

# Tips on Preparing PowerPoint Presentations



Conference attendees often complain speaker slides are difficult to read. Here are some tips to assist you with creating better PowerPoint presentations.

## 1. The Craft of Scientific Presentations

Even the most seasoned scientist will appreciate this online publication and find helpful tips on improving the effectiveness of poster and slide presentation design. "**The Craft of Scientific Presentations: Critical Steps to Succeed and Critical Errors to Avoid**" by Michael Alley of Penn State. [[writing.engr.psu.edu/csp.html](http://writing.engr.psu.edu/csp.html)]

## 2. Top 10 Slide Tips

Here are some tips by Gary Reynolds, a best-selling author, and professional speaker. <http://www.garreynolds.com/preso-tips/design/>

## 3. Widescreen is Here!

And that's a good thing for you because the 16:9 format provides a larger display area, ideal for graphs, charts and high impact visuals. Still want to use the 4:3 format? That's okay. PowerPoint fills in the extra space. Check out these links for more information on using widescreen.

<https://blogs.office.com/2013/01/24/powerpoint-2013-widescreen-presentations/>

<https://blogs.office.com/2010/06/23/ready-for-widescreen-how-to-manage-aspect-ratios-in-powerpoint-169-vs-43/>

## 4. General Tips for Slide Preparation

Here are some guidelines for creating slides that can be easily viewed in a large meeting setting.

- To ensure presentation visibility from any seat in the room, use the following minimum font sizes:

<b>Title:</b>	Bold Typeface minimum 40 pt size
<b>Subtitles:</b>	Bold Typeface minimum 32 or 36 pt size
<b>Text and Figures:</b>	Bold Typeface minimum 24 or 28 pt size

*Note: San- Serif fonts e.g. Arial or Verdana are easier to read in a large room*

- The 6x6 readability rule: *no more than six words per line and six lines per "page"* (i.e., Arial font size 40).
- Use upper and lower case letters rather than block: ALL CAPS CAN BE DIFFICULT TO READ.
- Lines that are used for emphasis should be bolder than background lines or borders.
- Choosing Colors for Slides: <http://www.thinkoutsidetheslide.com/choosing-colors-for-your-presentation-slides/>
- To ensure a safety zone for over-projection, leave a ¼-inch border, with no text or graphics, around your slide. Otherwise, anything close to the border of your slide may be cut off.
- **For a quick readability check: Stand back ten feet from your 14" monitor. If you cannot read the text clearly, your point size is too small for the audience to see.**

"There is no point in making a single slide until you know some of what you want to say, . . . If you make slides first, you become a **slide slave** perfecting your slides, instead of perfecting your thoughts."

[Scott Berkun](#), author of [five popular books](#) on creativity, leadership, philosophy and speaking.

*NOTE: We use Microsoft PowerPoint (2013).*