

# Slide Deck Tips

## Overview

KGI emphasizes the importance of making clear, communicable slide decks and recognizes the importance of this ability in the professional world. As slide decks are typically a major deliverable for classes or company projects, it is important that you understand what makes a good slide deck that can easily communicate what you want to say. This hand-out will provide some pointers on both what to do and what not to do in order to craft purposeful slides.

## Do's for Your Presentation

### 1. Tell a story

Perhaps the most important tip, slide decks should assist in telling your audience your findings, conclusions, etc. That said, they should be able to stand-alone and express your message in a way that flows and makes sense. Make sure that the slide deck tells your story without skipping around and confusing your audience. Every slide should have a purpose (sometimes called the "so what?"), and the presentation as a whole should have a purpose as well.

### 2. Go for consistency and clarity

The little things in a presentation are what makes it look professional. Double check to make sure that slides are of the same theme, fonts are identical, graphics are aligned, and header & body text sizes are the correct respective size throughout the entire presentation. Often, the professionalism and clarity of a presentation can be the deciding factor in driving home a message to your audience. Citations should be consistent as well.

### 3. Opt for graphical data

Too much text will confuse and bore your audience. Rather than write out all your findings, provide a strong but straightforward graph or diagram that displays your findings, and supplement the slide with brief conclusions. It's a much more visual way to get a point across. You can also rework bullet points with icons to give it a much more interesting look.

#### 4. Keep your audience in mind

It's an obvious tip, but under-appreciated. Industry tends to follow different slide deck styles than academia, and vice-versa. For industry, provide short 1 to 2 sentence slide summaries at the bottom of each slide and utilize text and graphical data. For academia, make use of diagrams and photographic elements of the slide and how that complements your message. This ensures your deck is well-received by the audience.

#### 5. Have an appendix

A crucial but less-utilized aspect of a presentation is the appendix. Here, you can hold back-up slides, raw data, and more supporting graphs. Appendices can be especially useful during Q&A as more evidence to support your claim, and the raw information they hold is appreciated by corporate liaisons who want to build off your work.

### Don'ts for Your Presentation

#### 1. Make it too eye-catching

Transitions, animations, and off-color texts as a means to attract attention to a certain point can be very distracting for your audience. Simple animations like "Appear" or "Fade-In" can be very effective measures to drive home a point, as are italicizing or bolding words. If you really want to drive home a point, do it with your words!

#### 2. Data dump

Realistically, you are going to obtain a lot more data for projects than is actually useful. Avoid filling slide decks with raw data and instead utilize a few key graphs to complement your findings. That said, put other relevant graphs and raw data in the appendix, which can be helpful for referencing during Q&A.

#### 3. Add a photo to every blank space

Photos are intended to be supportive of the slide, they are not a requirement. Although a noted "Do's" is to opt for graphical data, if the graphic has no value, it is just another piece that is taking away from your message. Often, a simple icon can do the trick if you are looking to fill an obvious blank space on your slide.

#### 4. Forget your references

When it comes to secondary research, it is imperative that you cite your sources on the slide where it is referenced. If you are explaining a disease mechanism or describing market trends, make sure you cite the academic journal or white paper on the slide where it is discussed. A full slide dedicated to the references can go at the end or in the appendix, but should appear in some form in your slide deck.

### **Conclusion**

Building a strong slide deck takes practice, and you will certainly get more opportunities to build up your skills while at KGI. Although these tips are not comprehensive, keeping them in mind can help you prepare a quality slide deck. Attend industry talks and notice how professionals craft their slide decks, or pay close attention to how professor's might utilize slides in their lectures. Seeing how others communicate their message can help you in communicating yours.