you have been asked to speak for and to begin with, it can be difficult to decide what to include and what to leave out of a presentation. Presentations are easier for you to control timing but workshops are unpredictable if you are encouraging audience participation.

Support the key points you want to make and compare the number of slides you have with the time you have. 30 slides in 30 minutes means you have a minute a slide - do you present at that pace? You may be using a sequence of slides rapidly to make a point so naturally you will take that into consideration but it's always a good to cross check the final number of slides with the time you have ... then be prepared to edit.

So now you've produced a great presentation. Consider sharing it with a wider audience to build your visibility and enhance your reputation. Those present in the audience can review or even download your slides and you get to be seen as the real pro.

Check out www.slideshare.com. [Here's what I am presently sharing](#). While you're there, check out the rest of the site for inspirational ideas for your next presentation.



Paul Clegg is a specialist at helping people develop marketing partnerships that lead to increase business. His background in marketing, combining 10 years experience in relationship networking in the South West and online, provides him with a level of expertise that is difficult to find. He lives in Somerset, England and writes a regular newsletter called [How to Turn Business Cards into Business at Any Networking Event](#).

He has also written: [If Follow Up is Critical to Your Business, Why Don't You Do It?](#)

Follow the link to receive your copy or contact him direct at paul.clegg@mac.com