

PA *Life*

The personal assistant for PAs and EAs

for work,
life and
everything
in between

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launch issue
Welcome to PA Life
DISCOUNT SUBSCRIPTION INSIDE

Welcome

NI'm writing this as we wave goodbye to the final pages of the first issue of PA Life, ready to be printed in Wales and distributed UK-wide. It's been an exciting few months and a lot of very late nights, the result of which is a product of which we're very proud. I hope you enjoy reading the magazine and engaging with the brand in print, digitally and at our live events. We're keen to hear from you as well, so feel free to email me with your ideas for the magazine at david.quainton@onetonemedia.com



The personal assistant for PAs and EAs

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HOW TO

D read that moment when your boss asks you to create a PowerPoint presentation?

You're not alone. The slideshow programme is used in offices all over the world, but the thought of creating the perfect presentation still fills many a skilled PA with dread. For just as PowerPoint can animate a meeting, it can also kill it. And guess who will get the blame for that?

But PowerPoint problems don't end there. The software offers so many options for users it is easy to while away an entire afternoon making a single slide. Not great for those spreadsheets and invoices that need sorting immediately.

So, to help you make a slick presentation that keeps your boss happy and doesn't use up too much precious time, here's our handy guide:

1 Step back from that screen and consider your options...

- Do you even need a PowerPoint presentation? It may not be the best way to convey your message.
- How will your presentation be delivered? Is there going to be a presenter or will it just be emailed? This will affect size and content. Bear in mind you will not be

make the perfect POWER POINT PRESENTATION



popular for sending presentations over 5MB in size.

- What is your message? PowerPoint specialists Eyeful Presentations' managing director Simon Morton is emphatic that this is the first thing you should consider. "You can get away with a really awful PowerPoint presentation if you have a strong message," he says.

2 Plan and structure

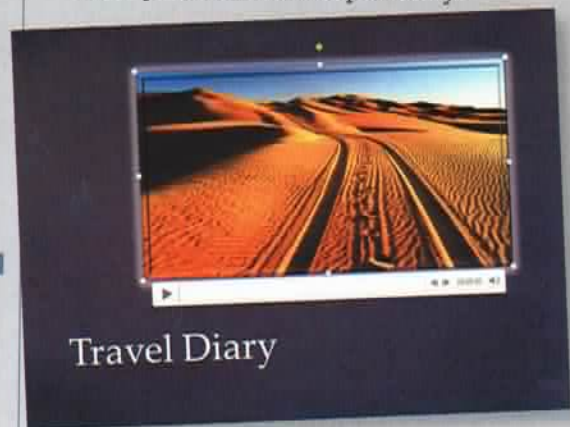
- Again keep away from that computer screen and plan out your presentation on paper.
- "What are your key points?" asks European Management Assistants

(EUMA) deputy national chair Angela Garry. "Write a rough précis, section them into pieces, and use this to build your slides."

- Use the outline pane in PowerPoint to plan out what will appear on each slide before you start adding the fancy design.
- EA to Elexon's chief executive Laura Richardson advises that you use strong section dividers. "Repeat the contents page at the start of each new section with that section highlighted," she suggests.

3 Text

- Remember the three S's. "You must be short, sharp and succinct," says Garry. Keep the text on each slide brief.
- Don't go below font size 20. People need to be able to read it.
- If you are presenting, never read off the slides. Have something separate to say. If you are emailing the presentation though do have enough text to make your slides self-explanatory.



"Be short, sharp and succinct"



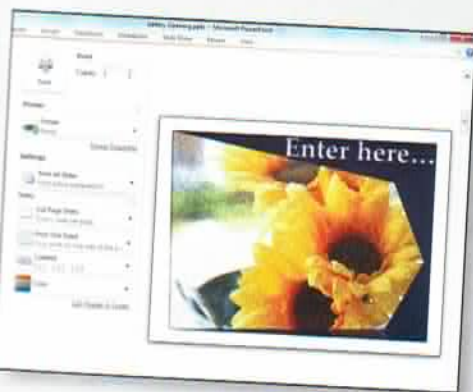
HOW TO ... POWERPOINT PRESENTATIONS

4 Images

- Use good quality images. PowerPoint professional Neil Tomlinson says: "The biggest issue with images is resolution. I often see presentations where people have grabbed an image off the web and when you look at the slide show it is heavily pixelated."



- Use images sparingly. "One very strong picture will trump several small, disconnected pictures," says Morton.
- Graphs are a great visual tool to make a point but make sure your graphs only contain relevant information in a readable format. If you have a bar chart with too many colour-coded bars, you need to re-draw it. Just highlight relevant results or even extract them and present them in a different form.



5 The whizzy extras – videos and transitions

- Tomlinson thinks audiences nowadays are so exposed to multimedia they expect it, so don't be afraid to use videos.
- However, don't just use videos because you can, make sure they add something to your presentation.
- Too many transitions between text and slides can be overkill.
- Remember PowerPoint only links to video files, it does not embed them. So if you email your presentation, send the video too.



KEYS TO REMEMBER:

- If your audience is ignoring you and admiring the images flashing behind you - hit the 'B' key. It will blank out the screen. Just hit it again to get your presentation back.
- If you are editing a presentation and want to see how the slide show looks with your new changes, press F5. This will start your slideshow from the beginning.

ONLINE ALTERNATIVES TO POWERPOINT

Hate the linear format of PowerPoint slideshows? Want more options for your presentation? Here are a couple of super alternatives...



Prezi.com

Say goodbye to slides with Prezi. This programme is like a whiteboard filled with text, images and videos, and it zooms in on the area you want to highlight, giving your presentation a more dynamic edge. Prezi will also go back to a single point you made earlier, so you don't need to scroll through umpteen slides to find it.



Sliderocket.com

This exciting slideshow software is ace for telling you what your audience actually thinks. Viewers of your emailed presentations can leave comments on each slide and answer polls in real time. The user analytics tool tells you which slides people spent most time on. Additionally, integration with Google Docs and Flickr makes adding data to your slides super easy. It also looks super swish, so will impress your boss.

Personal Assistant

PA Life's monthly letters page where we answer the profession's burning issues courtesy of industry experts and our editorial board. Do you have any questions for the next issue? Email us at editorial@onetonemedia.com

Charlotte from Torquay asks:

How can I use social media to help me improve at my job?

Angela Garry, PA to the Principal at the Nottingham University Samworth Academy and the world's most LinkedIn PA says:

Ever been asked by your boss to do a seemingly impossible task? Perhaps you have to organise a trip to a country you have not even heard of. Social media can help enormously.

Build yourself a network of PAs via business networking site LinkedIn. There are 64,000+ LinkedIn users who list themselves as a "PA". That's quite a few to learn from. It does not take long to connect with such a large group, simply register on the site and join one of the many groups for PAs. You can instantly be part of things by posting.

I don't use Facebook for business, due to its very nature. I don't think a website that allows you to "poke" a friend and post social photographs promotes anyone's business persona well.

But Twitter is a good tool for advertising your company or product. The constraint of 140 characters makes it a good way to attract attention. Without followers though, you are tweeting into dead air. Start following people relevant to your business and hope they follow back and advertise your username to others. Tweets need to be to the point, interesting and have something to offer.



Jane from Chester asks:

How can I improve lines of communication with my new boss?

Jane Firth, senior business manager at Hays PA & Secretarial, says:

It is important that you explain to your boss from the outset how open communication will help you work better together. Make sure they understand that if you know what their agenda and priorities are you can help them achieve them.

It is a good idea to gain as much insight as possible into your boss's working style and the pressures they face as early as possible.

This will help you to recognise their needs and priorities without requiring explicit instructions and will impress your employer and enhance your relationship with them. If possible, get as much information as you can from your predecessor or other PAs in the business.

Arrange regular reviews and meetings to agree on current tasks and provide updates on your progress. Try to schedule them particularly for the start of every day or week to keep organised.

When you meet with your boss always make sure you are confident and concise as their time will be limited. By proving your ability to make their working day run more smoothly, your boss should work better with you.



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