

The mark of success in a corporate environment is the day when you receive your very own laser pointer. The laser pointer can be a useful tool if you're giving a lecture in a crowded room, but almost always it is used as a symbol of power in small meetings, with the person who is holding the pointer being the person who wields the right to drone on for as long as they see fit.

I hate sitting through meetings when someone is waving around a laser pointer unnecessarily. I can understand using the pointer when there is a cluster of information on a particular projected slide, but more often than not, the pointer is used to shine a laser onto a simple Power Point slide containing very little information. It is during meetings like this that I have to resist the urge to stand up and scream that I can read the two sentences of information without a little red light indicating the exact spot I should train my eyes on.

When I was in college, many of my professors used a laser pointer during lectures. This is understandable since the lectures were usually given in large halls containing hundreds of students. It's useful to be able to follow the notes on the overhead projector or on the board, especially if the professor is explaining a complicated math equation. When you've seen a laser pointer used correctly it's hard to disregard its abuse without thinking of the person in charge of the pointer as a self-important bozo.

There is another instance where the use of a laser pointer is called for, and that is when you are entertaining pets, specifically cats. Cats aren't very smart about lasers and if you point one at a wall, the cat will lunge for it like it is something it can catch. It's fun watching cats throw themselves at the wall, so desperate to capture the little red dot that they lose all sense of their surroundings. They become frantic and agitated and this is good exercise for a normally sedentary housecat.

Now that I've explained useful ways to use a laser pointer, doesn't it seem silly that someone would break it out in a small conference room full of five people? It is to me. And it's more distracting than helpful because all I can do is sit in my seat and think about how stupid the person heading up the meeting is being, and wondering why there is a need for a false sense of decorum. But I suppose the same could be said about many of the things that go on in the corporate workplace.