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BUILDING CREATIVE BRIDGES

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Best Practices: PowerPoint for Onsite and Online Presentations

1. Make Powerpoint a tool, not a focal point, for your presentations.
2. PowerPoint slides should be seen, not read aloud.
3. Use a combination of text and images (pictures, screenshots, custom-made graphics) which contribute to, rather than repeat, what you as a presenter are saying.
4. Whenever possible, replace bullet points with a combination of a word, phrase, or short sentence and an image which fits the theme under discussion to stimulate rather than replace thought and discussion.

5. Use the Slide Sorter view in Powerpoint (choose "View," then "Slide Sorter") to help you create a narrative flow through the images as well as through the text of your PowerPoint presentation.
6. Keep the presentation interactive. (Examples: frequent classroom discussions rather than long stretches of lecture; online blackboards, chats, and voice-to-voice exchanges using Voice Over Internet Protocal— Wikipedia has a great introductory article on VoIP).
7. For webinars (where the presenter is only heard, not seen), you'll need more slides so you can put new images on the screen more frequently than you would when you are visible; this creates a sense of motion and momentum.
8. Use stories to make the presentation "sticky" (memorable).
9. Provide a visual rather than text bibliography by displaying covers of the books on one slide.
10. Try anything which can successfully engage an audience and build bridges between presenters and those attending the presentations. Great presentations encourage exchanges so that everybody learns and wins.

Notes: Much of what is included here is drawn from Cliff Atkinson's *Beyond Bullet Points*, Chip & Dan Heath's *Made to Stick*, Daniel Pink's *A Whole New Mind*, and the work of first-rate bloggers and other colleagues who are exploring ways to emphasize the visual elements of PowerPoint while moving us away from the deadly read-the-slides-until-you-and-your-audience-drop technique of presenting. It's not complicated, but it does require more time than the traditional template-based format which most of us learned when we learned how to use (and misuse) PowerPoint.

Special kudos go to Infopeople (http://infopeople.org) and ASTD Mt. Diablo Chapter presenters for their instinctive feel for effectively incorporating imagery into their presentations and their willingness recently to try new things each time they prepared a presentation. Special thanks to Roberto Giannicola (http://provokare.com) for his first-rate presentation to the Mt. Diablo Chapter of the American Society for Training & Development in June 2008 ("Best Practices: Storytelling and Images as Training Tools") and his example of a visual bibliography using book covers rather than text and titles.

Resources

Books
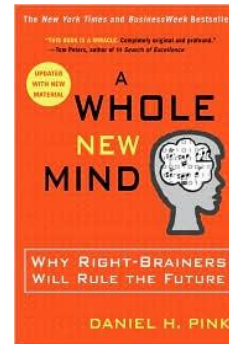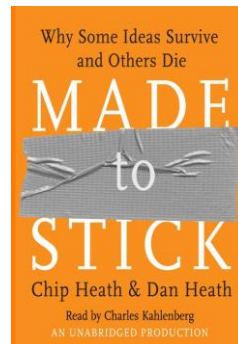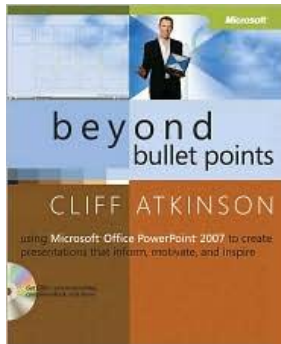
Blogs
The Beyond Bullet Points Blog, by Cliff Atkinson, http://www.beyondbulletpoints.com/blog/
Presentation Zen, by Garr Reynolds, http://www.presentationzen.com/presentationzen/
How to Change the World, by Guy Kawasaki, http://blog.guykawasaki.com/

Blog Articles
Michele Martin, The Bamboo Project Blog, "9 Lessons I Learned From Running My First Webinar"
http://michelemartin.typepad.com/thebambooprojectblog//2008/01/what-i-learned.html
Paul Signorelli, Infoblog, "Best Practices: Training, Story, and Powerpoint (three-part series)"
http://infoblog.infopeople.org/2008/03/best_practices_training_story.php
http://infoblog.infopeople.org/2008/04/best_practices_training_story_1.php
http://infoblog.infopeople.org/2008/04/best_practices_training_story_2.php

Images
Google Images (http://images.google.com; no charge, but always good practice to credit source)
Library of Congress (http://www.loc.gov/rr/print/catalog.html; no charge, but always good practice to credit source)
Flickr (http://flickr.com; no charge, but always good practice to credit source)
iStockPhotos (http://www.istockphoto.com; fee-based)

Examples
http://www.provokare.com/files/ASTD_SanRamon_Jun17_ProvokarePresentations.pdf
http://www.provokare.com/files/Picture_your_presentation.pdf

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