

Chapter 3: Preparing effective PowerPoint® slides

*"If your words or images are not on point,
making them dance in color won't make them relevant."*
– Edward Rolfe Tufte (1942-), American academic

The title of this chapter refers to Microsoft Office PowerPoint because this is the presentation program which 90% of readers will be familiar with. The tips in this chapter however are equally applicable to all presentation programs, such as Apple's Keynote and OpenOffice.org's Impress.

This chapter does not cover basic information about how to use these programs, as there are already a plethora of books and resources on the internet which address this. Rather, this chapter will be dedicated to tips which may help you make more effective use of these presentation programs in your presentations.

Tip 108: Know when to not use slides	Essential
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There are certain situations when you should not use slides:

- **When you want your audience's undivided attention.** Using slides divides your audience's attention between you and the projector screen. It also conditions your audience to see you as someone who wants primarily to convey information such as an instructor or a trainer, rather than as a leader who wants to command the audience's full attention.
- **When you want to build a personal relationship with your audience.** In some presentations your primary goal is to connect with your audience. Think of a candidate addressing a political rally or a CEO addressing the workforce. You want to look your audience in the eye and to convey a personal message to each individual member of your audience.
- **When you want your audience's participation.** The moment you start a presentation using slides, your audience can psychologically switch off, because they know that your presentation will be following a pre-determined and relatively fixed course. You have already set the content, scope, direction, and sequence of your presentation and the audience's role has been defined as passive observers.