Handy guide for effective EPFL PowerPoint presentations

Hi, I’m Pascal. I’ll be giving you helpful tips throughout this guide.
My first tip is to use a 16:9 format for your slides, not 4:3. 16:9 is more elegant and modern – people stopped using tube TVs decades ago.
Effective PowerPoint presentations

Don’t forget the basics!

Your audience:

• can **hear** faster than they can **read**

• can **see** faster than they can **hear**

• can grasp a **simple image** better than written words

• reads from left to right, up to down and clockwise (in western cultures)
Effective PowerPoint presentations

Three golden rules:

1. Your message should **captivate** your audience, so it has to be **targeted** and **clear**

2. Your slides should be designed to help get your message across, so it’s easier to **remember**

3. The success of your presentation hinges on how well you **present** your information orally
Effective PowerPoint presentations

Use slides to support your message
A slideshow should be designed to tell a visual story, like a storyboard or movie. Don’t use more than 50% of the space on each slide – white space can help focus your audience’s attention and facilitate comprehension.
Effective PowerPoint presentations

Each slide should contain only one message
Even if that means using more slides and going through them faster, like you’re telling a story.

Don’t forget the basics!
Effective PowerPoint presentations

Don’t forget the basics!

All slides should be consistent
Use the same font size throughout, for both titles and body text.
But you can vary:
Full-screen images, the background on slides introducing new sections, visual elements, etc.
Effective PowerPoint presentations

But don’t add useless distractions
To keep your audience focused, don’t use:

- Sounds and images that aren’t really necessary
- Complicated backgrounds
- Too many logos or titles
- Bulleted lists with several levels
- A hodge-podge of animations
- A mix of transitions
- Too many different colors
- Too much shadowing
- Too much text

Don’t forget the basics!
KISS

(Keep It Simple, Stupid)
Titles that grab
Use verbs in the titles of each of your slides, to make your presentation action-oriented. For example, “Give VIPs a better welcome.”
Sign your EPFL presentation

For instance, you could put the title of your talk, your lab, your name and the date.

People won’t remember your name if you only say it. A footer with this info should appear on all your slides.

To change the footer, go to Insert > Footer, Arial body 7.5
Stick to these fonts

Impact

Arial Narrow Regular
Arial Narrow Italic
Arial Normal

Arial Narrow Bold
Arial Narrow Bold Italic
Arial Bold

Arial Narrow Bold
Arial Narrow Bold Italic

• **Impact** for titles (body 24)
• Arial Narrow for text (body 18-24)
• **Arial** for quotes and tips (56+)

Don’t use any other fonts!

Using the same font throughout makes it easier for your audience to follow your presentation and associate a given font with a given type of content – letting them focus exclusively on your message.
Don’t use a lot of text

Studies have shown that people read text boxes before they look at images.

Reading is a reflex; people can’t help themselves when text is in front of them.

Source: www.lergonome.org

Keep words to a strict minimum

People spontaneously read what’s in front of them. Use too much text and you’ll lose your audience’s attention. And you’ll be tempted to read from your slides instead of explaining your points.
Make reading easy

Studies have shown that people read text boxes before they look at images.

Reading is a reflex; people can't help themselves when text is in front of them.

Source: www.lergonome.org

To make sure your slides can be read easily, use a large font and keep the text to eight lines max.

Do not use ALL CAPS (e.g., Philosophy, not PHILOSOPHY)
Do not use shadowing or underlining; rather, use **bold** (red or black) for emphasis
Use *italics* for sources and examples
Forget bulleted lists

Studies have shown that people read text boxes before they look at images.

Reading is a reflex.

People can’t help themselves when text is in front of them.

Use bulleted lists sparingly. Don’t overload your slides with endless bulleted lists containing several levels each.

If you must use a bulleted list, do so selectively and limit each bullet point to a single line. Get straight to the point!

Source: www.lergonome.org
Less is more

The fewer things on your slides, the better. That will let your audience focus on one point at a time, retain that point better and not get information-overload.
Use graphs, not tables

The title of a graph should tell people what to look for – a trend, a relationship between two variables, etc.

Use the right type of graph for your message – pie charts for percentages and line graphs for trends over time, for example.

Get rid of any information that doesn’t help your audience grasp the key message – legends, grids, etc.

Put the main information in larger font and use thicker lines. You can also draw attention to a key point with an arrow.
Use graphs, not tables
EPFL has a strong digital science group

EPFL faculty members (1994-2014): 83%
EPFL budget (1994-2014): 115%

ETHZ faculty members (1994-2014): 47%
ETHZ budget (1994-2014): 42%
230 startups created between 2000 and 2016

CHF 261m raised in 2016
Use color to liven up your slides

But don’t use more than **three colors**, otherwise you’ll confuse your audience.

*Fashion experts say you shouldn’t wear more than three colors at a time. The same holds true for PowerPoint slides.*

*Use a uniform (not gradient) background color, another color to draw attention to your main point, and a third color for all other content on the slide.*
Use EPFL colors in your slide (slide master)

Present your information in a lively way, to keep your audience attentive and engaged.

For instance, occasionally switch from a positive to negative background, and from text slides to a full-screen image. You could also sneak in a funny image once in a while, to lighten things up.
Use EPFL colors in your slide (slide master)

Arial Narrow Regular
*Arial Narrow Italic*
Arial Normal

Arial Narrow Bold
*Arial Narrow Bold Italic*
Arial Bold

Arial Narrow Bold
*Arial Narrow Bold Italic*
Use EPFL colors in your slide (slide master)

Arial Narrow Regular
Arial Narrow Italic
Arial Normal

Arial Narrow Bold
Arial Narrow Bold Italic
Arial Bold

Arial Narrow Bold
Arial Narrow Bold Italic

Light grey example
Use EPFL colors in your slide (slide master)

Arial Narrow Regular
*Arial Narrow Italic*
Arial Normal

Arial Narrow Bold
*Arial Narrow Bold Italic*
Arial Bold

Arial Narrow Bold
*Arial Narrow Bold Italic*

Black example
Use EPFL colors in your slide (slide master)

Arial Narrow Regular
Arial Narrow Italic
Arial Normal

Arial Narrow Bold
Arial Narrow Bold Italic
Arial Bold

Arial Narrow Bold
Textes Arial Narrow Bold Italic

Dark grey example
Use EPFL colors in your slide (slide master)

- Arial Narrow Regular
- Arial Narrow Italic
- Arial Normal

- Arial Narrow Bold
- Arial Narrow Bold Italic
- Arial Bold

- Arial Narrow Bold
- Arial Narrow Bold Italic

Blue example
The right way to use images

Images should support your message. Show them in **full screen** whenever possible.

The right image should neatly summarize what you want to say. Don’t waste time describing the image, instead explain your point.

Studies have shown that vision is our dominant sense, and that our brains are attracted more to pictures than text. So be sure to leverage visuals to boost your presentation’s impact.
Image
First slide

The image should be the background
Digitalization @ EPFL

Presentation title
Your name

Image
First slide in context

A collection of images will soon be available
We are ready to embrace the new opportunities that digitalization brings.
New initiatives

Example intro slide for a new section
Don’t waste time creating an intricate layout with several images that will only lose your audience. Remember, KISS. There is no limit to the number of slides you can create in PowerPoint!

Have fun!
The right way to use images

Don’t forget the copyright

“A robot was doing my job, but it quit.”

© Barbara Smaller, The New Yorker
Don’t go overboard!

Animation
Animation effects can make a presentation seem unprofessional. They are superfluous and needlessly monopolize the audience’s attention. Use them only if you have no choice.

Slide transitions
Ditto for transitions! They are generally useless and break the audience’s concentration – and yours!
Keep your PowerPoint skills up to date

The EPFL Staff Training Service (STS) now offers a new type of refresher course to help you develop your PowerPoint skills.

Learn more at:
sfp.epfl.ch/rapido
Conclusion

Over to you!

Don’t end with “The End.” Conclude with a call to action.

Your conclusion is important because it largely determines what state of mind your audience will leave with.
Questions?

Use the slide that will appear during Q&A to once again give your name and organization.
Thanks for your attention