My name is Mike Hey and I would like to help you create better PowerPoint.

Many of us use PowerPoint all the time, yet most of us could do with a little help improving our slides. In this series of videos I am going to share the techniques I use to create presentations and the lessons I have learnt creating thousands of slides in over 20 years using PowerPoint.

In this presentation I am going to share my tips on how to build slides that won’t let you down.

I hope you find it useful.
So why is it important to be able to create good PowerPoint slides?

First of all PowerPoint is everywhere.

There are around 500 million PowerPoint users in the World (1 in 14 of the population).

Every day 30 million PowerPoint presentations are created every day.

If we assume that are on average 20 slides in each deck and printed every slide produced in just one day, it would create a pile of paper 67 times higher than the Empire State building.
PowerPoint is important

These quotes are from 1998, 1999 and 2003 and they show how important PowerPoint was even then.
If you want to communicate an idea you use PowerPoint.

But if your slides aren’t very good then there’s nowhere to hide.

And there’s no shortage of poor presentations.

On average each PowerPoint slide contains 40 words
- Yet we all struggle to read and listen at the same time
- And we can only hold at most 5-9 ideas in our heads at once
So take my advice, remember this number.

365

3 stands for the three top tips for creating great presentations
It makes things easier if we classify slides into six types, which I will explain
And we have our five step process to preparing presentations, which I will share with you.
Top tips for creating great slides

Now here are my three top tips for creating great slides
Three top tips for creating great slides

1. Audience
   - Think of your audience and not yourself

2. Location
   - Different situations need different slides

3. Tidiness
   - Keep things neat & tidy people notice mistakes

My tips are:
- Think of your audience and not yourself
- Different situations need different slides
- Keep things neat and tidy
Tip 1 is think of your audience and not yourself

One of the most common mistakes people make when communicating with others is to assume that their audience thinks like they do and likes the same things.

A consultancy many years ago introduced me to this communication grid. The consultancy is long gone, but I have shared this many, many times since.

Based on Myers-Briggs and other personality types, this model splits audiences into four groups.

The first group are friends they are interested in people they will be interested in how people will be impacted by your presentation. They like to see pictures particularly of people.

Then we have Expressives. They like concepts, ideas – you can tell these people by their slides as they are full of diagrams, arrows and clouds.

Our third group are thinkers – analysts and numbers people they like tables of data even more than charts – they love facts and are not very keen on fluffy clouds.

Our final group are drivers – people who want to hear about the bottom line and just want you to get to the point – they love slides with one number or a single date on them – it’s all about impact.

Now the groups don’t communicate too well across the diagonals. Friends feel the slides Drivers like are impersonal. Drivers feel slides of people climbing mountains together pointless and so on.

If you know the type of person you are presenting to create slides that will appeal to them. If you aren’t sure then make sure you have slides that appeal to each group in your presentations.
Tip 2 – different situations

Tip 2 is about the different situations you might share PowerPoint presentations.

Most people create a presentation and then use the same deck wherever they are. This is a really bad idea, because it’s harder to see the screen in different settings.

Here are six situations where people might see one of your presentations.

In an auditorium – where people are often a long way from the screen and can’t see the detail

In meeting room

In a huddle space – where meetings are unplanned
On a conference call – where people are multi-tasking, which is just another word for not listening

In a coffee shop – where there is a lot of background noise and distractions

Or while they are alone – where they have to provide their own narrative
Tip 2 – different situations need different slides

For the best results you should adapt your slides for each situation.

In an auditorium people concentrate on a few large images or numbers – so they don’t have to see the detail.

In a meeting room, mix up the format of the slides to keep your audience engaged.

In a huddle space, you can use fewer, more detailed slides.

On a conference call, image quality is often poor, text can be fuzzy so keep your slides simple.

In a coffee shop, there’s little privacy so why not print your slides as a handout and talk through.

Increasingly PowerPoint decks are not presented to an audience. They are simply emailed to people, who are expected to look at them and create their own narrative.

It can be a challenge to understand a set of slides without someone talking you through them, so my advice here would be to either add detailed speaker notes for your audience to read or add detailed explanations to the slides themselves. When I am creating decks for someone to “read at home or in their office” I like to think that I am creating a brochure rather than a presentation. However I would use different slides if the deck is going to be presented in a meeting room.
Tip 3 – keep things neat and tidy

My third and final tip is about keeping things neat and tidy

This tip is broken down into three.

First alignment – we can spot even small mistakes so make sure your shapes and boxes are aligned properly.

Research has shown that we associate symmetry with beauty so let’s make our slides beautiful. Introduce symmetry whenever you can.

Finally, consider movement. People can very quickly detect “jitter” apparent movement of slide elements when you move from one slide to the next.

Let me show you what I mean – let’s jump to slide 13 and back again, apart from the text and the colours the slides are identical and there’s no jitter. Now if I move one of the boxes or change its size – see the difference.
Tip 3 – keep things neat and tidy

A. Alignment
Make sure all your boxes, shapes, text etc. are aligned and spaced out properly

B. Symmetry
We associate symmetry with beauty and notice even quite minor, flaws and discrepancies

C. Movement
Look out for “jitter” – make sure that only the items that are supposed to move actually move

Can you see the difference?

Flick between slides 12 and 13 and you should see the boxes appear to move and change shape. The differences are not great, but they are noticeable and they do make slide 12 look far more professional than slide 13.
Let’s play a quick game to illustrate the importance of keeping things tidy.

Pause the video and see if you can spot the 15 formatting errors on this page.
There are 15 formatting errors on this page – how many can you spot?

And here are the answers

The point I would to illustrate is just how easy it is to spot inconsistencies, mistakes and issues with your slides.
And this is what the slide should look like.

Notice all the boxes at the top are the same size (can you see the arrows formed by the gaps between the pairs of boxes.

Like most of my slides I would add the shapes and align them, before adding the text.
The six types of slides
(and how to use them)

Now for the six in 365.

You could argue that there are an infinite number of slides, but I find it helpful to group them into six types.
The six types of slides

**The list**
- These are the most common form of slides
- They are often created with the minimum amount of thought or effort
- And might just be a record of the thoughts of the presenter as he or she downloads them straight from the brain to the page
- They can be dull, unremarkable and difficult to remember

**The essay**
- Essays look something like this. They are often very long and full of detail. Sentence after sentence of text that the presenter either thinks is relevant or they have found in a document and have cut and pasted into PowerPoint.
- Presenters sometimes go to great lengths to draw out the salient points. They may …

**The big picture**
- One large image on the page

**Concepts & Processes**
- C’s & P’s

**Tables and Charts**
- T’s and C’s

**The focal point**
- A single statement on the page

And here are the six types of slide
- There is the list (usually of bullet points)
- The essay (a large block of text)
- The big picture (a slide with one large image)
- Concepts & processes (often featuring arrows, clouds and shapes)
- Tables and charts of data
- And the focal point (a slide with a single date, string of text or number on it)
The six types of slides

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>The list</th>
<th>Friend</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1. These are the most common form of slides</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2. They are often created with the minimum amount of thought or effort</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3. And might just be a record of the thoughts of the presenter as he or she downloads them straight from the brain to the page</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4. They can be dull, unremarkable and difficult to remember</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>The essay</th>
<th>Expressive</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Essays look something like this. They are often very long and full of detail. Sentence after sentence of text that the presenter either thinks is relevant or they have found in a document and have cut and pasted into PowerPoint. Presenters sometimes go to great lengths to draw out the salient points. They may …</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Thinker</th>
<th>Driver</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Long statements, usually one block of text</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

And conveniently four of these types of slide appeal to the four audiences we discussed earlier:

- Friends like big pictures
- Expressives prefer concepts & processes
- Thinkers like tables and charts of data
- And drivers prefer to get to the point
Here’s my advice on dealing with each of these six types of slide.

**First try and amend lists to create something more visually interesting.**

**Avoid essays wherever possible**

Then either add a mix of the other types of slide in your presentation or adapt your slides to include different elements on your slides that appeal to different audiences.
1. Dealing with lists

Let’s take a closer look at lists.

Lists are the most common form of slide

I must have seen thousands of lists of bullet point slides and they are incredibly dull and unimaginative.

So if there are a list of things you want to talk about, here are a few tips

Layout your list as a set of identical boxes neatly spread across the page. This gives each item equal status (people often skip the items at the bottom of a vertical list).

Use a box for each of your main points and bring each point to life with an image, fact or headline to help generate interest with our four different audiences.
2. Dealing with essays

Essays look something like this. They are often very long and full of detail. Sentence after sentence of text that the presenter either thinks is relevant or they have found in a document and have cut and pasted into PowerPoint.

Presenters sometimes go to great lengths to draw out the salient points. They may …

... break up the paragraphs. **Highlight items of text**. **Use bold to make a point** or increase the **font size**.

In the end though, audiences usually don't read essays. They might have a place in certain reference material, but otherwise put essays in the speaker notes and delete these slides.

Then there are essays – long blocks of text.

Presenters sometimes think it is absolutely critical that their audience reads a large block of text – few people do.

My advice would be to put any text you want to keep in your speaker notes and delete these slides.
3. Dealing with “big pictures”

Big pictures are great to tell a story around.

Now you don’t have to add any text to a big picture slide, but many people want to include some text.

If you want to add text – keep it very short and try not to obscure the image.

Oh and make sure you have the right to use any images.
4. Dealing with tables and charts

Many people like charts and some even prefer to see tables of data.

But if you are creating a table or chart slide and want to add something extra, insert a box and add in a summary, conclusions or a mini infographic.
4. Dealing with tables and charts

Add a chart or table or maybe both

Add statistics or conclusions

134% More of something

$92m

$56m

If the opportunity arises create a mini infographic

Like this.

This can provide something visual to interest drivers, friends and expressives.
5. Dealing with concepts and processes

Some people love concepts and processes slides.

Here are some tips:

• Use shapes
• Make them symmetrical
• Keep diagrams simple
• Don’t overfill the page and make sure there is a lot of whitespace
• Add quotes
• And of course sketch it out first on a piece of paper before you start creating the slide.

Expressives love these slides, but remember other people don’t so add something for other audiences such as headlines, images of people, statistics or trends.
5. Dealing with concepts and processes

- Use shapes
- Sketch it out first
- Add statistics
  - 134% increase
- Show trends
  - $56m to $92m
- Don't overfill the page
- Keep it simple
- Introduce symmetry
- Use whitespace to make it clearer
- Add "people"
- Add quotes "I agree 100%" says expert

Like this.
6. Dealing with “focal points”

- Emphasize the point in your narrative
- Don’t over-use these slides

If I said only one thing it would be... 

**this**

If you over-use these slides people think you are... 

**shouting!**

Our last type of slide are focal points.

Some people love these slides and they can really make an impact.

But please don’t use too many of them in the same presentation, because they will lose their impact and people will think you are shouting!
The six types of slides

- The list
- The big picture
- Concepts & Processes
- The essay
- Tables and Charts
- The focal point

To recap here are the six types of slide
- There is the list (usually of bullet points)
- The essay (a large block of text)
- The big picture (a slide with one large image)
- Concepts & processes (often featuring arrows, clouds and shapes)
- Tables and charts of data
- And the focal point (a slide with a single date, string of text or number on it)
Now let’s talk about the five steps in our process to create great PowerPoint presentations
When it comes to PowerPoint, most people choose to jump right in.

If they pause at all, it is often to ask themselves “which slides could I use from existing presentations?”

Usually though they launch PowerPoint and start creating slides, adding slides from other presentations, working out slide designs as they go and slowly determining what they are going to say.

They do this in bursts of activity, updating everything as they go, until eventually they have had enough of making changes and “go with what they have got”.

Sometimes they fool themselves this is efficient and the final presentations are “kind of OK”, but it’s rare to find someone who can multi-task to this degree and come away with a killer presentation.

Most of us are more efficient and effective if we focus on one task at a time.
With this in mind, we have created a more efficient process.

We have taken all those concurrent tasks and straightened them out to form a sequence then we’ve re-arranged them in a more logical flow.

This process is more structured and is more efficient
- It saves time by cutting out endless rounds of tweaks and changes

And it’s more effective
- It produces more compelling presentations
- And makes it more likely you will achieve the success you are seeking with your slides
Our five step process to preparing presentations

1. **Plan**
   - Decide what you are going to say
   - Create a narrative – your “golden thread”

2. **Design**
   - Determine the outline design for your slides
   - Create a storyboard – a rough sketch of the deck

3. **Prepare**
   - Create placeholders for your slide content
   - Add the narrative to your speaker notes

4. **Build**
   - Add the words (the minimum you need)
   - Select and add the images and diagrams

5. **Complete**
   - Review your slides and tidy them up
   - Tweak the text and add any special effects

We start with “what we are going to say”. This is our narrative – our “golden thread”. We nail this first before we start creating slides.

The second step is where we very quickly sketch out the layout of our slides.

Step 3 is a new step where we “layout” the slides to receive content – this speeds up the process, reduces the work required and improves alignment within and between slides.

Step 4 is where we add content to the layouts and step 5 is where we check the finished slides and fix any issues.

The result should be a professional looking presentation, that your audience finds compelling and few people seek to change.
Let’s go through this again.

Step 1 is create a “golden thread” for our presentation.

This could be typed on a device or scribbled on a piece of paper.

This is a list of the points we want to cover in our presentation, written in the sequence we want to raise them.

I usually spend 5-15 minutes creating a golden thread and try and do this away from my desk maybe in a coffee shop or somewhere else.

This slide shows you part of the original golden thread for this presentation.

The important thing about this step is to concentrate and do it quickly.

If there are multiple stakeholders who want to sign off your presentation – send them your golden thread and ask them to agree it. This can save you a lot of time and avoids scrapping slides you have spent hours carefully constructing.
Step 2 (Design) – produce a storyboard

On a separate piece of paper draw a grid of boxes. Each box represents a slide and write key points from your Golden Thread into the boxes. Think how you are going to illustrate each box and add quick sketches – you can see the storyboard for this presentation in this slide.

Maybe still in my coffee shop I would typically spend 10-20 minutes on this.

Normally storyboards are not shared, so make it as rough and messy as you like. Concentrate on the layout of the slides – we can work on the detail later.

This is the point, where we might decide to incorporate content from other presentations we have built previously.
Step 3 (Prepare) – create placeholders

Step 3 is to create layouts or placeholders.

This is a new step and is all about helping us be more efficient.

a) First of all create blank slides for each of the slides in our storyboard
b) You might want to change the layout for some of them using the Master slides in your PowerPoint template
c) Take the major bullet points from your Golden Thread and type or paste them into your slide titles
d) A good tip is to add the relevant sections of your Golden Thread to the speaker notes of each slide – this will give you a narrative to follow when you present your presentation
e) Add boxes for content, titles and text
f) If you have two slides with a similar layout, copy the layouts from one to another, this will ensure you avoid jitter when you flick from one slide to another
g) Finally check through your empty presentation to make sure you haven’t missed anything out
Step 4 (Build) – add text and graphics

Step 4 is to add content to our placeholders or layouts

Let’s start with the text.

With text less is definitely more – fewer words means more impact

• If you have too many words to fit in a text block – DO NOT REDUCE THE FONT – text of different font sizes and styles is a basic mistake and should be avoided
• Cut down the character count and remove some of the words if your text doesn’t fit
• There is usually plenty of space in the speaker notes if you really want to add a lot of text

Once we have added the text let’s move on to the images.

It’s usually more efficient to hunt down images in one go – I either choose copyright free images from Unsplash (making sure I credit the photographers) or buy them from a reputable source.

With images it is easier if we resize them to fit one dimension of where we want them (we need to grab a corner and pull or we could lose their proportions) and then we crop them to fit the other dimension.

We might need to re-centre an image, by moving the image while we are cropping it.
Finally with step 5 – let’s sit back and put our slides in Slideshow mode.

As we scroll backwards and forwards we will notice odd errors, typos and misalignments.

We should fix these to end up with a professional-looking, high-quality presentation we are ready to share.

That’s our five step process.
Here’s the 365 again.

Our three top tips
- Think of your audience and not yourself
- Use different slides for different situations
- Keep things neat and tidy

The six types of slides
- Lists (which you should amend)
- Essays (which you should avoid)
- Big pictures
- Concepts & processes
- Tables & charts
- Focal points

Our five step process
- Plan (build a golden thread)
- Design (create a storyboard)
- Prepare (create placeholder slides to hold your content)
- Build (add content to your placeholders)
- Complete (review your slides and make any final changes)

That’s it, it that’s Mike’s way to better PowerPoint.

Good luck with your PowerPoint presentations.

Thank you for listening!