

## The Truth About PowerPoint – Honest!

**Thirty million PowerPoint presentations are made each day around the world...** That's a lot of slides and it's easy to blame the software for putting you into a trance after a long-winded and tedious presentation. But the real problem isn't the software at all – it's not the message, it's the way you're delivering it.

### You are the message, not the software... so be YOURSELF

The software is simply one tool for doing a particular job. Frequently, people are lured into thinking that a sexy template and a snazzy graphic will win over the audience and have them marvelling at the presenter's prowess. However, **what really matters is the speaker's insight, preparation, delivery and personality.**

### What's your message, make it clear...

Most PowerPoint slides do little to spur action. Sure, you can display a set of facts on a slide that supports your case, or illustrate the imperative for change. That information may help swing a client's mindset to support your call to action, but people follow other people – not bullet points. What really matters is that **you've got a compelling, well articulated and relevant core message.** So before you click on that PowerPoint icon on your computer, test each idea you plan to present for clarity and precision. Few things will derail your ability to influence a specific outcome more than a muddled, disorganised message.

### How to ruin the best presentations...

Get your ideas on paper and let your presentation approach emerge after you've settled on what you want to communicate. Recently, a very clever person armed with a PowerPoint template **converted Abraham Lincoln's Gettysburg Address into a slideshow presentation** to demonstrate how easy it is to sap the life from the great orator. The hilarious rendition of Lincoln's speech is so painful to read that it's a chore to get through the slides.

### Word for word – don't do it...

Furthermore, if you find yourself reading from your slides, you will of course find that your audience can read five times faster than you can speak. This is immensely frustrating and thoroughly annoying. This is amply demonstrated if when a client or a customer decides they want to see your presentation and they can understand every word from what it is you email, then you have to question the need of your being there. **In actual fact, your personal appearance and your ability to convey a strong and powerful message will easily outweigh the mere text that someone reads off a page.** The value of PowerPoint is that it is able to convey the message in a slightly different fashion to the way that you do it verbally. And, therefore, it adds value and variety.

**Tell a story, get them to use their imagination...**

Not only that but if you ask a **good professional speaker to reveal the secret to high impact presentations**. Telling stories is likely to be high on the list. The simple fact about PowerPoint is that it likes to stick simply to facts, conclusions and recommendations, and fails to connect with the audience in a way that inspires thought and a move to action. Of course, we need facts – after all our recommendations must be based on something concrete. But the manner in which we communicate our thoughts and ideas can be enhanced with stories.

Frequently people fail to get excited about their own business or what goes on. And yet, a simple well-told story opens the imagination, making us receptive to the power of new ideas. So consider new ways to stir your audience by embedding stories with your facts and recommendations.

In very simple terms the problem with PowerPoint is that there is not a problem at all. The problem is actually that we rely upon PowerPoint to BE the presentation, but the presentation is YOU.