

Presentation Technology in the Digital Age



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Presentation technology has changed the way our culture communicates. From the corporate boardroom to external communications with customers, presentations have impacted every aspect of the business community.

This penetration has been largely achieved through two key advances. The first and perhaps most significant advance is the open accessibility to digital media. We suddenly live in a digital democracy, where everyone has access to and expects to consume vast volumes of digital media. The second advance is interactive presentation technology. Interactive presentations support active discussion, as opposed to the passive approach, where a presenter is talking to an audience who is listening at 50% capacity.

Digital Democracy forces strides in presentation technologies. The advances in media technology have empowered the masses to create, consume and distribute terabytes of media each day. And because the Internet is universal, everyone has access. Video, once limited to the domain of skilled craftsmen, is now being shot on mainstream digital cameras and cell phones. The easy creation of digital images, combined with the viral nature of the Web, has given the masses access to countless images. And, the popularity of digital cameras and photo sharing sites lets one's access to pictures grow exponentially. The same principal applies to digital music files. Billions of audio files are downloaded everyday.

The ready access of media into everyday

lives has naturally spread into the medium of presentations. People are exposed to sight, sound and motion in every minute of their lives, and thus expect a multimedia experience when they watch a presentation. Presentations must leverage multimedia to stir audiences. As such, presentation technologies, like PowerPoint, Keynote and Ontra, that make it easy for users to include a variety of media, have become a standard of communication throughout our culture.

On a corporate level, you can see the digital democracy in action. Long gone are the days when only the highest level executives, with their personal support staff, or the digerati, with their knack for technology, made the best presentations. The best presentations were slick, professional and included a wealth of video, audio and high quality graphics that wow'd the audience and helped reinforce the key messages. Now, because of expanded access to digital media, everyone in the company can present like the CEO.

Unfortunately, greater access to professional materials, including video, audio and graphics, does not guarantee that the information is being used and shared in the most efficient way throughout the organization. There are still coworkers and colleagues that are not up to speed when it comes to building presentations. Thus, smart corporations are taking a broader approach to presentation communication—practicing presentation management.

Presentation management treats the presentation as another piece of collateral in the marketing mix, like a brochure or a website. Presentation management is the creation, automation and distribution of presentation materials throughout an enterprise. Here's how it works. A designated group or person

in the company is responsible for building a comprehensive presentation library that includes all of the necessary information that users need to present, such as company overview, product and service information, pricing, market information, research, case studies, bio's, etc. The presentation is designed around the company's brand identity and utilizes relevant media, like video, animation and imagery, to reinforce the message and engage the audience. It is then distributed through a server or shared location. The presenters, typically sales staff, can search, select and choose slides according to their particular business, meeting need. With a managed library of slides, anyone can build a slick, multimedia presentation in minutes. This saves time, and money.

Presentation Management benefits presenters on two critical levels. First, it provides easy access to information, giving them the ability to talk intelligently about any aspect of the company, whether or not it falls in their area of expertise. Second, it puts everyone on an equal playing field, letting even novices present a professionally crafted presentation, to reinforce the company's message. The combination of presenting relevant, hard-hitting information combined with high-quality graphics provides added credibility and professionalism to the

presenter.

Interactive presentation technologies are changing the way business presentations are conducted.

Incorporating multimedia in a presentation is only one aspect of using presentation technology to conduct more effective, productive meetings. Productive meetings are those in which everyone participates, where questions are raised and ideas are shared. A client who is actively participating in a meeting is a client that is listening, engaged and above all, interested. The linear slide-show format, although very comfortable for many presenters, does not foster interaction. Presentation technologies that offer an interactive mode of presenting, or the ability to call up any slide, on any given subject, right in front of the client, can reduce the sales cycle by ensuring the client gets all the information he needs to make a decision. It makes the meeting more productive.

Essentially, through the combination of multimedia files, democratic distribution of presentation content, and quick access to relevant content, presentation management can upgrade the average presenter's (sales person) presentation skills to that of a CEO. This technological leveling of the playing field is allowing companies of all sizes, and people of all skill levels, to compete. ●

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Marketing

Top 10 Tips for Building the Perfect Business Card



Melissa Crowe

Regardless of our newfound reliance on e-mail and the internet as a means of communication, millions of hard copy business cards were handed out last year and continue to be distributed as our place holders. Don't

underestimate the power of the business card and what it can do for you. A business card is you when you can't be there and portrays the personality and image of your company. A well-crafted card can be the difference between success and failure.

The following 10 tips will explain how to design a business card that will serve as an effective sales and marketing tool, while properly conveying your company's mission.

1 Customize and Create Business professionals and consumers see numerous business cards during their travels so make your card a memorable one. Put on your creative thinking cap and customize every detail of your card according to the audience you are marketing to and the services you are

marketing. Anyone can hand out a cookie cutter business card, but the professional who expresses her organization's message and personality through their card will have the edge on the competition. Unlike the old days, cards can now easily be customized online, so you won't have to leave your home or office.

2 Avoid Flimsy Cards The weight and texture of your card is the first thing someone notices when a business card is handed to them. Handing out thin, flimsy cards will signal that you put little thought and even less effort into the development of your card. Use high-quality cards with a glossy or matte finish for a sharp look that will call your audience to action. You can also use vertical business cards to stand out among your competitors.

3 Use the Back of Your Card It's important to leverage your business card as much as possible, so use all available space, including the back. While the backside content should be secondary in importance to contact information, options include coupons, calendars, appointment cards, product information, customer testimonials or quotes from your company's leader. Business cards

are small and supply us with limited space, but it is important space. Don't waste it.

4 Add a Face to the Name Adding your photo to a business card can be a great way to build professional relationships, especially if you're working in an industry such as real estate, where the personal touch is important. Trust is a key to a lasting and profitable business relationship, and giving your organization a face can help this along.

5 Don't Forget the Basics It may seem obvious, but some professionals fail to list all necessary information on their

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business cards. The basic elements of a business card include name, title, company name and URL, and all contact information, including fax number. Try not to list more than one phone number on your card as too much information causes confusion. Lead with your company's name and, space permitting, include a clear, concise positioning statement or tagline.

6 Colorful Cards The color of your card should be tailored to the type of business you represent and your target audience. Warm and inviting colors such as blue and white are perfect for a doctor's card, while an artist or entertainer may go with a black card to show off their off-beat creativity. Make sure your cards are full-color to cast a bright, eye-catching image. Avoid using hard-to-read yellow business cards.

7 Different Cards for Different Folks Businesses marketing to a wide-ranging audience should consider creating more than one business card design for their personnel. For example, a floral business could tailor one card to target the wedding industry and another for the funeral industry. Your company needs to be all things to all people. **Continued on 10**