

## **Back to the roots of presenting:**

Five arguments about powerpoint(-free) presentations

Imagine all meeting rooms had a window. I bet you can easily tell if people inside are having a presentation or not. Why? If you see the participants sitting there like monuments, with motionless faces, all staring to one direction with glassy eyes... they must have a powerpoint-presentation. Remember that scene, because this form of presentation will disappear when effectiveness gets more aware in our communication.

Here are five common reasons for the use of powerpoint. See how they work today.

### **1. Powerpoint (ppt) is a standard. 400 million people worldwide can't be wrong.**

A big number tells something about quantity, not about quality. A standard can be on a low level. For example, two centuries ago millions of people moved to the next village by horses. This means of transportation was a worldwide standard. Our ancients didn't know alternatives at their time. But 200.000 Toastmasters worldwide today do know how to present without ppt.

### **2. Technical equipment and effects impress the audience. They raise image and credibility of the speaker.**

This effect just occurs when a medium is new and even in that case. Consider, the term "media" says "something in between". If you use media you have something in between you and your public. The medium grasps attention from your personality. The higher the level of the media, the more dominant they are. Just compare a flip-chart to a ppt-slide with all its complex content and effects: Even simple ppt-slides are more distracting from the speaker and his message than an overloaded flip chart.

### **3. Perception studies say: More channels = more effectiveness. Visual information is best: "One picture tells more than a thousand words"...**

In ppt-presentations we see and listen. But don't mix up a projection of text with an image. Reading just gets bottom results in memory quota, because the composing of abstract signs into sense is done by our logical brain. In difference, when we watch an image as a copy of our real world, we develop feelings. Only the connection of our inner movement with some rational messages triples the memory quota.

Let's come to often cited perception studies. First, they are about 35 years old and couldn't include our present flood of information with its mechanisms of densitizing. Example: Watching TV without watching. It happens, when you are longing for some emotional impulses while you are sick of processing visual information because you faced the monitor of your computer all day long! A phenomenon of visual perception in 2004 that doesn't stop at the TV-screen. For recent studies concerning ppt see for example [www.edwardtufte.com](http://www.edwardtufte.com).

Second, one part of the old studies' scales never got into public awareness although it could equalize some reactions to flood of information: "Telling myself" tops all reading, listening or watching and even their combinations. And if you "do something yourself", it reaches to the top line of memory quota. The show-character of a ppt-presentation unfortunately nips any interaction in the bud.

#### **4. Using powerpoint saves time and money: Files can easily be changed or recycled, e-mailed and printed into handouts.**

What worth has a time and money saving tool when it brings just a weak result? How many ppt-presentations ever really brought you to action? ... Okay. For that, it's still too expensive.

A special danger is to print out slides for the audience. You mix thoughtlessly two media made for different purposes and will miss one of it. Either you produce good, brief slides. These will be bad, incomprehensible handouts because they needed further oral information by the speaker. Or you get all-explaining papers but ineffective slides and an obsolete speaker.

#### **5. Powerpoint offers best frame to transport most content per minute. Presentation requires a monologue.**

In times of information overload we all don't need more impulses but better ones.

Raise quality not quantity! Change one-directional information to interaction.

Dialogue leads to most effective communication. Address your audience individually because we are bothered by "mass information". Integrate your feelings and you will touch the feelings of others. To sum up, our times require to recover the origins of human communication: Sitting around a fireplace, listening to stories of real life, seeing the shine of our eyes when we are fascinated of those messages and feeling with the speaker or our neighbours. You can learn, renew and enjoy this at the Toastmasters.

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