

TOP TEN LIST

TEN BEST WAYS TO MAKE A BAD SCIENTIFIC POWERPOINT PRESENTATION

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Confusion Reigns

**“Use the Picasso approach to slide
design and font selection – and include
the Blue, Cubist, and other periods of
your own devising.”**

Quote from undisclosed Internet correspondent, paraphrased
and extended by

R. S. Kirby, University of Alabama at Birmingham

October 14, 2003

Top Ten List: Ten Best Ways to Make a Bad Scientific PowerPoint Presentation

Number 10

Laura Ashley Designs

Make sure the color scheme for your PowerPoint presentation matches your outfit, right down to the accessories and shoes, so perfectly that the audience whispers to each other ‘how cute’ you are.

Can’t get it quite right? Try a test the night before – not all LCDs are the same!



Top Ten List: Ten Best Ways to Make a Bad Scientific PowerPoint Presentation

Number 9

Static Cues?

Make the audience feel at home, while you demonstrate your level of poise and comfort in making your presentation. A few pointers (both literally and figuratively):



Number 9 (continued)

- 1) Although laser pointers are precision instruments, no one will be distracted if you jiggle it erratically at the screen, or point it at something other than the object of your remarks.
- 2) Focus on your reading, and never make eye contact with the audience.
- 3) Walk over to the screen, leaving the microphone behind, and discuss specific points or trends on the screen, with your back to the audience. Make sure in doing so you block the view of some or all of the screen, especially the relevant part.

Number 8

Simple Simon Says

The PowerPoint presentation should exactly match your spoken word. Read every word, on every slide, and say nothing but what you have written on each slide.

Number 8 (continued)

To ensure maximum effect, also:

Corollary 1: Never spell-check, and read on, blithely ignoring and egregious (or minor) errors you may have made. A good one to grab audience attention is 'pubic' for 'public'.

Corollary 2: Make sure each slide is overloaded with text, and make no provisions for audience handouts. Only get through slide 15 of 60 before time is up? No problem.

Number 7

Colorific!

All color combinations work equally well. The palettes provided with MS PowerPoint design templates are only a guide, to be modified any way you wish to create your own scheme. A few pointers:

Red is very effective for text – especially when used with blue, brown, or yellow backgrounds, well just about any background you wish.

Yellow also works well, but not with blue or black.

Use your state flag colors for the background and text, and match the font to any text on your state seal. And, of course, tell the audience in detail, in case anyone misses the subtle connection.

Now is the Time

For All Good Men
To
Come
To the
Aid of their
Country

For All Good Men
To
Come
To the
Aid of their
Country

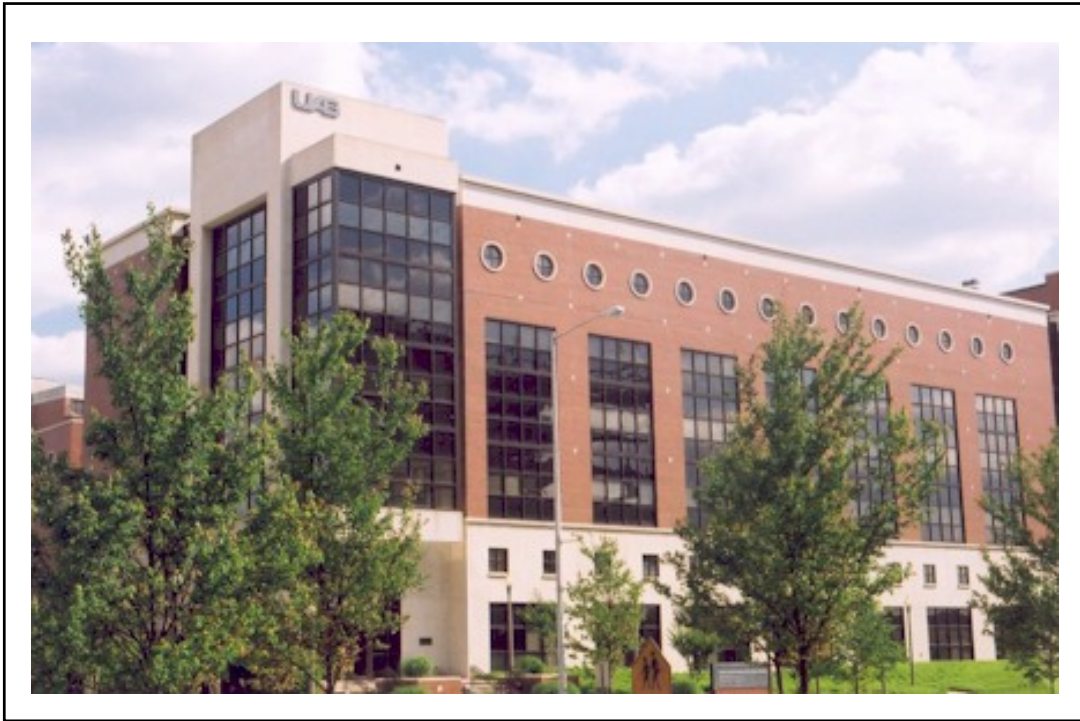
Top Ten List: Ten Best Ways to Make a Bad Scientific PowerPoint Presentation

Number 6

Isn't she cute?

For a personal touch, insert pictures of your kids, vacation, your idyllic workplace, your favorite artist, or your pets.

Some examples:



Or, to maximize audience interest:



Top Ten List: Ten Best Ways to Make a Bad Scientific PowerPoint Presentation

Number 5

A picture worth a thousand words

Humor can provide relief from a complex or tedious presentation, when done properly.

Make sure the cartoons or graphics bear no relation to your topic.

The captions should be completely unreadable, even by those in the front row. Laugh rather than explaining.

And don't worry about copyright issues: if you can scan it, make a digital photo, or download it, it's in the public domain.



Top Ten List: Ten Best Ways to Make a Bad Scientific PowerPoint Presentation

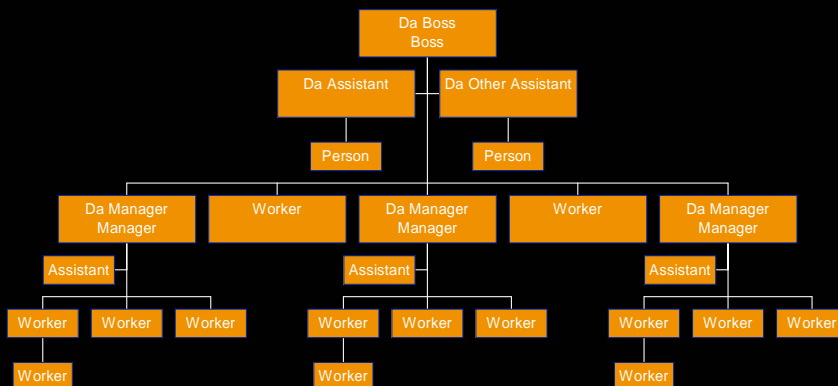
Number 4

Warning: Graphic Materials

PowerPoint is especially effective for presenting data graphics, but more so if you follow these simple rules:

1. Never create your own graphics. If you must, be sure to use the default settings in MS Excel or your favorite graphics software.
2. Graphics scanned from photocopies of articles are very effective. If too small, just expand the size of the image – resolution should be no problem.
3. See the list of the Ten Best Ways to Draw Bad Data Graphics for more helpful hints.

Da Organization



Number 3 **Animation Fascination**

PowerPoint provides an impressive array of sound and animation techniques. Use these liberally, no matter how long they take, or how cute or annoying they are.

Here's an example to use as a guide:



Keeping Bad Books out of Schools



- What our children are reading
- Reading between the lines
 - The best way to hold a book-burning party
- The devil is in the details

Number 2

Some Assembly Required, Manual Optional

It's not necessary to use the latest technology; they all work the same regardless of software, operating system, or version.

It isn't really necessary to worry about media either – all computers connect to all LCDs with the available cables, and if you didn't bring yours, conference organizers are sure to be able to provide a computer with an Iomega 250 Mb drive, available USB II ports, 3.5" and 5.25" floppy drives, and a DVD drive. If not, just download your presentation on the spot.

“Know thy audience”

Recently rediscovered 14th Commandment, found near Mount Sinai (the archaeological site, not the hospital), as depicted by Moses dropping the third tablet as he explained to his followers about the Commandments, in Mel Brook's movie [The History of the World, Part I](#)

Number 1

The main event

PowerPoint is not an adjunct or auxiliary tool. It's the main event in any lecture or presentation.

No one will listen to you or look at you if you have a good PowerPoint presentation, so you don't need to spend any time preparing or practicing your lecture or speech.

Bonus

A word in closing

Repeat headers on all slides in each section – and use 40pt or larger font size. Remember to include separate sections for:

- Conclusions
- Summary
- Study Limitations
- Recommendations
- Implications

The final slides should acknowledge all who participated in the project, no matter how small the role. Even the janitor who accidentally unplugged your computer just as you were saving the final version of the presentation should receive a kind word or two.