Power Point Tips for a Successful Presentation

1. Keep your slides simple and uncluttered
2. Use a large, clean font
3. Get to your presentation early to coordinate with the A/V technician.
4. Check your images on the actual projector
5. Know how to toggle your computer display to external
6. Turn off your screen saver (and power management)
7. Start up your presentation smoothly and cleanly
8. Keep a final image on screen at the end of your presentation
9. Use laser pointers and mouse movements sparingly

Keep Your Slides Simple:

Resist the temptation to put your entire presentation on the slides. Highlight your main points as anchors to what you are going to say. (A good rule of thumb is a maximum of 5 points per slide and a maximum of 5 words per point.) Use fewer slides rather than more. If you must display a complex visual concept, build it gradually on screen rather than throwing up a detailed image that is too complex to grasp. You may want to echo it in printed materials for the audience.

Font size and style:

Assuming you have kept to the rule of max 5 points per slide and max 5 words per point, your font size should be large enough to read from the back of the room. You'll be surprised how large this has to be. Avoid all-caps and italics except for emphasis on a portion of text.

Arrive Early:

If you are running your own presentation, find out where your computer will be stationed, what the transition to your computer image will be from the previous speaker, event, etc. If someone else is cueing your slides, rehearse with them, or at least agree exactly how the cueing will work. If you are also running keypad polling, a slide projector, video etc., co-ordinate when and how these will be integrated into your presentation. (Ask the technician for their advice and

assistance. They are experienced professionals who would love to help you look good.)

Preview Your Presentation:

Check out your show on the presentation projector ahead of time. Iron out resolution syncing issues ahead of time, i.e. make sure that your computer image: (a) projects at all, and (b) is adjusted properly. Color combinations, font styles and sizes, graphics, etc. that look fine on a desktop monitor may not have the same impact on a data projector. For example, silver balls on a dark blue background might look battleship grey when projected. A crisp Kelly green becomes bilious, graphics are so busy as to be unintelligible, text colors wash into each other. Arrange with audio visual not to show your computer screen to the audience until it is 'set' at our first slide. The audience does not need to be distracted by you navigating around Windows and PowerPoint. By the way, this is NOT the time and place to review and edit a presentation that someone else has built for you. You can do that off-line without taking up everyone's time.

Know How to Toggle Your Computer Display Output:

Know what keys toggle your graphics image to your projector. Most computers have a three-way toggle: internal only, external only, and both. The key to use is usually marked on the keyboard with an image of a monitor or "LCD" and is pressed in combination with function key.

Disable Screen Savers and Power Management:

Turn off your screen saver or power management. Otherwise, if you stay on one slide too long, your computer will go to the screen saver or a blank screen in the middle of your presentation.

Begin Your Presentation Smoothly:

If you must work live in front of your audience to set up your presentation, memorize a few hotkeys to minimize the visual "noise" to which you subject your audience, e.g. Ahead of time, drag your PowerPoint file onto your desktop to create a shortcut icon. At presentation time, double click on this icon, and F5 to start your slide show ("Look Ma, no mousing"). PgDn to advance to the next slide and PgUp to go back within your presentation, "W" for a blank white image, "B" for a blank black image.

End Your Presentation Properly:

What image does your screen go to after your last slide? Avoid the situation whereby clicking on your last slide pops you into desktop mode PowerPoint, or to a blank screen with "Press Esc to return to PowerPoint" on it. If you don't want to leave your last content slide up, go to a general slide (e.g. your opening title slide, a slide saying "Questions?", a pleasing picture etc.). There may be an option for the technical people to go to a 'logo' slide.

Limit Laser Pointer Use and Mouse Movements

If you are going to use a laser pointer, do so sparingly. Do not keep the light dancing endlessly across the slide like a crazed bumblebee. Consider using your mouse if you want to maintain a 'pointer' on some part of your slide. Otherwise, keep the mouse off the screen.