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Professional Development

More PowerPoint tips

When I did a presentation skills workshop at the Easley Chamber recently, one thing the participants wanted most to learn about is how to create and use PowerPoint in their presentations. In the last column I gave five tips on putting pizzazz in your PowerPoint. Here are five more.

Use a clear, clean font. My favorite is Verdana because it's more "open" and easy to read than Arial or others. Use your favorite as long as it's not too ornate or "cutesy" (unless your presentation calls for it). You can mix it up at times, using "Chiller" font for example to depict something scary (like giving a presentation)!

I was in the back row at a workshop recently and couldn't read most of the slides. For larger groups use 36 and 44 size font. You can come down a *little* in smaller rooms, but even then it's best to use large type.

Slide content. Many people try to crowd too much on a slide and no one can read it. A good rule of thumb is to use a maximum of six lines per slide and six words per line. If any of your slides have more text than this, break them down into two or three slides. Doesn't cost anything and looks much better.

Here's a tip for using a flip chart – use different colored markers. Throw out the standard black (yuk!), red, blue, and green and use purple, pink, dark green, orange, etc. It's a little thing that separates the pros from the rookies. They cost a little more, but they make you stand out from all the other presenters. For flip charts and PowerPoint slides, it would be great to use the colors of your group's logo. You don't have to say anything, they'll notice.

Look at your audience, not the screen. It's okay to look at the screen briefly when you're making a transition. Use a pointer (laser is best) if you have to point something out, but spend 98% of your time facing, gesturing, and making eye contact with your listeners. Read Roger Ailes's book, *You Are the Message*.

Understand the purpose of PowerPoint. All visuals, whether they be PowerPoint, flip charts, pictures, or props are intended to *enhance* your presentation, not *carry* it. Don't use visuals as a crutch to keep from looking at your listeners. *You* are the most important part of your presentation.

If you'd like a free presentation skills tip sheet, send an email to Annette@CoachAnnette.com with the words 20 Presentation Tips in the subject line.

Annette Estes is a Certified Professional Behavioral and Values Analyst, Coach, and Consultant. She is a professional speaker and author of the book, *Why Can't You See it My Way? Resolving Values Conflicts at Work and Home*. Annette won Matrix Awards in 2004-05 from Women in Communications for her columns in *The Easley Progress*. Contact her through her website at www.CoachAnnette.com.

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