

*This handout is designed to provide key lessons from the PSTD Tipanan last October 15. Hence, it is a document that is really wordy and text-heavy. This is the best way to ensure that visual aids, handouts and presenter complement each other – make the visuals (slides) less cluttered, put all of the text in the handouts (document) and make the presenter discuss the handout contents supported by the visuals.*

*Also, to create “visuals” or “slides”, you may use PowerPoint, Keynote & Prezi. In the future, there may be other visual technology tools that can be developed. PowerPoint and Keynote may have differences in commands but they work the same way and produce the same output – slides. But regardless of what tool you are using, the objective must be the same – produce visuals to support the presenter in delivering a powerful presentation.*

- 1. How do you become a “powerful presenter”? It all starts with the right mindset on why you present.** You don’t just present to “inform” – if you do, you will just dump a lot of data, facts, jargon on your audience. Hence, you will end up with visuals that are full of information and clutter. “Inspire” the audience – make them like the topic! “Influence” them – urge them to act, apply and practice what you shared.
- 2. What do you need to prepare to be a “powerful presenter”? Present like an MVP: Message** (Have clear objectives, clear key messages and prepare talking points.) **Visuals** (Use PowerPoint as a visual aid – an aid to the presenter and not a competition to the presenter. An aid to retention of information and not aid to confusing or overloading the audience.) **Presenter** (Deliver well, speak well, explain well, engage the audience.).
- 3. “PowerPoint” is a very apt name – it must put power in the talking points of the presenter! Let us make PowerPoint live up to its name and avoid “Powerless” presentations.** 4 reasons why “Powerless PowerPoint” presentations happen are:
  - Dependence on bullets
  - Overload of unorganized information
  - Lack of focus. Too many distractions
  - No storyline. No planning. Just borrowing templates and copy-pasting/ editing.
- 4. Apply and adopt principles and techniques that you can.** It is NOT about the CORRECT slide design but the APPROPRIATE slide design. Work with what you can. Work around constraints and rules – e.g. company slide template, company required color palettes.
- 5. Go beyond bullets!** We have been conditioned to just type in the bullets. We place everything we need to say on the slide – long sentences and even paragraphs – that’s why we have a tendency to read the slide. Just one look on this cluttered slide and the audience may see it as unappealing, boring, cluttered and overloaded.
  - Remove bullet point symbols. We understand that each line is a bullet anyway!
  - Put fewer text – key words/ figures and phrases only. You want people to focus on what you are saying not on reading the slide.
  - If you need to give details, provide a handout which contains more information – not a handout which contains all slides printed in sets of 2 or 3 slides.
  - Use relevant images/ pictures (highlighting the key message) instead of words.

- 6. Don't just "bulletize". Organize your content!** Instead of putting content in bullet format, use "high-impact", "attention getting" ways that also make it easier for the audience to remember information. Use PowerPoint's SmartArt Graphic options – choose the best one that is appropriate to your content – e.g. creative lists, process, chart, relationships.
- 7. Create focus. Remove distractions.** Reduce the content of each slide to ensure your audience is focused on what you really need to discuss:
  - Observe "1 thought, 1 slide" principle.
  - For slides that are really text-heavy, vary font size and font color to emphasize key words, phrases, numbers and/or convert these key content into bold font.
  - For slides with tables, charts and figures:
    - Ask yourself – "Do I really need to put the entire table or graph or can I just show 1 number/ selected numbers on a slide?"
    - When your audience requires seeing a "sea of numbers", create focus by highlighting the important number, line on the chart/ graph, row or column. You may create the highlight using "shapes" around the key content – draw shapes (circle, oval, rectangle etc.) with thick, colored borders and animate them for extra effect.
- 8. Use images to put life in your slides and increase retention.** Various studies show that people remember content/ messages better when a high-impact image is used than numbers.
  - Avoid clip art that is already built in PowerPoint's gallery – it is most likely 'cartoonish' and outdated. Use workplace images or take your own photos.
  - Use high-resolution images instead of pixelated, blurred ones.
  - Avoid images subject to copyright – with logos in watermark on the images.
  - Ensure that the image you use is consistent with your message, appropriate to your content and projects a professional image.
  - Use the "full bleed" technique for images – position images strategically so the image is not floating on the slide and the slide area appears like a movie screen, with the text and images blending like characters in a movie.
- 9. Make your visual aids readable.** Use the right font size – ideal minimum size is 32 (for most fonts). Use the appropriate font – Serif fonts have 'tails' (e.g. Book Antiqua, Times New Roman, Monotype Corsiva) which can be distracting while Sans Serif fonts (e.g. Arial, Verdana, Tahoma, Helvetica) look neat and easier to read. Ensure high contrast between font color and slide background.
- 10. Use correct animation. Use animation to focus audience attention.**
  - No other fancy, distracting animation. Just make it APPEAR without fuss.
  - Use DISSOLVE or make it FADE IN for added effect.
  - Ensure animation is appropriate for content. (Arrows going to the pointed direction.)
  - 1-2 animations per slide or for the entire deck.

**References:** Cliff Atkinson's "Beyond Bullet Points". Garr Reynolds' "Presentation Zen" & "Presentation Zen Design". Nancy Duarte's "Slide:ology".