

Writing the Business Case: Designing a Slide Deck Report and Slides for Presentations

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1.1 Pros and Cons of PowerPoint

Introduction

When giving a presentation you are more likely to fare better if you follow accepted standards of business presentations. One of those standards is the schematic report.

You are probably already familiar with the use of PowerPoint to create presentations for an audience. Such presentations will be covered in more detail in the next chapter. However, in this chapter we look at PowerPoint as a report generation tool.

In business, PowerPoint has been gaining traction as a page layout tool to generate reports. These reports use smaller fonts, mix text and graphics, and are designed primarily to be read rather than projected on the screen. Businesses use different names for this type of report including decks, reading decks, and schematic reports.

Used in this way, PowerPoint becomes equivalent to a poor man's desktop publishing package—but with the added advantage that the report also fits neatly on the screen.

However, it is difficult for an audience to read a font smaller than 24 point onscreen. **Small font presentations (around 11 point) raise the obvious question as to why the presentation should be projected at all.**

PowerPoint as a Report Writer

Traditionally students are taught to write reports using a word processor such as Microsoft Word. The emphasis in the reports is on grammar and composition. However, much of the business world has been moving in a different direction. The primary means of formal communication in corporations is with PowerPoint.

PowerPoint was developed as a presentation graphics package. PowerPoint presentations are designed to supplement a live presenter. For this reason, the fonts used tend to be large (around 24 point) and the words few (less than fifty per page) so that the audience can read them. The bullet points also serve as a cue for the presenter in lieu of note cards.

However, there is a growing movement to create presentations that can stand with or without the presenter. The term used to describe a PowerPoint presentation with this dual purpose is a deck. The term has obvious ties to a deck of cards. The term deck is used whether the slides are primarily

designed for a presentation or primarily designed to be read. However, to be clear about which we mean, we will use the term schematic report to describe a deck intended to be read rather than projected. A sample follows below:

<p>INTRODUCTION</p> <p>In order to establish a community in which the preservation of the environment is a top priority, people must begin to assess and change the way they visualize the material world. Sustainability can be applied by the community as a whole, by businesses, and by individuals. Each level has started taking initiative in realizing the need for sustainability beyond basic environmental awareness. People are voicing concerns about organizations that aren't effectively managing wastes, resources and emissions. Parallel to this concern is the future prospect of greenhouse gas emission regulations for businesses. The continued practice of ignoring sustainability issues also leads to record heat waves, disastrous storms, increased energy prices, and global insecurity. The awareness of these realizations influence individuals to align sustainability goals with business strategies: creating new business values, improving corporate image, reducing risk, and attracting and retaining employees.</p> <p>Cities, businesses and individuals establishing green values and pursuing more sustainable living habits will lead to the enrichment of the environment. Whether sustainability is practiced by a community as a whole or businesses, it needs to be compounded by individual participation within these organizations. In the following report, a business model for Eco-Scope will be provided. The business model will improve the level of sustainability within communities by providing steady revenue, employment opportunities, and offering a number of services that promote a sustainable lifestyle in citizens with green values. Throughout the remainder of this report, this business model will be discussed in terms of the placement of the business (sustainable communities and beyond), the product (staff in four service segments), the pricing (financial analysis), and the promotion strategy (heavy advertising and use of public relations). Through the implementation of this business model, sustainable communities can expect to experience value through the steady revenues, employment opportunities and the spreading of green values that Eco-Scope provides.</p>	
<p>Eco-Scope will be placed in a very specific portion of the market: sustainable communities. In order to fully understand the level impact and pressing need for a business model like Eco-Scope, it is important to first understand the current nature of sustainable communities. In the changing world today, the switch to sustainable and green practices has become imperative. According to American City & County Magazine, "such times as build a crisis or a bridge the way we've been doing it, we're committing ourselves to 50 to 75 more years of doing business as usual". Once these practices are integrated into the daily life of a community, value can be seen in its effects on the economy, the environment, and people's quality of life (Jackson, 2009).</p> <p>Sustainable communities are becoming increasingly important as more world citizens realize the damaging effects of the world's harsh treatment of the environment. The three core concepts that establish a successful sustainable community are denoted as the "three E's" of sustainability and include economy, equity, and environment (Jackson, 2009). These three factors must work together in harmony in order for communities to be successful over an extended period of time.</p> <p>Participants or residents of a sustainable community must consider how their community "meets the needs of the present generation without sacrificing the ability of future generations to meet their needs" (Bewley, 2008). Some of the most important green practices for green and clean cities include sustainable transport, energy efficiency, green building, recycling and zero waste techniques, but the challenge is finding the strengths in each practice and how they can act together (Bewley, 2008).</p> <p>Proponents on the green movement argue that one community in one place is not enough to create change. In order to make any significant difference, people need "tools and practices that can be repeated across space and time" (Welch, 2010). It is clear that the development of sustainable communities is a crucial issue for the future of our society as a whole and should be recognized as such. The realization of the relevance of this issue should encourage cities large and small to make a commitment to change and to the health and sustainability of future generations.</p> <p>Being sustainable and eco-friendly is not a cheap venture. It involves a large investment of both the time and money of members of the community. When attempting to support a family of their own, the idea of additional resources allocated toward the community can be burdensome to residents. The resources needed are based around six central needs of the sustainable communities.</p>	
<p>SUSTAINABLE COMMUNITIES: EXPRESSING THE NEED</p>	

As more words are required to be fitted onto one slide, many presenters are using smaller fonts for their presentation slides. The small text creates a presentation that can no longer be read easily by the audience. What should be a presentation turns into an eye test. To compensate, many times

audience members are each provided with a copy of the presentation. So while they may not be able to read the screen, they can follow along. Unfortunately, sometimes in an effort to save paper, the presenter will use a PowerPoint hand-out with three slides per page and a space for the audience to write notes. This simply transfers the eye test to paper. Distributing handouts to the audience is only helpful if the slides are readable. Here they are not, nor would they be readable projected on the screen. The only way to make this presentation readable is to print one slide per page for reading purpose.

1.2 Schematic Report

Report vs. Presentation

A schematic report minimally contains the following elements.

1. Title page with author.
2. Executive summary: A summary analysis of the report with the key facts, issues, and conclusions. Your audience should be able to get the gist of your entire report just by reading the executive summary.
3. Table of contents—with page numbers identifying sections and second level headings only.
4. Introduction.
5. Body: that includes the analysis and recommendations (most of your report). To provide continuity the evidence should point back to the main argument.
6. Conclusion.

The report may also include a letter of transmittal, references, and appendices.

If a schematic report contains too much detail to be projected, what can you use for your presentation? The solution is to create two decks—a schematic report intended to be read and an accompanying presentation intended to be projected. The task is not as hard as it might seem.

Schematic reports tend to be heavy on graphics. All of those graphics can be copied from the schematic report to the presentation report. Within the presentation, those graphics should be enlarged, perhaps to fill the entire screen. Key summary points can similarly be lifted from the schematic report while leaving the bulk of the text behind. The speaker will provide the gist of the text during the presentation. The two decks can even run in the same order so that the audience can follow along in the written report.

How to create the presentation from the schematic

The easiest way to do this is by beginning with the schematic and then stripping it down to the graphics and key text, then enlarging those and arranging them on the screen.

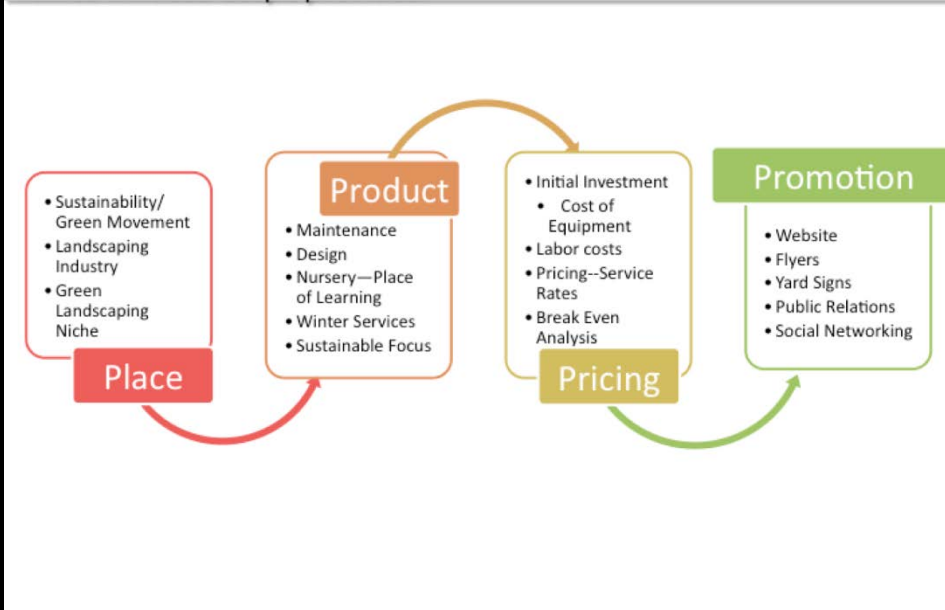
In order to establish a community in which the preservation of the environment is a top priority, people must begin to assess and change the way they visualize the material world. Sustainability can be applied by the community as a whole, by businesses, and by individuals. Each level has started taking initiative in realizing the need for sustainability beyond basic environmental awareness. People are voicing concerns about organizations that aren't effectively managing wastes, resources and emissions. Parallel to this concern is the future prospect of greenhouse gas emission regulations for businesses. The continued practice of ignoring sustainability issues also leads to record heat waves, disastrous storms, increased energy prices, and global insecurity. The awareness of these realizations influence individuals to align sustainability goals with business strategies: creating new business values, improving corporate image, reducing risk, and attracting and retaining employees.

Cities, businesses and individuals establishing green values and pursuing more sustainable living habits will lead to the enrichment of the environment. Whether sustainability is practiced by a community as a whole or businesses, it needs to be compounded by individual participation within these organizations. In the following report, a business model for Eco-Scape will be provided. The business model will improve the level of sustainability within communities by providing steady revenue, employment opportunities, and offering a number of services that promote a sustainable lifestyle in citizens with green values. Throughout the remainder of this report, this business model will be discussed in terms of the placement of the business (sustainable communities and beyond), the product itself (in four service segments), the pricing (financial analysis), and the promotion strategy (heavy advertising and use of public relations). *Through the implementation of this business model, sustainable communities can expect to experience value through the stable revenues, employment opportunities and the spreading of green values that Eco-Scape provides.*



For example: above is a page from a schematic, which matches the presentation slide (on the next page). The key sentence from the schematic slide becomes the title of the presentation slide. The artwork is enlarged. Note that even the text in the artwork has been enlarged.

Sustainable communities can expect to experience value through the stable revenues, employment opportunities and the spreading of green values that Eco-Scape provides.



Writing an Executive Summary

Every schematic report leads off with an executive summary. An executive summary usually occupies one page and summarizes the key facts, issues, and conclusions of the report. A manager should be able to garner enough information from the executive summary. There are many definitions of an executive summary—some are highly specific. We have chosen to go with one of the more general definitions modified from: smallbusinessdictionary.com to make a decision. The rest of the report is effectively backup if there are questions that arise from the executive summary.

Many times a senior level manager will not even read past the executive summary. Rather they will assign one or more junior level managers to follow up on a subsection of the report. Looked at this way, the executive summary is obviously something that you want to spend a lot of time crafting—not a reluctant chore at the end of the process.

The key to writing an executive summary is to get quickly to the point. You should tie the parts of the executive summary to main points in your report:

- Key facts—what is the current state? What are enablers that will help with the proposed solution?
- Issues—what are the barriers that would impede the proposed solution?
- Conclusions—what is the report specifically recommending? What course of action should the reader take?

One of the most common mistakes is to treat the executive summary as an introduction to the report. You will have an opportunity later to write a gentle introduction to the report, but not in the executive summary.

The purpose of this report is to provide a business model for Eco-Scape. The report will be divided into four sections that will describe the business' marketing mix according to the business' target market, services provided, promotion strategy, and financial analysis.

Industry Research and Analysis Supports the Need for Eco-Scape

Research suggests that there are three main ideas associated with a sustainable community; environment, equity, and economy. These ideas must work together in harmony for a sustainable community to function correctly. It was also found that there are six main needs that need to be met within a community, these being food, energy, water, shelter, jobs and infrastructure. Eco-Scape brought these ideas together to create a business model that will support the economy and functionality of a sustainable community and create jobs while spreading sustainable goals and ideals to a broad audience.

Eco-Scape's Business Model: Four Landscape Service Segments

Eco-Scape's business model is divided into service segments including basic lawn maintenance, sustainable landscape design, snow removal services, and a nursery. Ideally, all of Eco-Scape's employees will come from the community where it is located. The employment model consists of four areas including administrative, maintenance, design, and nursery management. The core needs of the company require 29 employees and is highly scalable as the client base expands.

Promotional Strategy

Eco-Scape will use many promotion outlets to advertise the business. Fliers, yard signs, social networking tools, and a user friendly website will be created and used to attract customers. Eco-Scape has also picked a hypothetical location for their business to show the ease of promoting and encouraging green ideals in a city that is involved in these practices and the possibility for growth.

Financial Analysis

Finally, Eco-Scape did a financial analysis for the business. This includes costs associated with the initial equipment investment, annual energy expenses, annual employment expenses, forecasted sales breakdown, and a simplified income statement. Using these models, the report provides a break-even analysis of the number of sales that are required to cover costs of one year of operations. Based on these figures, it is apparent that the business will be profitable and add value to sustainable communities.

After researching, creating a business model, and doing a financial analysis, it can be seen that Eco-Scape has the potential to grow and prosper as a premier sustainable landscaping business. The value Eco-Scape will add exists in its profitability, employment, and, most importantly, its continuous encouragement and influence on a sustainable and green way of living.



Key Takeaways

- You should prepare both a written report and a PowerPoint presentation rather than projecting the written report.
- A business presentation combining concise text and graphics. Schematic reports should be brief, well organized, and easy to navigate. Though usually designed in PowerPoint, schematic reports are intended primarily to be read rather than projected. (The term was coined by Robert Heckman of Syracuse University.)
- It should also have a companion set of presentation slides primarily designed to be projected which combines brief text and graphics. Presentations use few words and large fonts for audience readability.
- Pitchpoint is a PowerPoint template well suited for creating schematic reports because of its small font size and versatile layouts.
- Additional reading: <http://business-finance.blurtit.com/832225/what-is-schematic-report-in-business-communication>
- Sample next page

<p>ECO-SCOPE: GREEN LANDSCAPING AND DESIGN</p> <p>Prepared for: Ivy Bieman Hala Annabi Jane Sojka John Kiefer Kate Kiefer</p> <p>Prepared by: Dale Andrassy Jessica Fruchey Katie O'Brien Sarah Peis Michael Saul</p> 	<p>EXECUTIVE SUMMARY</p> <p>Introduction Eco-Scope is a sustainable landscaping and design business created for a sustainable community. The main goals of the business are the spread of green and clean ideas and practices and the creation of revenue and employment opportunities for the community in which it exists. This business has great potential for high scalability and hopes to expand outside its community to offer its services to others interested in an environmentally friendly landscape. The purpose of this report is to provide a business model for Eco-Scope. The report will be divided into four sections that will describe the business' marketing mix according to the business' target market, services provided, promotion strategy, and financial analysis.</p> <p>Industry Research and Analysis Supports the Need for Eco-Scope The creation of Eco-Scope stemmed from research on sustainable communities and how the landscaping industry fits into these communities. Research suggests that there are three main ideas associated with a sustainable community: environment, equity, and economy. These ideas must work together in harmony for a sustainable community to function correctly. It was also found that there are six main needs that need to be met within a community, these being food, energy, water, shelter, jobs, and infrastructure. Eco-Scope brought these ideas together to create a business model that will support the economy and functionality of a sustainable community and create jobs while spreading sustainable goals and ideas to a broad audience.</p> <p>Eco-Scope's Business Model: Four Landscape Service Segments Eco-Scope's business model is divided into four service segments including basic lawn maintenance, sustainable landscape design, tree removal services, and a nursery. Ideally, all of Eco-Scope's employees will come from the community where it is located. The employment model consists of four areas including administrative, maintenance, design, and nursery management. The core needs of the company require 20 employees and is highly scalable as the client base expands.</p> <p>Promotional Strategy Eco-Scope will use many promotion outlets to advertise the business. Fliers, yard signs, social networking tools, and a user friendly website will be created and used to attract customers. Eco-Scope has also picked a hypothetical location for their business to show the ease of promoting and encouraging green ideas in a city that is involved in these practices and the possibility for growth.</p> <p>Financial Analysis Finally, Eco-Scope did a financial analysis for the business. This includes costs associated with the initial equipment investment, annual energy expenses, annual employment expenses, forecasted sales breakdown, and a simplified income statement. Using these models, the report provides a break-even analysis of the number of sales that are required to cover costs of one year of operations. Based on these figures, it is apparent that the business will be profitable and add value to sustainable communities.</p> <p>After researching, creating a business model, and doing a financial analysis, it can be seen that Eco-Scope has the potential to grow and prosper as a premier sustainable landscaping business. The value Eco-Scope will add exists in its profitability, employment, and, most importantly, its continuous encouragement and influence on a sustainable and green way of living.</p> 
<p>TABLE OF CONTENTS</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Introduction 4 Sustainable Communities: Expressing the Need 5 Eco-Scope's Business Model 7 <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Maintenance Segment 10 Design Segment 11 Winter Services Segment 16 Nursery Segment 17 Employment Structure and Requirements 18 Promotional Strategy 30 Financial Analysis 38 <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Equipment Expenses 39 Break Even Analysis 39 Works Cited 41 	<p>INTRODUCTION</p> <p>In order to establish a community in which the preservation of the environment is a top priority, people must begin to assess and change the way they visualize the material world. Sustainability can be applied by the community as a whole, by businesses, and by individuals. Each level has started taking initiative in realizing the need for sustainability beyond basic environmental awareness. People are voicing concerns about organizations that aren't effectively managing wastes, resources and emissions. Parallel to this concern is the future prospect of greenhouse gas emission regulations for businesses. The continued practice of ignoring sustainability issues also leads to record heat waves, disastrous storms, increased energy prices, and global insecurity. The awareness of these realizations influence individuals to align sustainability goals with business strategies: creating new business values, improving corporate image, reducing risk, and attracting and retaining employees.</p> <p>Cities, businesses and individuals establishing green values and pursuing more sustainable living habits will lead to the enrichment of the environment. Whether sustainability is practiced by a community as a whole or businesses, it needs to be accompanied by individual participation within these organizations. In the following report, a business model for Eco-Scope will be provided. The business model will improve the level of sustainability within communities by providing steady revenue, employment opportunities, and offering a number of services that promote a sustainable lifestyle in citizens with green values. Throughout the remainder of this report, this business model will be discussed in terms of the placement of the business (sustainable communities and beyond), the product itself (in four service segments), the pricing (financial analysis), and the promotion strategy (heavy advertising and use of public relations). Through the implementation of this business model, sustainable communities can expect to experience value through the stable revenue, employment opportunities and the spreading of green values that Eco-Scope provides.</p> 
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Source: <http://2012books.lardbucket.org/books/designing-business-information-systems-apps-websites-and-more/s15-writing-the-business-case-desi.html>

1.3 Designing Presentations

Introduction

PowerPoint presentations have become the standard method of presenting information in businesses. This program is not only used in corporations; however, even professional sports teams and the military use PowerPoint to convey information internally.

Yet, there are still those who claim that PowerPoint is one of the least effective forms of communication for many reasons:

- Most presenters use slides with words only and yet very few words fit on a slide.
- Presenters tend to cram an entire idea—no matter how complex—onto a single slide.
- Most presentations are thrown together with limited preparation, and the goal of most presentations is to summarize and sell ideas rather than to engage the audience in serious discourse.
- Slides are only displayed one at a time. Therefore, the audience has the difficult task of trying to remember what information appeared on previous slides.
- Presenters tend to read their slides.
- Presenters tend to look at the screen when reading the slides thereby avoiding eye contact with the audience.

The result are presentations that are visually bland, intellectually insulting, and easily forgettable.

During your university career, you will use PowerPoint for almost every class in which you or a group has to do a presentation. In this chapter, you will learn how to make those presentations great. Presentations should explain material clearly and concisely while also prompting the audience to take a certain course of action.

A PowerPoint presentation should be a complement to your schematic report. In fact, you should be able to generate the PowerPoint presentation fairly quickly from your schematic report.

Presentation Content

You need to determine the purpose of the presentation and possible circumstances or contexts in which the presentation might be given. This is a time to showcase your ideas and highlight all of the great things about your project. Be concise and powerful. This may be the most crucial deliverable of the project—especially if given to higher-ups who will have only skimmed the actual report.

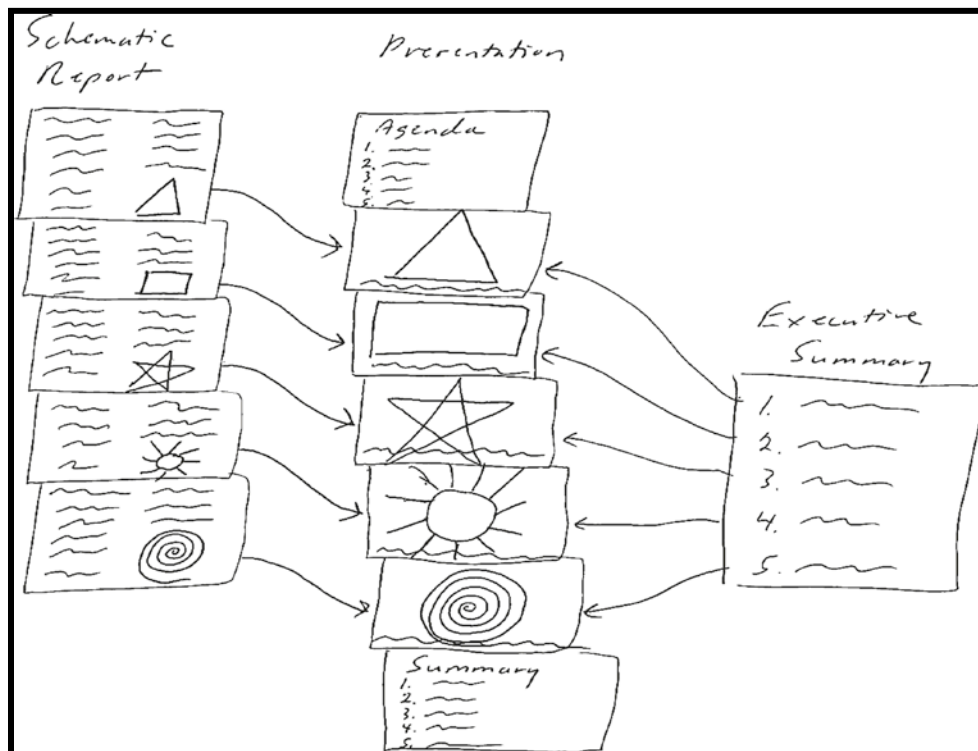
Think of your presentation as an illustrated version of the executive summary of your schematic report. If you look at it that way, you have already done the work! Each idea from your executive summary should correspond to a slide. Pull ideas out of your executive summary and illustrate them with exhibits from inside the report. Each illustration should be accompanied by a sentence. The sentence can come from the executive summary or from the relevant slide in the report. You may even find that in the process, you end up revising and improving your executive summary.

Not every slide needs to be illustrated, and not every illustration needs to be included. A slide with a single sentence and no illustration may actually have great visual impact by contrast with the rest of the report. Furthermore, some of your illustrations may simply set up foundation knowledge or due diligence and need not make it to the presentation.

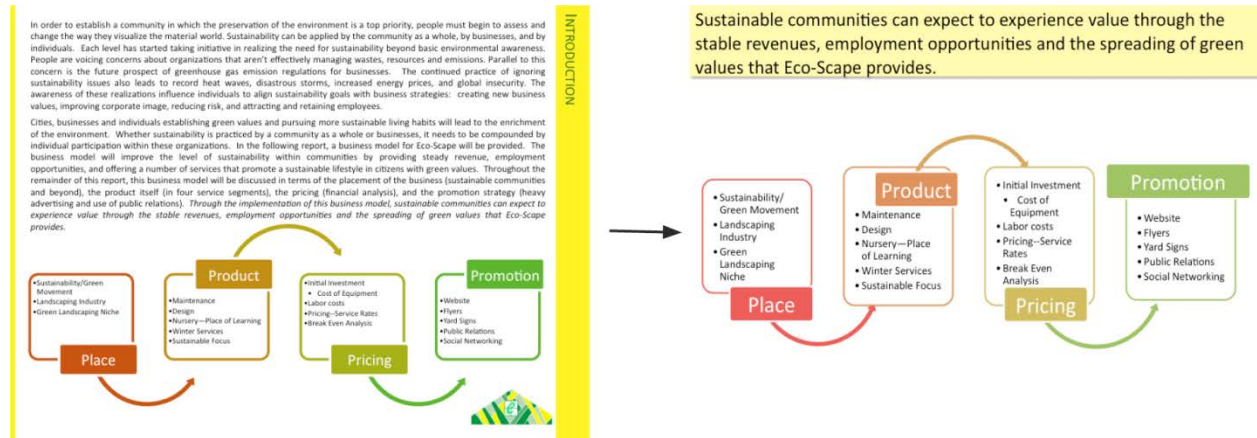
To finish up, create slides that bookend your presentation with an agenda up front and a summary at the end. Follow the old adage, tell them what you are going to tell them, then tell them, then tell them what you told them.

Here are some additional tips:

1. Master the content. **90% of the words that come out of your mouth will not be on the slide.** You want the audience to look at you not the slide. Furthermore, if you know your content, you can look at the audience. If necessary, have note cards that you could refer to in an emergency.
2. Try to avoid handing out miniatures of your slides. Slides created using the method above will be virtually meaningless without the presenter. Hand out the schematic report or even just the executive summary instead.



Each sentence in your executive summary can form a slide heading (use your judgement). Then pull the images from your schematic report and enlarge them.



Slide Design - Themes

PowerPoint comes with many different themes to apply to your slides. In general, try to choose either a very light or a very dark colored background. Anything in between will wash out in a bright room.

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PowerPoint comes with many different themes to apply to your slides. In general, try to choose either a very light or a very dark colored background. Anything in between will wash out in a bright room.

Themes cannot save a text heavy slide. It is still a boring slide and the speaker may feel obligated to read it to the audience. Many students turn to a dark background theme with the hope that it will convey more professionalism. However, as you can see, it doesn't solve the problem of a boring slide.

A better option is to move most of the words to your schematic report and instead make your point in a dramatic visual fashion. Visual slides take much longer to create but could differentiate your presentation from every other boring PowerPoint presentation making yours more persuasive.

Recommend Immediate Visual Inspection of Columbia

- ▲ The Crater software can not predict damage to Columbia because the foam piece that hit the ship was big and was travelling very quickly.
- ▲ Even tiny foam particles can penetrate the tiles when they strike with sufficient velocity.
- 6 □ Once tiles are penetrated, significant damage to the spacecraft is possible.
- ▲ The foam piece that hit Columbia was 600 times bigger than the foam used to calibrate Crater.
 - 1920 in³ vs. 3 in³ for test.
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Slide Design - Principles

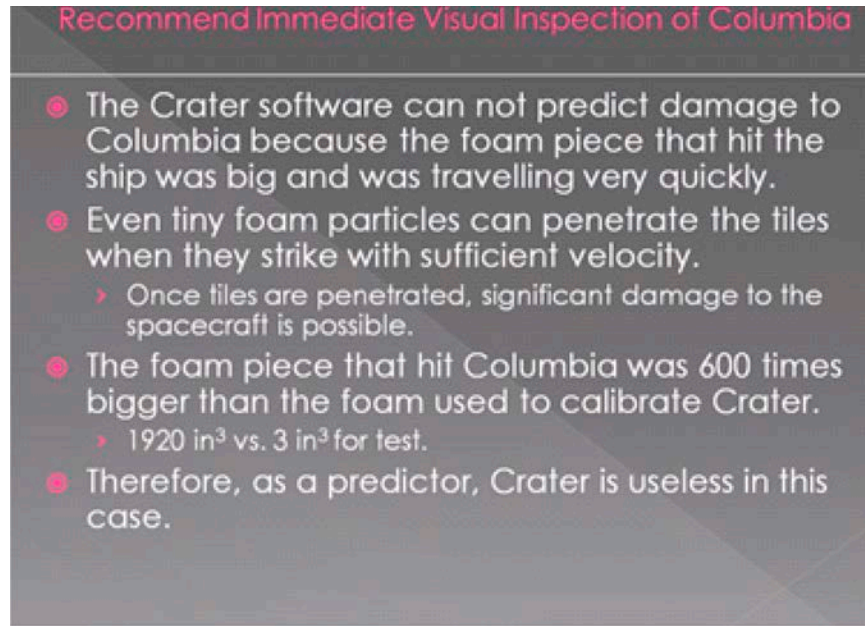
You want your presentation to be professional and engaging. To get there you will need the C.R.A.P. principles. You will also need stylistic enhancements that come under the heading of Presentation Zen. Finally a little (and we do mean *little*) multimedia—embedded video or subtle use of animation serves to spice up a presentation.

The C.R.A.P. graphic design principles apply to slide design as well. Contrast, repetition, alignment, and proximity help organize information on your slide, focus attention, and create an overall professional look and feel.

Highly visual presentations with very few words are popularized by Garr Reynolds in his book, *Presentation Zen*. Reynolds advocates restraint, simplicity, and naturalness. The idea is that the slides naturally support your presentation rather than serving as a narrative. You are supposed to know your material.

Presentation Zen slides are characterized by very large illustrations—often full page bleeds—and usually just one sentence of text. This is called the picture superiority effect—basically that pictures are more memorable than words.

Three other Presentation Zen principles are to aim for a high signal to noise ratio, make good use of empty space, and align images using the rule of thirds. These will be covered next.



Presentation Zen in action. Above a text heavy slide cannot be saved no matter which PowerPoint theme is applied. Below the key message of the slide is illustrated by a full page bleed of a picture of the damaged tiles of a previous shuttle flight. We also enlarge and crop the foam picture. Text is set in white on a black fill for contrast. Which slide do you find more interesting, and memorable? Images reprinted from NASA.



High Signal to Noise Ratio: Inform, Don't Decorate

Every item on your slide should be there for a reason. You are trying to inform the reader and transfer information. You should not aim to decorate your slide with meaningless fluff.

In technical terms you want a strong communication signal and very weak distracting noise in your slide. This is called a high signal to noise ratio. Normally, words, numbers, and graphs are your communications signal—the information you are trying to convey. Pictures can also be part of that signal if they are used judiciously—otherwise they become part of the noise. Example on the next page.

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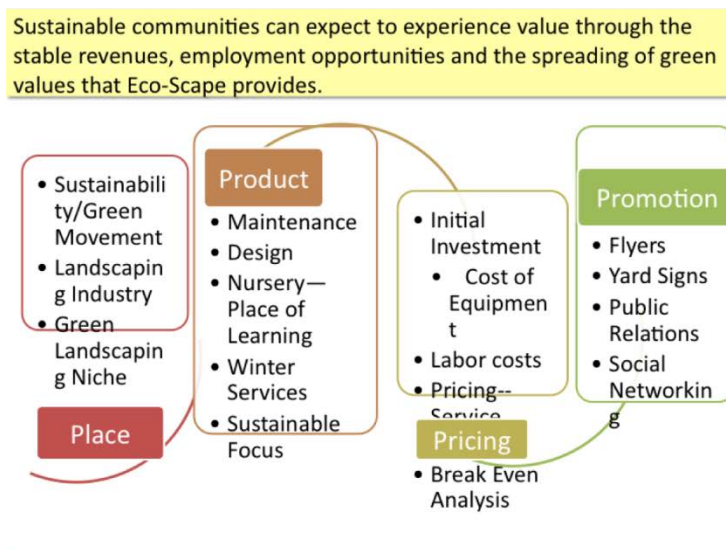
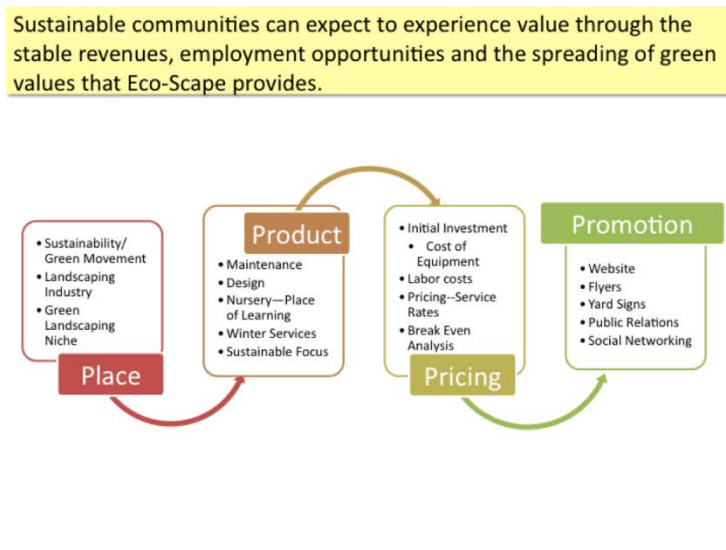


Our preference is for the top slide. With no distracting illustrations the audience can focus on the content. However, the illustration in the middle slide is calm enough so as to be acceptable. The bottom slide is just too busy—it has too much noise.

Use of Empty Space: White Space Is Good!

Resist the temptation to fill every available space on your slide with words or images. White space is good! White space is pleasing to the eye and can represent balance and harmony.

However, too much white space might convey that you don't have very much to say about a particular topic, or that it is not important. Again, it's all about balance.

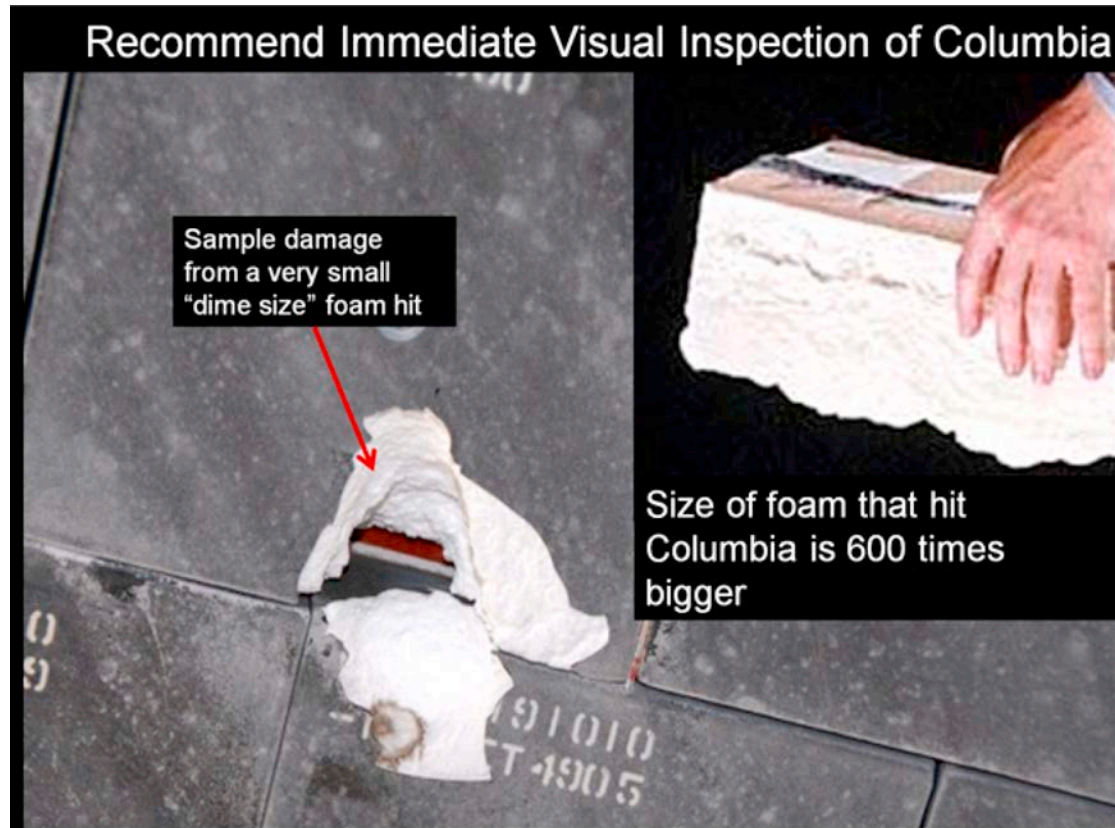


The top slide makes good use of white space to let the image breathe. The bottom slide tries to use up all of the white space and in the process horribly distorts the slide. If it looks cartoonish, then don't do it.

Rule of Thirds

One of the advantages of using a full page bleed is that the picture is often larger than the slide. This gives you the option of positioning and cropping the picture for maximum visual impact.

For many years professional photographers have used the rule of thirds to compose a picture, and you can too. Simply divide the slide horizontally and vertically in thirds using the guides (see technique). The place where the lines meet are called “power points.” No lie. Try to place your subject whether words or images at the power points for maximum visual impact.



Fills for Text Blocks

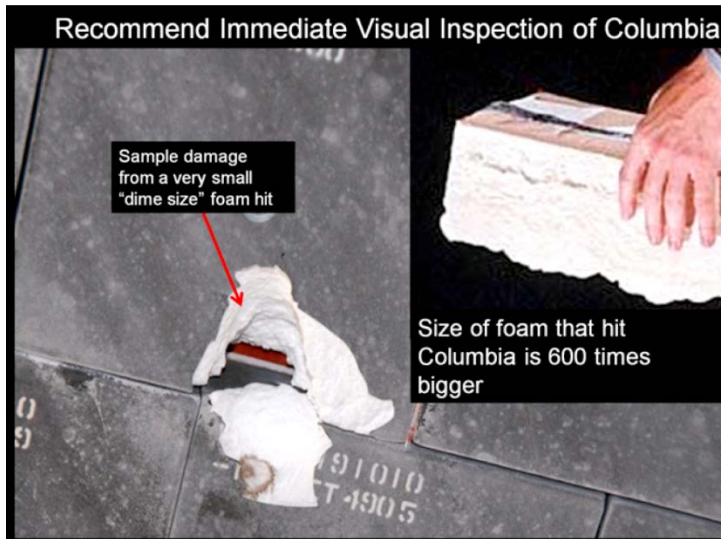
The problem with a full page bleed is that the text may be unreadable on top of the image depending on the image. One easy solution is to place the text on top of a fill. The fill may be solid (opaque) or semi-transparent if you would like the picture to show through. In either case, the fill allows you to add dimensionality to your document in much the same way that magazines layer text and graphics on their covers.

The easiest way to create this effect is to create a layout on the master slide. Reposition the title so that it completely covers a strip at the top or bottom of the slide. Then right-click and format the text box adding a fill and adjusting the text color as necessary.

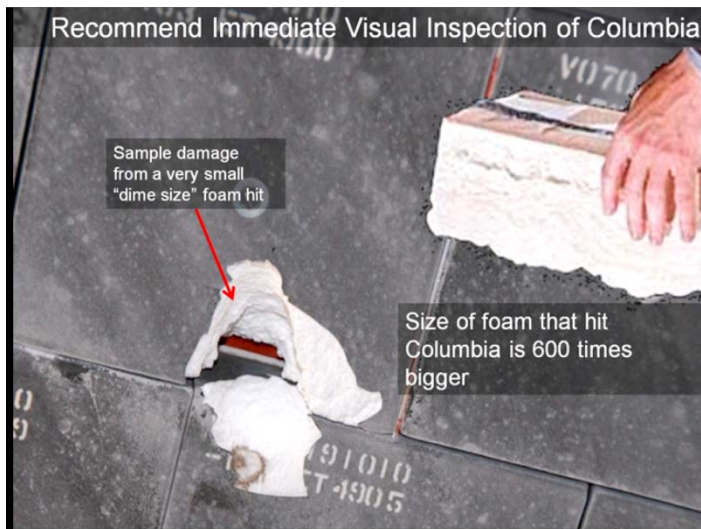
To ensure consistency among slides, turn OFF the auto—fit text. Instead simply set the font size to 24 point.

On individual slides you may have to arrange layers so that the text box sits on top rather than below the graphic.

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The same slide shown with black background text above and a 60% semi-transparent screen below:



Source: http://catalog.flatworldknowledge.com/bookhub/2579?e=frost-ch03_s01