

PRESENTATION TIPS: POWERPOINT MAKEOVERS

Reprinted from Midwest Meetings, Spring/Summer 2003

Before and **AFTER**

Design skills and stock media can bring slide imagery alive.

Iconix Pharmaceuticals, based in Mountain View, Calif., knows the value of a professionally designed presentation. Specializing in field of genomics (the study of genes) and drug development, the firm must make presentations on the complex topics without bogging the audience down with technical details.

Executives from the company approached our marketing-design firm, The Presentation Team, to give their presentation a facelift. They wanted a more polished look and overall, more memorable presentations.

At first glance the presentation the company submitted seemed fairly solid, but it lacked the creativity to lure the audience into the topic. The introductory slide, for example, was cluttered with images, and the data slides did not use any graphics or pictures.

To add some spice, we dove into our library of stock media. Unless you're a gifted graphic artist, using stock media is an efficient strategy for making professional looking presentations. A huge array of pre-designed templates and royalty-free images are available to the resourceful developer. Some can be found online for free, but most must be purchased either alone or in sets, or volumes. For a variety of photos, illustrations, and movies, try www.corbis.com.

Once you've found the stock images or templates you want, you need a digital-imaging program such as Adobe Photoshop to edit and arrange them to your specifications. If you're going to assemble these images for a PowerPoint slide or pages, we suggest you build a Photoshop document to fit the slide. Start by creating the new Photoshop file with a resolution of 1,024 x 768 pixels. Then begin adding and editing new images to your liking. Once the slide page is laid out and saved as a layered Photoshop file, you can use the "save as" command to create individual image files (by making the appropriate layer or layers visible) and saving them as PNG files or importing into PowerPoint. Alternatively, you can flatten the entire Photoshop document and "save" it as a JPEG for importing into PowerPoint as a single file.

Following are some examples of original artwork and the updated artwork with the use of stock media and some creative energy.

AP

A case study on improving graphics

Iconix at a Glance

- **Founded 1998; 43 employees**
- **Financing**
 - Abingworth, NP, KPCB
 - Motorola
- **Products**
 - ChemExpress chemical genomics database
 - Drug discovery for kinases, small G-proteins, DNA repair
- **Key Capabilities**
 - Bio- and chemo-informatics; databases/software development; expression profiling; novel bioassay development; drug discovery
- **Key Founding Advisors**
 - P. Brown (Stanford); J. Chabala (Pharmacopela); R. Smith (Merck); F. McCormick (UCSF); F. Cohen (UCSF); K. Zarut (Fox Chase)

A simple way of delivering bullet points. Effective, but it lacks visual stimulation.

Before and **AFTER**

The bullet points have been converted to free-standing boxes, complete with relevant images. The text is handled within PowerPoint, and the sub-bullets are placed on top.

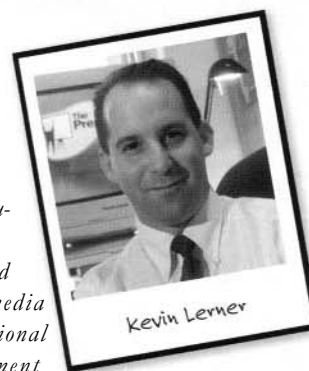
Iconix at a Glance

Founded 1998 43 employees	Financing Abingworth, NP, KPCB Motorola	
Products ChemExpress chemical genomics database Drug discovery for kinases, small G-proteins, DNA repair	Key Capabilities Bio- and chemo-informatics; databases/software development; expression profiling; novel bioassay development; drug discovery	Key Founding Advisors P. Brown (Stanford) J. Chabala (Pharmacopela) R. Smith (Merck) F. McCormick (UCSF) F. Cohen (UCSF) K. Zarut (Fox Chase)

Kevin Lerner is the Executive Director of The Presentation Team, specializing in presentations and communications solutions for the corporate market. His expertise in the strategy and content formulation of multimedia materials, together with exceptional communications and management abilities have given him the skills to help presenters around the world.

Kevin can be reached at 877-823-5730,

KLerner@presentationteam.com or www.presentationteam.com



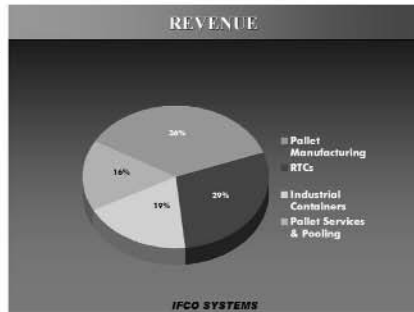
Kevin Lerner

Spring/Summer 2003

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Pie charts are an effective way of communicating information quickly. Small numbers and inconsistent text boxes take away from the ease of reading.



By increasing the size of the chart's numbers and spacing the text, the chart is easier to read. Adding graphics to the individual wedges on the chart add to the overall appeal.



Before and **AFTER**

Bullets are great for delivering the main points, but lose their appeal when placed too closely together.

The image is spaced too tight, and the bullets are cluttered.

Safe & Convenient Printing

- Control provided by LCD touch panel of SafeCom
- Convenience includes access to print jobs as soon as you are logged on
- All printing jobs controlled by PIN code, magnetic card and encryption

PrintTech
Intelligent Business Solutions

By decreasing the size of the text, the bullets stand out more effectively.

Add a visually appealing background and images to coincide with the message.

Safe & Convenient Printing

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PrintTech

There are too many colors and messages on this chart. The chart refers to growth, but the headline indicates performance. Keeping a common theme is essential.



When using a bar graph, it is the easiest to read when the bars are similar in design and color. The main difference should be the height.



Before and **AFTER**

The message is stated, but it is not felt in this format.

Instead of inspiring, a ho-hum slide will likely bore the audience.

Believing

Beliefs deal with our understanding of ourselves and our environment.

What we believe requires a self knowing and an object knowing.

Larr & Associates, Inc.
Omaha, NE

Clarian Health
Methodist - IU/Reg
Columbus, IN

A message of personal change is illustrated with an image of change, empowering the viewer to visualize the possibilities.

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PRESENTATION TIPS AND POINTERS

By Kevin Lerner of The Presentation Team (www.presentationteam.com)

Struggling to start? Overwhelmed by options? If you've ever had difficulty developing a presentation, there's help! Here are some tips and pointers to help bring your next presentation together quickly and easily.

Budget your time (and money)



Don't get caught by the clock! When starting a presentation, it's helpful to budget your time. A safe estimate is 30 minutes for each slide with basic graphics and text. For example, at the delivery pace of one slide per minute, a 20 minute talk would have 20 slides, leaving you 10 hours for development, revisions, and rehearsal. And of course, time is money.

By setting timeframes and benchmarks during your presentation development, you can take a lot of guesswork out of development... and move the process along more smoothly. More tips on time budgeting and cost estimation at <http://www.presentationteam.com/News/Tips/PowerPointers/Lerner/TimeMgmt.php>

Content first, then visuals

When starting a new presentation, try not to become distracted by the desire to make it look good. Rather, focus on creating the content first. Create an outline to get your bullets and main points in place. Or draft it out on paper.

And beware of "Paralysis by PowerPoint". Yes, this feature-loaded program can actually cripple the creative process by sidetracking the content-focused developer into tinkering with its features and technicalities. One of the best ways to avoid this is simply to stop using it! That's right, walk away from it, and go to a quiet place to write your core message/speech and presentation objectives... distraction free.



When you're ready, return to PowerPoint to type in your notes and then tackle the graphics. Sometimes, the mere focused transcription of your notes into PowerPoint can serve as a catalyst for additional creative development and propel you forward.

Directory Structure and File Saving/Naming Tips

Nothing improves presentation development efficiency more than well-organized directories and logical file names. Rather than dumping all your files into one huge folder- which makes it hard to find things- use your folders/ directories more like a file cabinet. By logically arranging your files by client, project, or theme, and then further delineat-

ing the structure (see graphic), you pave a road for quick and easy access...for you and others.



Another helpful strategy is to save your file every few hours with an incrementally higher file name (draft1.ppt, draft2.ppt). This way, you can develop your presentation but have an earlier version to refer to if needed, or if the program crashes. Also, it's better to save on your own computer, (locally) not the network. File saving and organization should be a continuous activity- a state of mind- and not something just done once in a while.

Development through delivery

Just do it. If you're stuck on what to say in your presentation, just start talking and see what comes out. Extemporaneous delivery is often a good way to develop the core messages of your presentation without relying on PowerPoint. People often know more than they think they know about their topic, and by just talking off the cuff (as a development strategy), it can be surprisingly effective. Get a group together of your peers and have someone take notes as you start presenting on the fly...and watch it all come together.



Save time with keyboard shortcuts, toolbars, & right mouse



Power users of PowerPoint (or any computer program) frequently rely on keyboard shortcuts to improve their efficiency. Rather than using the menu for all your functions, push yourself to learn the keyboard shortcuts. Instead of using the mouse to select cut and then paste, simply use

Control X and Control V. Many others exist; see

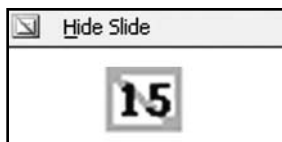
<http://www.presentationteam.com/News/Tips/PowerPointers/Lerner/Shortcuts.php>

Additionally, the right mouse button will always bring up alternate menus- in any program. Push yourself to use it and challenge yourself not to fall back on the easy to find menus. The right mouse can shave time off your development!

And for even more functionality, customize your toolbars so they have all the common buttons conveniently accessible. Think of it like a painter's palette, where everything is easily

within reach. Simply right-clicking on any toolbar will bring up a list of common toolbars, as well as the customize option. Positioning these toolbars close to where you're working can decrease the distance you need to move your mouse...and increase your efficiency.

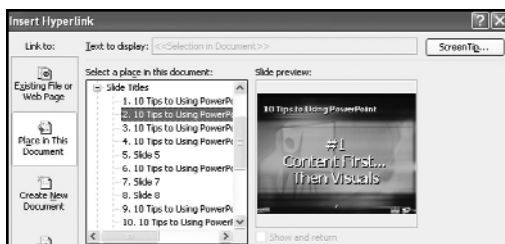
Create backup and alternate slides



All too often, someone will spend hours developing their presentation and then make revisions to a page or two, only to revert to the previous version...but soon to discover that the previous version doesn't exist anymore. By creating backup slides (copy and paste) you can try different options without affecting the main presentation. Then, move the alternate slides to the end of the presentation and apply the "hide slide" feature, so they don't appear in the slideshow.

The Hype of Hyperlinking

Most people look at a presentation in a linear (start to finish) manner. But sometimes while talking, it may not be necessary to cover all the slides in the presentation, especially if you're under a deadline. That's where hyperlinking helps. You can create your presentation overview slide as a main menu, with links to the respective slides and sections. Then simply click to the individual slide sections and then back to the main menu. It takes more time, but is definitely worth the extra effort, as your presentation will look much more polished, and you'll be working with the audience to create a more interactive expedience.





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Energize PowerPoint with 3rd party templates and graphics

Rather than playing artist and creating your own graphics, there are a lot of other 3rd party solutions that can save you a lot of time, and make you look like a world-class presenter.



One of these great solutions is a product by Crystal Graphics called **PowerPlugs**. This package of 16 CD-ROMs helps energize PowerPoint with hundreds of templates, plugins, photos, software effects, images, music, and more! It'll take you weeks to familiarize yourself with everything in this

amazing software package. PowerPlugs retails for \$699 and is available at PresentationTeam.com.

Another great source for digital presentation content is PresentationPro. Their **PowerDesigns** product is a PowerPoint add-in that gives you access to a huge library of templates and 3D business graphics. A one-year subscription costs just \$99 per year. PresentationPro.com also features a number of other products including other stock photos and audio and video clips, and a cool tool to turn you multimedia presentation into an email. Or Check 'em out at PresentationPro.com and mention Presentation Team and get a discount.



The third presentation template and graphics solution is a tremendously versatile product from Digital Juice called **The Presenter's Toolkit**. It's a 6-DVD collection of images and templates that add magic to any presentation.

There's nearly 5000 backgrounds, 2900 photos, 2900 photo objects, 6,700 illustrations, video clips, music, and a whole lot more. Over half the presentations I create use some element from the Presenter's Toolkit...so I truly endorse it and recommend it to anyone who's creating a PowerPoint presentation. This terrific tool retails for \$299 and is on sale at presentationteam.com.