Memorandum

To: XXX

From: Evelyn Smith

Date: 2 March 2025

Subject: Project 2

Introduction

Per the instructions for Project 2, this document provides a detailed analysis of the user experience (UX) issues present in the January 2010 revision of the Washington State Employee Hiring Manual slideshow presentation, provided in the assignment options.

The slideshow was examined for inconsistencies with current best practices in slideshow design, according to the Web AIM Guide. The guide makes the following recommendations for user-friendly design and accessibility:

- Good contrast and simple background
- Use programmed slide layouts (such as Title, Title and Content, etc.)
  - If layouts cannot be used, arrange object order in reading order (for screen reader)
- Provide alt text (a written description for visually impaired users) for images
- Place weblinks in descriptive text (and provide full URL for print)
- Good text size
- No information provided solely by color-coding
- Keep transitions and animations simple
- Clear, simple language
- Captions for videos and transcripts for audio

Preliminary Analysis

The original version of the slideshow had a number of issues.

Overall, the slideshow suffered from excessive wordiness, slides that were either too cluttered or too stark, and images that were awkwardly placed or served no purpose (which should be either to convey information or to fill excess white space). The slideshow did not use any template or slide layouts.

Utilizing MS PowerPoint's built-in Accessibility checker returned the following results on the 200+ page document:

- 543 cases of missing alt text
- 9 missing table headers
- 22 missing slide titles
- 1 case of hard to read text contrast (though I found several on a quick visual skim)

Suggested Revisions

The slideshow would benefit from a global revision to conform to modern UX and design standards. Below is a sampling of slides to serve as a before-and-after comparison, with explanations of suggested changes. Note: Corresponding slides may have different slide numbers.

Title Slide
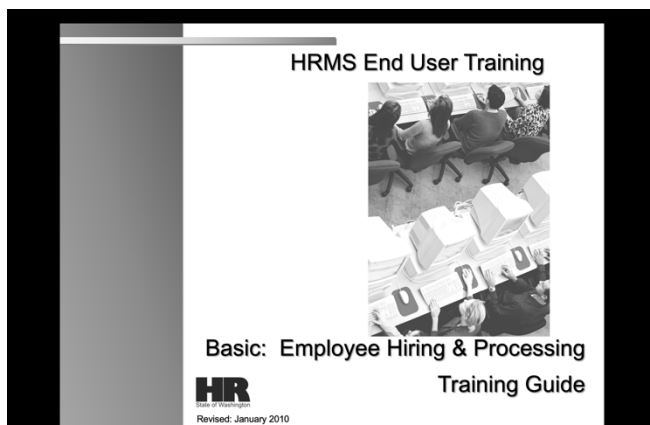
High contrast between black font and plain white background, worsened by shadow effect on text. Positioning is awkward, with text squeezed in around picture. Picture is obviously dated.

Standardized template with light gray background to decrease contrast. Image is pertinent and not specific to a time-period. Clear distinction between title and subtitle.

Content Slides

Stark appearance. Wordy. Some slightly condescending language.

Utilizes standard layout. Condenses word usage and states points in plain and neutral language. White space can be used for image if desired.


Overdescription of information that should be conveyed verbally. Nonsensical changing of font colors and use of bolding. Colored textbox makes awkwardly placed weblink hard to read. Distracting shadow effect on image.
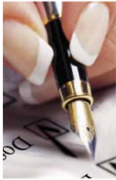
Information presented in concise bullet points. Corresponding sections on website screengrab highlighted. Link embedded in plain text and also given as a full URL in a footnote for printed version.
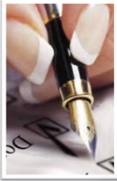
Long list with a lot of repetitive wording. Bullet points unnecessarily wordy. Introductory phrase is not really needed (implied by title and context).

More specific title. List condensed and organized into subsections to eliminate repetition.

Awkward organization into table. Shading draws all attention to middle entry. Entries are in illogical order. Descriptions are verbose. Image at bottom is distracting and serves no purpose.
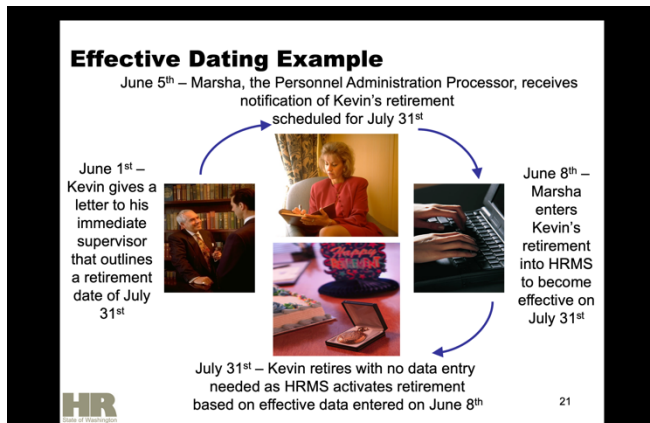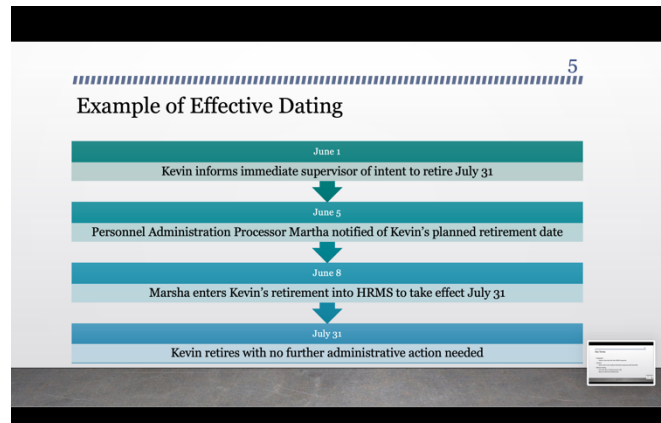

Information is presented simply and plainly in list format. Items are organized to build on previous information.

Flowchart is cluttered and puzzling.

Flowchart is clear and concise.

Conclusion

The original version of the slideshow is outdated and poorly designed. Information is buried under small walls of text and within confusing charts. It utilizes no standard formatting, which is not only important for pleasant appearance, but is also essential for compatibility with screen readers. An accessibility check on the revised slides reveals no issues.

Implementing changes along the lines exemplified in the sample set would greatly enhance the overall user experience and accessibility of this slideshow.