

Hello, I am Wayne Botha, and these are the Five Simple Strategies to Presenting with PowerPoint®. Please feel free to share this recording with other people. This recording and many other resources are available for you for free at www.waynebotha.com.

Let's start off quickly by reminding ourselves of common problems in a typical PowerPoint® presentation. Think of a presentation that you attended recently. What do you often see in a PowerPoint® presentation? The number one complaint that meeting planners get from audiences after a PowerPoint® presentation is and I quote, "The presenter just reads their slides to me. We could have read the slides ourselves."

We are going to discuss five simple strategies to make sure that your audience does not have the same complaint about your PowerPoint® presentations. Here they are:

- Strategy No. 1: Plan before you create your slideshow.
- Strategy No. 2: Use black slides in your slideshow.
- Strategy No. 3: Rehearse. Rehearse. Rehearse.
- Strategy No. 4: Use your remote presenter when you deliver your presentation.
- Strategy No. 5: Never ever, ever read your slides to your audience. Never.

Let's discuss each one of these strategies in more detail.

Strategy No. 1: Plan before you create your slideshow. Sit down and think what would I like my audience to leave with? What do I want them to do or think or act differently when they leave my presentation? Write down in ten words or less what the purpose is for your presentation. Put those ten words on your desk as you create your presentation. That allows you to focus your stories and focus your presentation to meet your purpose.

Now, why would you do this? Why would you write down your key purpose? Because if you do not write down the key purpose of your presentation, you're likely to go off on tangents during your preparation and during your presentation, and that's how you end up with slides that do not support the purpose of the presentation. So Strategy No. 1, plan before creating your slideshow.

Simple Strategy No. 2: Use black slides in your slideshow. Now, I know you can just reach off the projector by pushing the B button on the keyboard or by pushing the blackout button on your remote presenter, but you might forget to black out the projector. When you become engaged with the audience and you're right in the midst of your powerful story, you might forget that the audience is looking at a slide when they should be focusing on you.

The easiest way to make sure that you engage your audience and you've got all the attention on yourself when you're presenting, is to have a black slide. Because when you progress from the point that you just made to a black slide and the black slide comes up on the screen the audience focuses on you. Do this just once and you'll see the power of having a black slide. I was astonished because the first time it happens in your slide show your audience is not expecting it, and your audience suddenly thinks well, what on earth happened, and they look at you.

So use black slides in your slideshow, at least one black slide for every ten slides in your slideshows. So, how do you create a black slide? Well, it's simple. Create a new slide in PowerPoint®, take out all the text and all the graphics and set the background color to black.

Simple Strategy No. 3: Rehearse. Rehearse. Rehearse. Rehearse with timing. Rehearse with the actual equipment that you're going to be using on the day of the presentation. Time your rehearsals so that you can see how long your timing is, you can see how long your entire speech is, and you can get a feel for how far you need to be; halfway through the time, which slides are going to be up when you're more or less halfway through your presentation.

Rehearse out loud so that you can hear the words coming out and you can correct any words, which seem to be awkward and are not getting your point across. This is possibly the point where most presenters fail with PowerPoint®, because they don't rehearse. How many times have you seen somebody say, "Well, I'm just putting together my slides quickly because in ten minutes I've got a presentation," and the result is that the audience gets a very disjointed and confused and unprepared presentation. That's where you get the slides that are full of text. Simple Strategy No. 3: Rehearse. Rehearse. Rehearse.

Simple Strategy No. 4: Use a remote presenter. The remote presenter lets you walk into the audience and engage your audience without being concerned about where the computer is and where the keyboard is. So use a remote presenter, and here is a tip, practice with that remote presenter and get to know it because remote presenters have got their own challenges. For example, mine has got a number of buttons. You can progress through the slideshow, but you can also go directly to a certain slide in the slideshow if you know the number of the slide, and most of the remote presenters can black out the projector. Rehearse with your remote presenter. Get to know it so that you can deliver the most powerful presentation.

Simple Strategy No. 5: I've left the best one for last. Never ever, ever read your slides to the audience. Never. Reading your slides to the audience forces you to lose eye contact with the audience, and Professor John Sweller of the University of New South Wales in Australia found that reading text to the audience causes information overload. If you'd like to read a little more about that, just do an Internet search for Professor John Sweller and PowerPoint®. Do not read the slides to your audience. Never.

How do you do this? Well, firstly don't put text on your slide. Well, you're saying "How can I communicate my message without text?" I agree. Sometimes we need text on the slides to communicate your message, but limit the amount of text. Now, I don't believe in absolutes. So let's say that you should only have six words on one slide or six and a half words or seven words on a slide. But I can tell you that if you reduce the amount of text in your slides, you will proportionately increase the communication with your audience. So slash the number of words in your slides. Slash the amount of text in your slides and replace that with photographs and stories. Never ever, ever read the text to your audience.

So the first strategy is don't put long pieces of text on your slides, and the second part is practice your presentation so that you know your presentation. If you know the presentation and you know what your message is, you do not need to have a lot of text on the slides. If you don't have a lot of text on the slides and you've practiced your presentation, you have no reason to read the text to your audience. So you can overcome this common problem with PowerPoint® presentations through rehearsals.

Let's recap the five simple strategies that we have discussed in this recording. Simple Strategy No. 1: plan before you create your slideshow.

In ten words or less define exactly what you want to communicate to your audience when your presentation is over. Simple Strategy No. 2: Use black slides in your slideshow. Simple Strategy No. 3: Rehearse. Rehearse. Rehearse. Rehearse with the equipment that you'll be using. Rehearse and check the time that you'll be taking to deliver your presentation. Simple Strategy No. 4: use the remote presenter when you are delivering the presentation so that you can be free of the keyboard. Simple Strategy No. 5: Do I need to repeat this? Never ever, ever read your slides to the audience. Got it? Never read the slides to the audience.

In closing, thank you for listening to this recording. If you can take away once concept from this recording, then let it be this one. The biggest challenge for most presenters when presenting with PowerPoint® is that they have too much text on the slides. You can overcome this challenge by reducing the amount of text that you put on your slides. If you successfully reduce the amount of text on your slides, then you're setting the state for a successful presentation, and your audience will not be among the complainers who say the presenter could just as well have sent me the slides.

This recording and many other tips on presentations are available on www.waynebotha.com.