

Well-designed slides can highlight your key points, add variety to your talk, and capture audience attention. But slides have two big disadvantages:

- Projecting them requires you to darken at least part of the room. The darker the room, the more likely someone will take the opportunity to snooze!
- Too much copy on a slide takes away from the speaker being perceived as the expert.

Determine the best method of visually communicating each concept. That is, the most appropriate picture, graph, diagram, or written text that will *help* to make your point. Remember that the real purpose of using slides is to get your points across in a way that demonstrates “one picture is worth a thousand words.”

## CONTENT: KEEP IT SIMPLE AND CONSISTENT

### KEY POINTS

- Select the most important points, review those points and be certain that you need to create a slide for each one.
- Group the key points in your presentation by concept and building points:

EXAMPLE – CONCEPT A:	KEY POINT 1	CONCEPT B:	KEY POINT 1
	KEY POINT 2		KEY POINT 2

### CLARITY

- Use wording and design that are consistent throughout, direct, and clear. For a lot of information, build the ideas gradually, one point at a time.
- Focus on key phrases, creating no more than six to eight lines of text per slide. On each line, state one thought clearly and concisely.
- Enhance readability by using no more than six words per line of text.
- If you have a lot on one slide, make it show up gradually (build), one point at a time, rather than all at once.
- Use bullets to focus on the integral components of a key point. In a few words, bullets highlight ideas in a consistently organized way. The best use of bullets is three per slide and, preferably, no more than six.

(Continued)

## DESIGN BASICS: SIMPLICITY, CONSISTENCY AND READABILITY

### GRAPHICS

Remember that you want the audience to pay attention to your message, not the slides.

Graphics are good only when they clearly support your point! Their purpose is to clarify and inform, not to impress the audience with useless information that confuses the subject matter.

- Use a horizontal format. Even labels should appear horizontally on charts and graphs to avoid distraction and to enhance easy reading.
- If one large graphic makes the point, use it instead of a lengthy descriptive slide.
  - Use a bar graph to compare totals.
  - Trends show clearly in a line graph.
  - Percentages show well in a pie chart. Keep the pie slices to six or fewer and show them in high-contrast colors with minimal text.
  - Tables display data well when there are fewer than 30 cells, or 6 columns x 5 rows including top and side labels.
  - Your slides should stay with the key ideas in your speech. If supporting facts are vital, make sure they are available as a handout.
- Create a visual background that helps the flow of ideas and use the same underlying grid (template) for each slide.
- Take advantage of the template feature of most software programs for creating slides. Modify the template to your liking or get a professional designer to design a template for your use.
- Use a logo or title as a lead-in slide and as an ending slide for your presentation. The last slide or two should summarize and close your presentation.
- Use symbols to show ideas and check for a clear connection between each symbol and your point.

### TYPE AND TEXT

- Be practical. Out of all the hundreds of typefaces available, you really need only one or two at a time. Type is meant to be read . . . so legibility should be your number one priority. You don't want to call attention to the type itself.
- Most readers find simple serif typefaces (the ones with little curls) easiest to read. Unusual or distinctly fancy typefaces easily distract from the message.
- Use upper and lower case letters. All upper or all lower case is not as readable. If you want to emphasize something, do it with a larger size, bolder type or a brighter color.

*(Continued)*

- To make your slides fully readable to all participants in the room; apply the 8:1 rule. The rule is that the maximum viewing distance for an audience to read small-size type is eight times the height of the full screen image. For example, if the back row is 40 feet away, your screen image should be at least five feet high.
- Type size should reflect the importance of the ideas on a slide. Emphasize an important idea with either larger type, boldface or a bright color. Do not combine more than two such treatments of a font. For example, regular print and boldface are fine, whereas highlight and boldface detracts.
- Titles should be consistent and 30 to 60% larger than body text.
- Use text that is at least 24-point; 18-point is the absolute minimum.
- Avoid connecting ideas by hyphenation; this interrupts continuity of thought.

## COLOR

- Know the results you want to achieve with color. The role of background color is to recede, thereby clarifying and focusing the foreground elements. Using a distinctive color provides appropriate contrast between text and background.
- Use color sparingly – limited to two or three on a contrasting background. Generally, four colors is the maximum per visual: background, headlines, body text, and perhaps one for emphasis. The exceptions to this are reserved for graphs and complex images.
- First select a main color to reflect the mood of your project. Next, select a color scheme based on the choice of that central color and corresponding hues. Refine the selection according to taste.
- Make up sample slides to ensure that your projected images come out as planned. Remember that a projected slide rarely matches the color on your computer screen. And even that color will not match a print copy.
- Many authors have scrutinized the selection of a particular palette to achieve a desired result. *The Complete Color Harmony* by Tina Sutton and Bride M. Whelan (Rockport Publishers; Rockport, MA) is one handy guide to color.
- Be aware of how colors evoke an emotional response in an audience. Colors have connotations that match or detract from your presentation. Here are some general tips about selecting colors:

(Continued)

**BACKGROUND COLORS**

- Dark absorbs projector light, setting off the lighter foreground elements for easy viewing.
- Royal blue or yellow/white is overused and usually bores people.
- Deep rich navy, forest green, charcoal gray, and dark eggplant purple are recommended.
- Black represents what has happened in the past that cannot be changed. It can work well and is great for financial presentations.

**EMOTIONAL ASSOCIATIONS**

- Red heightens audience emotions; signals a warning, danger, or financial loss.
- Blue indicates a conservative approach and calms.
- Green stimulates audience interaction and shows growth.
- Pink with powder blue suggests a nursery.
- Orange with black says Halloween.

**TEXT COLORS**

- Yellow with light gray is good for text as long as they contrast with the background.
- Red bleeds and 12% of the adult population are color blind so they cannot see red or green.
- White tends to be fuzzy.

**ADDITIONAL TIPS**

- When flying, carry your laptop, wireless remote, memory stick and/or flash drive onto the plane. Never check them.
- Keep the room dark enough to enhance projected images, and allow enough light for members of the audience to take notes.
- Always bring a backup or second memory stick or flash drive.
- Do not rely on your lap top battery. Always have a power cord for a direct electrical connection.
- Plan, plan, plan . . . and then plan some more.

# About The Newman Group

The Newman Group is the premier provider of executive media training, business presentation coaching, and crisis communication facilitation in the United States. Over the last 30 years, C-level executives, officials in public office, best-selling authors, sports and entertainment celebrities, and business people from almost every industry have benefited from The Newman Group's personalized, dynamic, and challenging media interview and business presentation training.

Based in New York City, our team of professional communication coaches regularly trains clients around the globe. We do not offer public training sessions.

Capitalizing on the diversity of our clientele, we focus our attention on developing strategic messages and getting *powerful results!* Video-taping is an integral part of most sessions, with each project tailored to meet each client's specific needs and objectives.

The Newman Group's executive media interview and presentation training provide both sound presentation techniques and real-time, on-camera experience. In a concentrated space of time, participants develop the skills they need to handle themselves before an audience, inviting participation while staying on message. After working with one of our professional coaches, intimidating interview situations become inviting as participants become confident in their ability to handle themselves with ease.

## **Our business presentation, crisis communication, and media coaching is designed to:**

- Demystify the presentation and interview process.
- Empowers participants to become compelling speakers in their field.
- Help even the most accomplished professionals overcome stage fright.
- Prepare participants to handle the pressure, uncertainty, and scrutiny in a crisis situation.

## **The Newman Group's services include coaching and training for:**

- Analyst meetings
- Annual meetings
- Book tours
- Celebrity appearances
- Crisis communications
- FDA product defense
- IPO presentations
- Keynote presentations
- Media spokespersons
- Media tour preparation
- News conferences
- Product demonstrations
- Product launches
- Sales meetings
- Satellite tours
- Speaker bureau training
- Shareholder meetings
- Spokesperson tours
- Talk shows
- Team building
- Teleconferences
- Teleprompter
- Testimony
- Video conferences
- Video news releases
- Witness appearances

## About Joyce Newman

**Joyce Newman**, founder of The Newman Group, helps professionals to improve their communications skills in a variety of speaking situations – from platform presentations to media interviews.

Joyce leads presentation skills workshops and media training sessions in which she teaches clients effective video techniques; coaches them for testimony and presentations in security analyst and shareholder meetings, sales conferences, and new product introductions; and assists clients in designing and conducting road-shows for initial public offerings.

An expert speaker, Joyce frequently addresses industry and association conferences throughout the United States on the subjects of *Managing the Media*, *Powerful Presentations* and *Selling Yourself*. She co-authored *Selling Yourself: Be the Competent, Confident Person You Really Are!*



Her clients include such diverse organizations as the American Diabetes Association, The AXA Financial Group, BBDO Worldwide, Biogen Idec, Booz Allen Hamilton, Brown-Forman Corporation, CARE, Coca-Cola North America, The Estee Lauder Companies Inc., The Gillette Company, Hearst Corporation, Hoechst Marion Roussel, Hologic, Inc., Legg Mason & Co. LLC, Luxottica Retail, Mandarin Oriental Hotel Group, The Reader's Digest Association, Sara Lee Corporation, Skadden, Arps, *USA TODAY* and Weyerhaeuser Company.

Joyce also works with publishing companies including Ballantine Publishing Group, Disney Publishing Worldwide, Farrar Straus and Giroux, Harper Collins Publishers, Penguin/Putnam Books USA, and Simon & Schuster. She has helped many best-selling authors to prepare for national media tours including Ellen Alderman and Caroline Kennedy, *In Our Defense*; Lorenzo Carcaterra, *Sleepers and Apaches*; Johnnie Cochran, *Journey to Justice*; Shirley Conran, *Lace*; Nicholas Dodman, *The Dog Who Loved Too Much*; Janet Evanovich, *Hard Eight* and *To The Nines*; John Fairchild, *Chic Savages*; Marilyn French, *Her Mother's Daughter*; Victoria Gotti, *The Senator's Daughter*; Michael Korda, *The Fortune*, *Curtain* and *The Immortals*; Emma McLaughlin and Nicola Kraus, *The Nanny Diaries: A Novel*; Anne Perry, *Traitor's Gate* and *The Sins of the Wolf*; Craig Robinson, *A Game of Character*; Katie Roiphe, *The Morning After*; and Edward Rutherford, *Sarum*.

A graduate of the University of Wisconsin, Joyce holds an M.A. from New York University, a Certificate of Clinical Competency from the American Speech & Hearing Association; and a Speech/Language Practitioner License from New York State. Elected to Women Executives in Public Relations, she holds memberships in the Financial Women's Association, Public Relations Society of America and Women in Communications. Joyce lives in New York City with her husband, Richard, their daughter (Wendi), Little Romeo (a Coton de Tulear), Sally (a rescue) and two cats (Murray and Sammy). Paulie, a turkey vulture the Newman's adopted for life, lives at the Brevard Zoo in Melbourne FL and they sponsor a swan habitat at the Save Our Seabirds sanctuary in Sarasota FL.