

Hints for Power Point Presentations

PowerPoint presentations are not difficult to do!

Usually, in the typical venue, you will be using a laptop, and they often take getting used to. (If you give a lot of presentations, consider investing in one of your own. That way you'll have the advantage of familiarity with the equipment, and the presentation can be loaded and ready to go.)

The laptop will be connected to a projector which will show your slides on a screen. The laptop must be away from the screen so as not to block view; fairly close to the projector for easy connection. The screen should be placed at a level which does not cause either eyestrain or neck strain for the trainees. Several cables and cords are involved, so getting help is best. Bring extra power supply if possible, just in case—definitely if you're using your own equipment.

Do have the laptop turned off before you begin the setup operation. Depending on the make of computer, getting a display may involve either the "F1" or the "F3" key; try those if you're having trouble once everything is a) connected and b) turned on. Remove the projector lens cap for best display!

How to get the presentation up in a hurry, once you've found its file, brought it up, and have loaded PowerPoint? The quickest way is at the lower left corner of the PowerPoint screen. It looks like this:  Click on this, also, if you press the wrong key and exit from the presentation accidentally. It's much faster than Slide Show/View Show or View/Slide Show and will resume right where you were.

Incidentally, you might want to load more than one presentation—any you might think of using that day, in fact. Then they would all be accessible from the "Window" on the toolbar. And you could get them easily once it was time for them.

There are various ways to navigate through a presentation on a laptop. Some may work on one computer and not on another. The worst way is the "sensitive" touch pad; it's sure to zip you too many slides ahead. Best ways:

Forward:	Back
Left click	Right click
Enter	Backspace
Page down	Page up (<i>careful here because these may be too close to "Home" and "End"</i>)
Space bar	Up arrow (<i>my favorites</i>)
Down arrow	Left arrow
Right arrow	p(revious)
n(ext)	

If you are within a presentation, and, say, you need to go back several slides—if you can quickly find the slide number, just type it and press Enter. You'll return there. By the same token, you can also go forward. While practicing in show mode, try the F1 (help) key and look at all the commands available to you during the presentation.

Now you're breaking for "Break" or "Lunch." If you haven't made a slide for that—as I suggest below—perhaps you at least want to blank the screen. A simple touch on the "b" key will bring a black screen; the "w" key will get you a white screen. How's that? By the way, those are toggles; touch them again, and your display returns.

It's not hard, once you've decided on your schedule, to add some things that will make the presentation work better for you. For one thing, there's usually a master slide that will enable you to continue the look and feel of the presentation if you wish to insert a slide of your own (say, a slide with the day's schedule, a signal for a break or lunch, or something to personalize your show). You can add a slide by clicking on Insert/New Slide above the screen. This command will bring up several layouts for you to choose from. If you're just adding a word, such as "Lunch," choose the first layout, or the one that allows you "Title only" near the bottom. These will naturally give you a large font. There may be a default font, but you can change fonts and font sizes. The process will be familiar to you if you have used Windows programs. You might want a decorated font to signal a break, so you can experiment a little bit. Here is why you don't need to be worried:

- a. The left, curving arrow at the top of the screen will "undo" up to 20 actions, including the insertion, or deletion, of a slide.
- b. As long as you haven't saved anything, you still haven't trashed your presentation!
- c. Even if you've gone beyond that point, or saved unwanted material, you can still delete slides by the easy method of clicking on "Edit/Delete Slide."
- d. Unless you're a seasoned PowerPoint user, it's best to limit your changes to the slides to this type of change at end or beginning of a presentation. Even rearranging the order would put them out of sync with the manuals, so that's to be avoided. If you really need a different order, you can use the "jumping" technique described above, and notify your audience of what you're doing.

While you're in the show, you can use the PowerPoint arrow to be your laser pointer if you wish. You can even change the arrow to a little "pen" shape, and make the pen a different color, by clicking either right or left button on your mouse or pad on the "show" icon I illustrated earlier (or Control-p). Doing it again, or Control-a, changes it back. The only drawback is that to point, you may have to move the pen or arrow across one of those "sensitive" touchpads, and instead of pointing to something, you'll find yourself jumping ahead to a different display. If it's your laptop, de-sensitizing the pad according to the instructions on your particular computer, long in advance of the presentation, is the best way to handle this. (It's a menu command somewhere within your laptop customization options.) Alternately, bring or arrange for a laser pointer—or a long wooden or steel pointer—to make your points. Fingers don't make good pointers. Caution—laser pointers in an unsteady hand can cause audience vertigo, too.

Should you, as a trainer, need to print from your slides, you can do so from the print menu. You can print the slides alone, the slides and notes, various styles of handouts, etc. Be careful, when you do, to make sure you have specified which slides you want printed unless you want them all, which is the default. Also—important tip—unless you're going to want very dark, unreadable images, choose not just "black and white, but "pure black and white" before you print!

Good luck in presenting your show!