



Presentations

You have all seen a poor presentation: no clear message; a presentation with no structure—no beginning or middle or end; slides with type that is too small for the audience to read or slides that are confusing with too much information; too many slides, so the time on screen for a slide is far too short; extemporaneous delivery by someone who should not attempt this style; obvious unfamiliarity with the topic; and so on. . .

We offer this guide as a step in making sure your NETL presentation is good and that you feel comfortable in giving it. We have compiled this guide in three sections: planning, creating, and delivery. We hope this guide will help you feel comfortable in creating your own presentation, with assistance from experts as needed. We also hope this guide will help you understand why planning is the first step in creating a presentation, and why delivery may be the most important part of a good presentation.

This guide has been completely linked and bookmarked. Click on the contents section you wish to read to go directly to that section, or use the bookmark view (click on the bookmark tab in the upper left corner).

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Planning an NETL Presentation

There are three parts to giving a presentation: planning, creating, and delivery. This section should help you plan your presentation, whether it is a technical discussion, an executive overview, a welcoming address, an uplifting message, or an educational lecture.

This is intended as brief review of what you should consider in planning your presentation. For assistance, go to the experts: read some of the excellent guides and visit some of the websites we list on how to plan your presentation.

Presentations are the most visible extensions of NETL's vision, goals, and culture and thus they reflect our identity. They enhance the way we are perceived **if they are done right**, and this is the reason we offer this guide—to help you make sure your presentation enhances NETL's image.

First Get the Facts

Before you can begin planning what you are going to say, you need some facts. The speech profile shown in the box is used for every speech given by the NETL Director.

This is the planning part of a presentation. The speechwriter needs answers to these questions before planning and preparing a presentation for the Director. When all these items are answered, the speechwriter knows **how** long the speech is to be, **what** the Director is to talk about, **where** and **when** the speech will be given, and **why** the presentation is being given. The speechwriter also knows if visuals will be used and if so, what type.

You also need to know the answers to these questions for any presentation you are giving.

Ten-Word Message. Can you condense your topic to a ten-word message? This brief statement of what you plan to say incorporates the theme of the event and why you are speaking. Then, as you prepare your presentation, make sure what you plan to say, and what visuals you plan to use, all enhance this 10-word message.

Speech Profile	
<i>Speaker:</i>	
<i>Date of speech:</i>	
<i>Due date to speaker:</i>	
<i>Event:</i>	
<i>Location (business, city, state):</i>	
<i>Theme of event:</i>	
<i>Title of speech:</i>	
<i>Theme of speech:</i>	
<i>Ten-word message:</i>	
<i>Expected outcome(s):</i>	
<i>Time of day:</i>	
<i>Length of time allotted for speaking:</i>	
<i>Length of time allotted for questions:</i>	
<i>Other speakers and speech topics:</i> (attached agenda or program if available)	
<i>Anticipated audience size:</i>	
<i>Make-up of audience:</i>	
<i>Visuals:</i>	<input type="checkbox"/> Vugraphs <input type="checkbox"/> 35mm Slides <input type="checkbox"/> Video <input type="checkbox"/> Flipchart <input type="checkbox"/> None
<i>Handouts:</i>	
<i>Technical point of contact:</i>	
<i>Communications contact:</i>	
<i>Speechwriter:</i>	
<i>References:</i>	

Presentation Type

What you say and how you say it depends on the type of presentation you are giving. And the type of presentation depends on the theme of the event and how long you are to speak. Do you need to inform, persuade, or entertain your audience? Are you speaking first thing in the morning? Right after lunch? Gear your presentation to fit the time of day as well the theme and the amount of time.

Welcoming Address. A welcoming address is just that—a welcome to the meeting. It is brief, puts the audience at ease, and sets the tone for the meeting. You may be introducing speakers or topics; you may need to speak about housekeeping details.

Executive Overview. If you are going to be a keynote speaker at a conference, opening a specific session at the conference, or summarizing results of a panel discussion, you are probably planning to present an executive overview. An executive overview looks at the big picture and is not detailed or too technical. The executive overview can set the stage for the presentations that follow, or can wrap up a meeting with a summary of what was presented.

Technical Discussion. If you are presenting a paper at a professional organization conference or a contractor review meeting for a specific technology, you are probably planning a technical discussion. A technical discussion assumes the audience has a certain level of knowledge and expertise in the topic. Your presentation then is a discussion among peers, and you need to be prepared for technical questions. A technical discussion often leads to technical papers or poster presentations that are compiled into proceedings.

Educational Lecture. An educational lecture is intended to instruct, and the audience is supposed to come away having learned something. The audience is there because they need to learn and they may take notes. Be prepared for specific questions; many students learn by asking questions

An Uplifting Message. An uplifting message is an inspirational speech, a rally call to action, a sermon. If your talk is supposed to convince your audience that action is needed now, you are presenting an uplifting message. For this type of presentation to succeed, you need expert help on how to present your message. You will not be effective if you read a script, for example.

Outline Your Speech

This will help you see key points. You need a beginning, middle, and an end. You can write an outline in words, phrases, or key sentences. You can outline your speech following one of several patterns.

- **Topical.** This is an effective approach for informative or entertaining speeches. You have several ideas to present, and one idea naturally proceeds to the next. An executive overview or a welcoming address could fit the topical approach.
- **Chronological.** A chronological approach uses time as a framework and is especially useful in informative and persuasive speeches. You could use a chronological approach for a technical discussion or an educational lecture.
- **Classification.** This approach puts points into categories. You could use this pattern for almost any type of speech and to inform, persuade, or entertain your audience.
- **Problem/Solution or Cause/Effect.** These patterns are most useful for persuasive speeches—an uplifting message or an educational lecture, for example. The first part of the problem/solution speech outlines the problem; the second part presents the solution. The first part of the cause/effect speech describes the cause of a problem and the second part describes the effect.

You can also sketch your talk as a flow chart, planning your speech in a top-down or bottom-up structure.

- **Bottom-Up:** The chronological way research is done is a bottom-up structure. You begin with objectives, conduct your research, and you document your results. If you want to build to a conclusion, you will be using the bottom-up approach. You will discuss the points of your topic and show how they lead to your conclusion. So the real message is at the end of your talk.
- **Top-Down:** A top-down structure communicates the main points of the research more effectively. You begin with the main topic and discuss your conclusion. Then you go back and add the points of your topic and discuss the details that prove your conclusion. The real message is at the beginning of your talk. An added benefit of a top-down approach is that you can easily cut information. Prune the lowest parts of the discussion first, the smaller details. You can also do this as you give the presentation if your time is limited.

Organize Your Thoughts

Know your subject. This is self-evident. But the type of presentation you are planning may require you to do some research on side issues that bear on your subject. You may need to find out about NETL priorities with respect to your topic area. You need to know if your talk should mirror the NETL mission and goals. Are you talking as an NETL spokesperson? Are you speaking as a subject expert?

What does your audience need to know? What do you want them to do as a result of your presentation—make a decision, change how they think about a problem, submit a proposal for research, promise cooperative efforts? The answers to these questions will help you organize the material you select to present and the information you need to emphasize.

How much time do you have to speak? What do you need to say in the time allotted? Do you have too much material to present? Decide what you can talk about and what can be omitted or left to a question and answer period.

Using Visuals

If you are going to use visuals, you should story board your speech, that is, sketch your speech slide by slide, following your outline. Talk with a communications representative or ask the Graphics team for assistance in story boarding.

If you are using visuals, you should plan the visuals first—before you write your speech. You need to make sure the visuals enhance and illustrate what you are going to say. Review the next section of this presentation guideline on creating your presentation, which deals specifically with devising visuals.

Writing the Speech

Begin writing. Use your outline to write your speech or your talking points. You can write an actual speech, word for word, or write an expanded outline that you will use as talking points. But know your own style and your own capabilities—can you give an effective speech based on talking points or will you stumble and lose track of what you are saying?

Report

Before building new capacity, utilities are expected to use other options to meet demand growth – maintenance of existing plants, power imports from Canada and Mexico, and purchases from cogenerators. Even so, assuming an average plant capacity of 300 megawatts, a projected 1,000 new plants with a total of 300 gigawatts of capacity will be needed by 2020 to meet growing demand and to offset retirements. Of the new capacity, 90 percent is projected to be combined-cycle or combustion turbine technology fueled by natural gas or both oil and gas. Both technologies are designed primarily to supply peak and intermediate capacity, but combined-cycle can also be used to meet baseload requirements. (*Annual Energy Outlook 2000*, p. 65)

Speech

- 1,000 new generating plants needed by 2020. Given an average plant capacity of 300 megawatts, this means 300 gigawatts of capacity.
- 90% of this will be combined-cycle or combustion turbine technology, and the fuel will be natural gas or both oil and gas.

Remember that a speech is not a report. You do not talk the way you write. What you say in a paper is not how you discuss a topic in front of an audience.

Avoid long, convoluted sentences. Use the first person. What could sound silly in a written piece can work quite well in a spoken presentation. You can speak in incomplete sentences, repeat yourself for emphasis, use slang or jargon, begin with a story or joke.

Don't make your speech too long. The standard is about 100 words per minute. It's far better to speak for less time than allotted than to go into overtime. Your audience is more apt to pay

attention to and remember a short punchy speech than a long, boring lecture. And consider if you need to include time for questions as you plan what you will say.

Say what you have written aloud and revise your speech accordingly.

Begin With an Introduction. Why are you speaking? What will you be talking about? Why does the audience care? Your audience will listen more intelligently and will understand more readily if you let them know up front what you plan to talk about. If you plan to cover three main points, enumerate them. If there will be time for questions at the end of your talk, say so. Give hints about your speech, and repeat these hints as you progress through the speech.

You can begin with a story—but make sure it is pertinent and that your audience sees the connection. The story should be interesting and not too long. You can use humor if the situation is appropriate and if you understand your capabilities in making humor work.

End With Punch. Let your audience know you are about to end your speech. You can summarize what you have talked about, or leave your audience with a point to remember. You can end with another story, but only if it is pertinent.

References

The websites listed below offer hints, tutorials, and step by step instructions on planning a presentation.

TLC Seminars - Presentation Skills:

<http://www.tlsem.com/porganize.htm>

University of Kansas - Virtual Presentation Assistant:

<http://www.ukans.edu/cwis/units/coms2/vpa/vpa.htm>

Bill Communications, Inc. – Creating and Presenting:

<http://presentations.com/>

RAND – Guidelines for Preparing Briefings:

<http://www.rand.org/rand/online.pubs.html#classics>

Creating an NETL Presentation

There are three parts to giving a presentation: planning, creating, and delivery. This section gives you hints about how to prepare your presentation using NETL's standard PowerPoint template: incorporating photos from the NETL image bank; incorporating graphics; and deciding if using sound, videos, animation, or a combination will work with your presentation.

However, this is a first aid document; it is not a surgical procedure. Go to the experts if you are having problems. Read some of the excellent guides and visit some of the web sites we list on how to prepare a presentation; practice with PowerPoint using their help function; ask Graphics personnel for assistance.

A PowerPoint presentation can be electronic—shown on a screen using a computer, or printed—shown on a screen using an overhead projector. Use clear Mylar sheets to print a presentation for overhead projection and be sure to print color slides using a color printer

You have already determined the purpose of your talk, the reason you are giving a presentation. You know what you are to talk about and who your audience is. You know how long your presentation is to be. And you already know what type of presentation you are giving – a technical discussion, an executive overview, an uplifting message, a welcoming address, an educational lecture.

You have determined that a slide presentation will enhance your talk, that your audience will learn and remember more if you give them both visual and verbal information. A good blend of visuals and narrative is the best to communicate your message. You also know that your visual presentation must illustrate your verbal information, not replace it, which will distract and confuse your audience.

Organize Your Materials

Collect your materials: the papers, recent presentations, and illustrative material that you will use to prepare your presentation.

Outline what you plan to say and how you can illustrate it. Your outline should include the who, what, when, how, and why of your talk and in an appropriate order (e.g., begin with who you are and what you are talking about). You need to prepare your talk and presentation at the same time. That is, think about how you can enhance what you are saying, what you can show that will help your audience remember your main points.

An excellent way to make sure your visuals illustrate what you are saying is to build your talk using the “notes” view in PowerPoint. This means you draft your slides first, and create your talk based on the slides.

Sketch the Slides

How many slides should you prepare? The standard is 1 minute per slide. This means your audience needs at least 1 minute to comprehend what you are showing on each slide. So if your talk is to be 20 minutes long, you should have no more than about 15 to 20 slides. You will

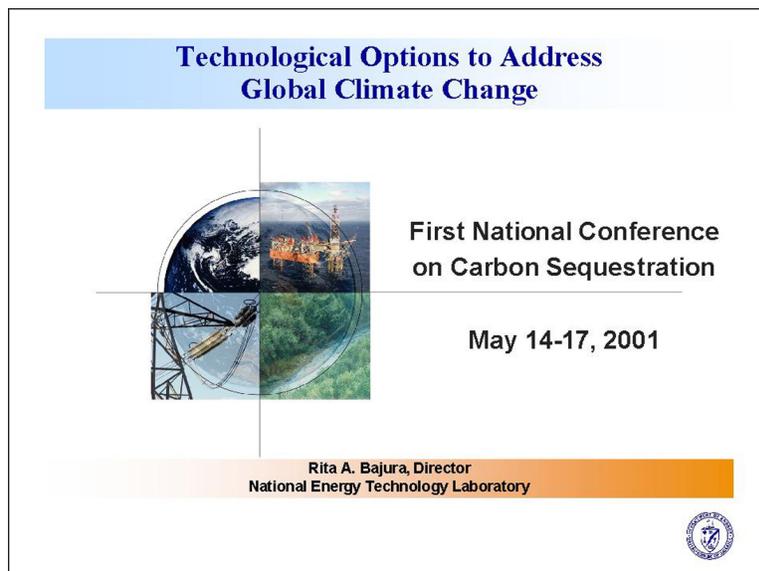
exhaust your audience if you flip through slides too quickly. They will try to read and assimilate what you are showing, rather than listening to you speak.

Use words sparingly. You need to use words, but make these be key words that you expand upon in your talk. Your audience will read what you have on the screen. If you use too many words, your audience will be distracted and may miss what you are saying. And don't include everything you are going to say—this is boring and will put your audience to sleep.

Too Many Words	Deleting Unnecessary Words
<p style="text-align: center;">Objectives</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • To develop a methodology for the efficient implementation of detailed combustion chemistry which (1) can be applied to any detailed mechanism, (2) is efficient with controlled accuracy, and (3) requires minimal human effort to apply • To test thoroughly the methodology with different mechanisms for simple flows under different thermal conditions • To use the methodology in existing PDF codes for lean premixed combustion in combustor geometries for which there are benchmark quality experimental data 	<p style="text-align: center;">Objectives</p> <p style="text-align: center;">Develop the methodology</p> <p style="text-align: center;">Test the methodology</p> <p style="text-align: center;">Use the methodology</p>

If possible, use photos and graphics instead of words. Explain what the graphics show; explain how the photos illustrate your points. Look for places where you can replace a table or a list with a visual. Use a photo to show an example of a particular technology, a graph to illustrate a trend.

Do plan an opening slide, one that you can show while people are settling down or while you are getting ready to talk. This can be the title of your talk and where you are presenting it—the cover page. The example below includes a photo of the globe cut into fourths. Three of the photos pertain to the title of the talk. (See the subheading “Adding Photos and Graphics.”)

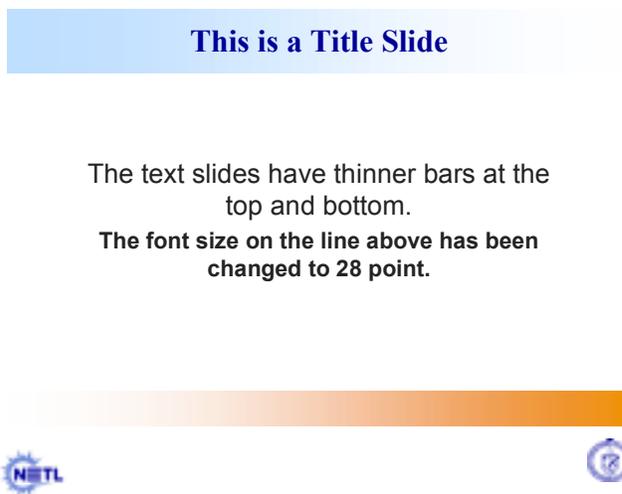


You can begin your talk with an outline of what you plan to say, and then you can repeat this slide as you continue through your talk. Your audience will understand and remember what you say better if they (1) know what you are going to talk about, and (2) are reminded what you have already talked about. A summary slide near the end can help you conclude your talk.

Use a header or title on each slide—these could be the main points of your talk or the outline of what you are saying. And each slide should make only one major point. If you find yourself unable to give a title to a planned slide, perhaps you are trying to convey more than one point. Or perhaps the slide is unnecessary.

Microsoft PowerPoint

The NETL PowerPoint Template



NETL has created a PowerPoint template. Using this template means that your presentation will be consistent with other NETL presentations. The template makes your job easier and it enhances our image as a unified organization with knowledgeable personnel who give high quality presentations.

Click on the PowerPoint software icon that is part of the desktop of all NETL employees. Two NETL templates are in the “new” folder: “Draft NETL Presentation” and “NETL Presentation.”

The draft template has a “draft” watermark on each screen, which you can remove: go to the “format” pull down menu, choose “apply design,” click on “templates,” and choose “NETL Presentation” instead of “Draft NETL Presentation.” The template has a white background, the NETL and DOE logos, a blue bar at the top that fades to the right, and an orange bar at the bottom that fades to the left.

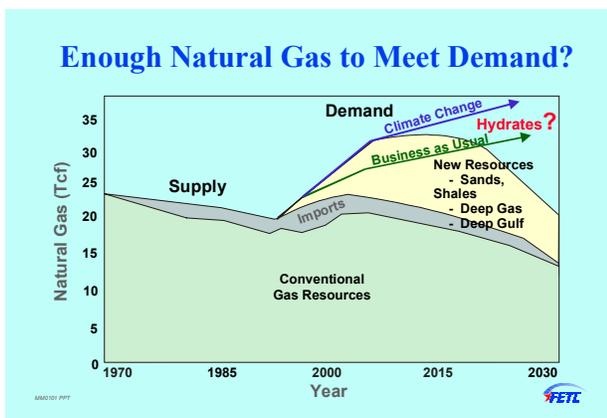
The title goes in or below the blue bar at the top and has already been set to the Times New Roman typeface, bold, 33 point, and is a dark blue. The text has been set to the Arial typeface, 24 point, in black. Arial is a sans serif typeface, and Times New Roman is a serif typeface. Studies have shown that sans serif is easier to read than serif in a presentation. But using Times New Roman for the title sets it apart from the rest of the slide. Using more typefaces than these two will clutter your slides (called “creeping elegance”). Be careful about using a smaller size type; the template choices are the minimum sizes for easy viewing by your audience.

The point sizes of the title and text dictate how many lines of text you can fit on one slide. If you change to a smaller point size, you run the risk of making your slide illegible to those who sit farther away from the screen. Illegible slides are worse than useless, because your audience will strain to read them instead of listening to you.

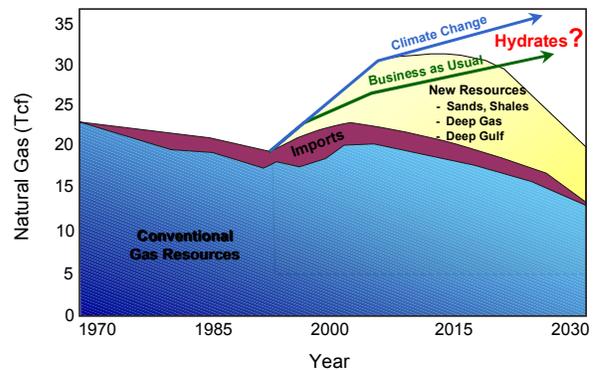
The next few subheadings outline how to use NETL assets to build your presentation in PowerPoint. For more information on how PowerPoint works, go to the help function and review the Contents and Index.

Using and Modifying Existing Slides

To add a slide to your existing presentation, go to view, slide sorter, and move your arrow to where you want the slide to appear. Then go to insert to add a new slide or an existing slide from a file. If you choose a slide from an older pre-NETL presentation, the NETL template will overlay the earlier information. That is, FETC will become NETL, for example, and the background color will change from aqua to white. The new template may change colors in your graphics; you may need to edit the slide.



Enough Natural Gas to Meet Demand?



It's easy to edit slides. Simply click where you want to edit. You can delete photos and pull in new ones, change the text, change colors, and change font sizes much as you would in a word processing program. To add a number or descriptor in the lower right hand corner, go to the "View" pull down menu, choose "Master," and edit the text box in the lower right corner. The font type and size in the Master document is Arial Italic, 6 point.

Adding Photos and Graphics

The Graphics department can send you electronic copies of existing art—schematics, charts, line drawings, and photos that have been used in past presentations or reports. You will need to request these by the NETL graphics code. Or ask a communications representative for assistance. Presentations given by the Director and other technical experts are available on the Intranet. These presentations include excellent, top quality slides with graphics and photos that can be used by any NETL employee.

Minimize your use of clip art, especially cartoons. Clip art was amazing and wonderful when it first became available for casual users, but audiences are now sophisticated enough to recognize it. If you need original art, sketch your idea and talk about what you want to show with a Graphics expert.



Or choose an NETL photo that is specific to your talk.

The photo on the left appears to be a power plant; it's from Word clip art.

The photo on the right is from the NETL image bank and is of the LIMB/ Coolside Clean Coal Technology demonstration



project at Ohio Edison's Edgewater Station, Unit 4 in Lorain, Ohio.

NETL Image Bank. The NETL image bank, available on our intranet, has hundreds of photos you can use to illustrate your talk. You can also have your own photos scanned and converted to electronic files. Talk with NETL Photography personnel for assistance in scanning photos.

To pull an image from the image bank into your slide, click on the image bank, choose the catalog you wish to review, and enter a topic in the search box. Check those photos you want added to the "image basket." At the end of your search, click on the "collection basket" and one or more jpg filenames will appear, depending on how many photos you have chosen. You can also request a higher resolution photo from the person noted in the image bank for any given photo.

To make a photo appear in your slide, click on the file name, then right click on the actual photo, and choose copy. Then go to your PowerPoint slide and click paste. Although many different electronic photo formats can be pulled into PowerPoint, jpg or gif files work best.

You can position a photo by clicking on it and moving your cursor to where you want it to be. You can also resize the photo by clicking on it, going to an edge or corner and when your cursor becomes a double arrow, moving the arrow. Practice this, and be careful that you don't destroy the proportions of the photo (making it longer in proportion to width than the original, for example).

Graphics can help you size different photos to fit and insert in the globe photo shown on page 2 of this section (NETL's Role in Environmental Management). You choose the photos you want, and replace existing photos with your choices.

A caution: making a new photo that is a collection of photos (photomontage) yields a very large file. You may have trouble pulling up slides on a projection screen that have several color photos. Your computer could also lock up. Graphics personnel can help you reduce the file size.

Using Color or Black and White

Color adds visual appeal and color can help illustrate things that would otherwise be hard to show, for example, multiple overlapping and intersecting lines on a graph. But color should be used to clarify meaning or to add emphasis, not to decorate your slides.

PowerPoint has nearly unlimited colors. Some colors do not show up well on a screen. Yellow does not project well; save it to use as a highlighter. Blue and green are often difficult to distinguish from each other, so don't use them next to each other unless you are coloring large portions, such as parts of a large pie chart. Some particular shades of certain colors seem to vibrate if mixed together, for example, certain shades of red mixed with certain shades of green or blue. You'll see this on your computer screen.

The more complex your color choices are, the larger your file will be. Using black and white instead of color has advantages and disadvantages. The file sizes are much smaller, but details may get lost in shades of gray. But you should consider cost if you need to distribute handouts of your presentation; black and white printing is much cheaper.

PowerPoint Notes Pages

You can describe your slides by adding text on notes pages attached to each slide. If you build your talk around your slides, you can then write your speech based on your notes pages.

Go to the "View" pulldown menu and choose "Notes Page." Use the zoom button to enlarge the area, and key in your explanation, your talking point, what you will discuss. Remember again that your slide should enhance what you are saying.

Computer-Driven Presentations

If you are using a computer to run your PowerPoint presentation, you have animation options that can enhance your slides. Review these options in the help function of PowerPoint or ask Graphics personnel for assistance.

Transitions. A transition should not distract your audience from what you are showing, but can help you move from one slide to the next. We recommend that you chose one type of transition for your presentation.

Buils. You can add bullets in a list as you discuss them, sections of a flow chart as you discuss the process, emphasize a point as you are making it. This helps your audience focus on what you are saying. Using the build function can make a lengthy, wordy slide more viewer friendly.

You can make the build be dynamic. For example, you can have a trend line move or bars grow as you discuss the chart. You can also make bullets or word tables appear and be highlighted one at a time, and have previous material grayed out.

Incorporating Audio and Video

How much time do you have for your presentation? Will showing a video clip or incorporating sound help keep your audience's attention? Using computer projection means that today's presentations can be far more interesting than those of even a few years ago. Check the PowerPoint Index under the help menu for how to add video and audio.

Graphics or Multimedia personnel can help you add a clip from a video that is pertinent to your talk. Ask a Graphics or Multimedia employee to review your movie with you; identify the part you want incorporated.

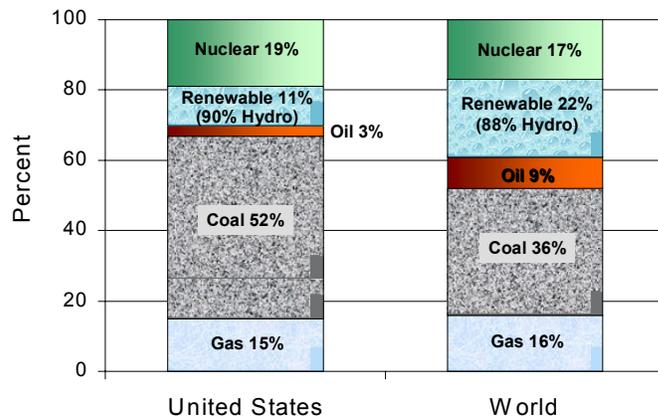
Movies and sound take up a lot of file space. You will need a powerful computer with special effects on your computer to add these features.

Reviewing Your Slides

After you've assembled your slide presentation, review it. Arrange to view it on a large screen. Colors, size of type, spacing, graphs, and photos can all change drastically when projected on a large screen.

You can change the order of your presentation. Go to slide view and simply click on the slide you wish to move and drag your cursor to where you'd like it to appear.

Fossil Fuels Dominate Electricity Generation



Here is a great visual, a graph that shows a lot of data but illustrates it so well that the message is not confusing.

The slide is from a presentation by the NETL Director (The Role of Fossil Energy in a Carbon-Constrained World) given at a conference in February 2000.

The data could have been presented in a table, which is better than words, but still something that viewers would try to read. Or the data could have been presented in two bar

charts with each type of fuel being a separate bar. A bar chart is much more graphic than a table. But combining the data for the U.S. and the World into cumulative bar charts makes it possible to put both in the same slide. Adding color and background patterns makes the types of fuels show up clearly, which makes it more likely that the viewer will remember what was on the slide.

Although this presentation did not include notes pages, a notes page for this graphic could detail what the two bar graphs show, a note about coal being the biggest contributor, and what this means. In the talk that accompanies this presentation, the Director's comments for this slide were: *Electricity is the fastest growing segment of the energy market. And—most often—the fuel used to generate electricity is a fossil fuel. Both in the U.S. and worldwide, fossil fuels are the dominant energy source for electricity generation. As a large point source, power generation may be forced to meet a disproportionate share of any mandated CO₂ reduction. How can we decouple fossil fuels from CO₂ emissions?*

The Director did not explain the graph; she simply used it to illustrate her point. But then the graphic is so well done that explanation is not really needed.

Saving Your Presentation

We encourage you to save your final presentation by submitting it to the Web Manager for posting on the Internet. You will then be able to access it at any time, and other NETL employees will also have access. Here's a way to show off your great presentation!

References

The websites listed below offer hints, tutorials, and step by step instructions on creating presentations in PowerPoint.

Online Tutorial for PowerPoint 97:

<http://www.microsoft.com/education/tutorial/classroom/ppt97/>

PowerPoint 97 Tips:

<http://coverage.cnet.com/Content/Features/Howto/Ofc97tips/ss05.html>

Catalyst Quick Guide - Create PowerPoint Presentations:

<http://depts.washington.edu/catalyst/quick/ppt.html>

Oregon State University - Giving Effective PowerPoint Presentations:

http://www.bus.orst.edu/tools/support/pwr_pnt/default.htm

Acadia University - PowerPoint Resource Center:

<http://plato.acadiau.ca/sandbox/ppt/ppt.htm>

Delivering an NETL Presentation

There are three parts to giving a presentation: planning, creating, and delivery. This section gives you some hints about delivering your presentation: how to reduce your stress so your presentation is effective, and how to help your audience get the most out of your presentation.

This section contains a group of hints on delivering your presentation. For assistance in becoming a more effective public speaker, consider joining the Toastmasters club in your area. Talk to the experts on the Graphics team, or ask for help from your communications representative. Visit some of the websites listed at the end of this section. The Toastmasters International web page includes information about how to join and what clubs are located near you: <http://www.toastmasters.org/join.htm>

Delivery is the most important part of a presentation, because no matter how well done your presentation is, if you can't stand up in front of an audience and comfortably give your speech, your audience will not hear what you have to say. They will be too busy empathizing and agonizing with you, hoping you can get through the speech without too much awkwardness.

Getting Ready

If you know you need to read your speech, print it out in a larger than normal font (for example, 16 point) and leave the bottom third of each page blank. Number the pages. As you practice it, highlight phrases and points you want to emphasize.

Use the same format even if you feel comfortable with talking points instead of a written speech. Having something in hand will make you feel more prepared. You can use cue cards instead of normal size sheets of paper.

Confirm the time and place for your presentation. Confirm that the audiovisual resources you need will be available where you give your presentation.

Use NETL resources to help you get ready. If you will be using visuals, find out if you will need to use an overhead projector or if you can use computer projection. NETL has laser pointers you can use. NETL can also provide you with a laptop computer so you can give a computer projection of your speech. This means you can add video, audio, or animation to your presentation.

Practice

Practice, practice, practice. This is the most important part of delivery. First take the time to practice what you have prepared by yourself. Deliver the speech out loud. Time yourself. If it's too long, shorten it. If it's too short, chances are you are speaking too fast, so slow down.

A good way to practice delivery is in front of a mirror. No actual presentation will be as embarrassing as watching yourself talk in front of a mirror. Then, if you have time, practice your talk in front of some good friends or peers and ask them for critiques. Once you have gone through both these steps, the actual speech in front of an impartial audience will be easy.

Try to arrange to view any visuals in a setting similar to what you will have when you give your presentation. Check that visuals are clearly legible from all parts of the audience. Do you have too much information on your slides? Do the slides really enhance what you are saying? Do the colors and graphics come across as you planned? Now is the time to correct any problems.

Speaking Do's

- Do see yourself giving your speech. See yourself speaking confidently with a loud, clear voice. When you see yourself as successful, you will be.
- Do dress comfortably and suitably for the occasion. Don't wear that flashy, uncomfortable new outfit.
- Do stand straight with your hands and feet at ease. Relax. Ease tension by doing a few exercises beforehand.
- Do take a deep breath at the beginning, and pause and do the same if you begin to feel nervous. Take a sip of water.
- Do harness your nervousness. Harness your nervous energy and transform it to enthusiasm.
- Do speak clearly in a normal tone of voice with normal inflections. Bring variations to the loudness according to the mood of your words.
- Do look at people in the audience. If you must read your presentation, look up every now and then, and move your eyes around the audience.
- Do greet some of the audience as they arrive if you can. It's easier to speak to people you know than a group of strangers.
- Do move around if that is comfortable for you and suitable for your presentation. Use gestures if you are comfortable doing so.

Speaking Don'ts

- Don't mumble.
- Don't speak too fast. If you race through your speech, you will lose your audience.
- Don't look down at your speech and read it painfully word for word, losing your place and stumbling because you haven't practiced enough.
- Don't jiggle the change in your pockets, clench your fists, grip the podium.
- Don't apologize—for anything: for slide quality (it's too late now), the poor acoustics or audiovisual equipment (beyond your control), your speaking abilities or lack thereof (you'll do better than you think), the time of day you're giving your speech (that was predetermined). If you apologize, you are calling your audience's attention to something they probably did not notice. And if they do notice that your slides are too busy and hard to read, for example, they will be annoyed with you for calling it to their attention. (So why are you showing them? Why didn't you fix this before the presentation?)

Remember

Your audience wants you to succeed. They will be embarrassed for you if you have trouble speaking, if you lose your place, or if you hesitate and can't find the right words. Most of them have also given presentations. Your audience will not be as critical of your performance as you are.

Be prepared to cut your talk. If you follow several other speakers, the time schedule may be crunched. You'll endear yourself to your audience if you shorten your talk and get things back on track.

Practice, practice, practice. This is the key to a successful presentation.

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