Title Slides for Profit

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Examples of good "text" slides.
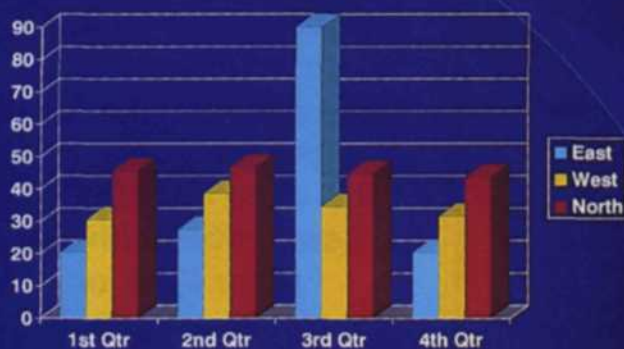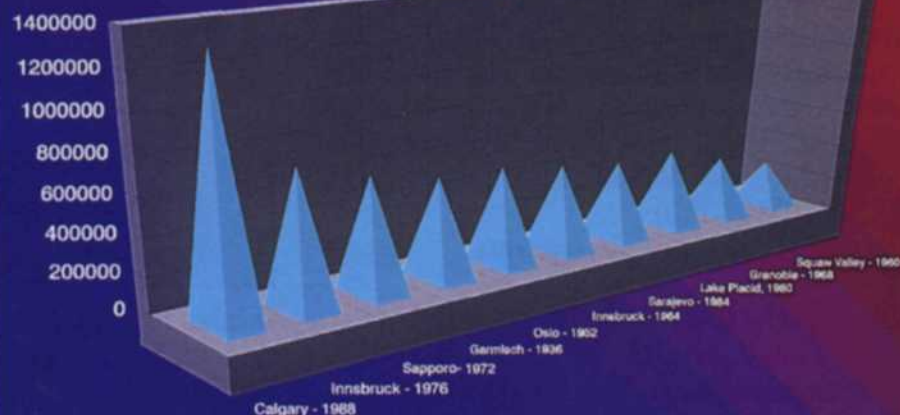
Charts, text, graphs.

Todays PHOTO LABS survive by being versatile. The lab must be able to solve almost any problem a client can present. This includes copywork, restoration, film processing, printing, lecture slides and computer file imaging. When it comes to creating slide presentations, you not only have to offer the service, but you need to educate your client base as well.

You are probably wondering why we are suggesting that you take the time and effort to try to educate your clients about presentation slides. From our experience as lab owners, we have found that many people have no idea how to go about it. They have been asked by their bosses to give slide presentations, and the expectations are high. You can be sure that if it doesn't go well, they won't take the blame. Instead, the lab gets the pointed finger.

We have found that the client may know his own company's product, but have no idea how to create a presentation about it. The client often creates slides using presentation software programs, and sets up the page size for 8.5x11, thinking that

he needs handouts. That will give him great slides too—right? You are left to fix the problems. If you don't intercede, he ends up with slides that don't turn out, and then he is upset with the lab. You need happy, satisfied customers. By taking the extra time to help customers create more effective slide presentations, the photo lab will ultimately profit. They will order more than they intended, and will become return customers since you helped make their presentation a success.

To help you and your staff give your clients a few pointers on how to create effective lecture slides, we have prepared a few tips to help you answer their questions.

The key to successful presentation slides is contrast. There must be a definite difference in tonal value between the background and the text. Generally, darker backgrounds work the best. Dark blue, dark green, dark red, dark purple and even black works well. Many of the presentation software programs offer the capability of creating graduated backgrounds. This allows the background to go from a dark color at the top
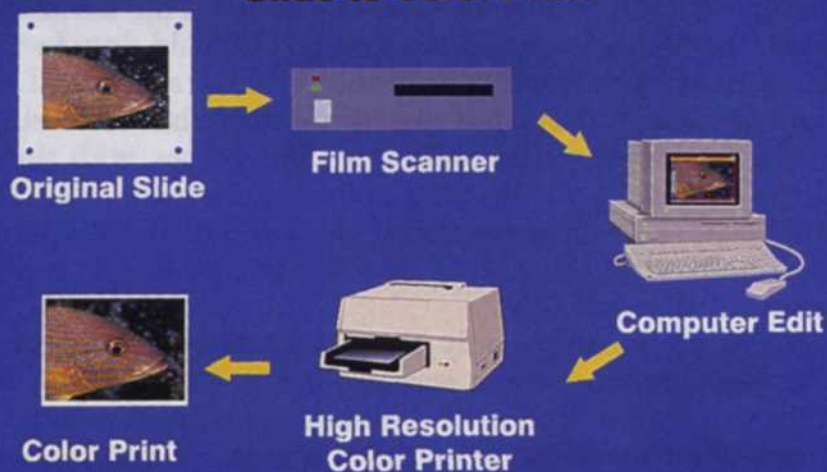
PROGRESSIVE DISCLOSURE

- First subject for discussion

PROGRESSIVE DISCLOSURE

- First subject for discussion
- Second subject for discussion
- Third subject for discussion

**Advanced Computer Editing System
Slide to Color Print**

Original Slide

Film Scanner

Computer Edit

Color Print

High Resolution
Color Printer

Added symbols and photos.

PROGRESSIVE DISCLOSURE

- First subject for discussion
- Second subject for discussion
- Third subject for discussion
- Fourth subject for discussion

Progressive Disclosure.

of the slide to a lighter tone at the bottom or vice versa. This generally produces a more professional appearance than the plain-colored backgrounds.

The text should be light in color so that it contrasts against the background. White, cyan, yellow or even magenta work well. You will have to decide which looks the best, dependent on which background you select.

The body copy and the heading do not need to be the same color. You need to achieve consistency from slide to slide. Select a heading color and a different body color, and carry that scheme throughout the presentation. You can use a dark red background if you decide that suits your color scheme. Do not use red for your text color choice. Many people are red color blind. This tends to be one of the most difficult colors to read. Red is very effective when used as a bar color in a chart or graph, but not as a text color.

Typeface selection is critical. You are looking for maximum legibility. Serif type, which has little curly-q's at the end of the

strokes, is harder to read on slides. You might also be eager to use some of the exotic typefaces offered in many of the presentation software packages, but leave those for your printed newsletters. The sans serif typefaces such as Helvetica, Avant Garde or Switzerland offer the best legibility.

When the text is finally imaged by a film recorder or optical camera, the thicker type will reproduce better than the thin. As a general rule, keep your headings in all upper case. If your slides have only a few lines of text, upper case will work well. When you have many lines of text, then use upper and lower case.

Most slides are created to help the speaker present a point. They are not meant to replace the speaker, but rather provide the speaker support material to make lecturing easier. We recommend using the slides as cue cards. This could mean that some of the slides may only have a word or two in order to keep the speaker in control of the lecture. More slides will need to be

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produced by the photo lab, thus generating more profit.

Because the lecturer uses cue cards to introduce each lecture section, it makes it easier for the person speaking to keep track of what's coming up next. That way, if the speaker is momentarily distracted, he or she can resume without becoming befuddled. This also makes it easier for the presentation to be given by a variety of speakers within a company with little or no preparation.

Keep the amount of text on the slides to a minimum. If necessary, break the information into several slides. Use simple text like you would in a telegram. The purpose of the presentation is to keep the attendees' attention. By changing the slides often, you keep the attention alive.

Many studies have been made to determine what size typeface should be used for maximum legibility. All kinds of formulas have resulted, but the best rule of thumb is "bigger is better." You want the person in the last row to be able to read it easily. We use the theory that it will be legible if you are able to read the text on the final slide without the aid of a magnifier.

Your goal in this presentation is to educate and stimulate those who attend your lecture. When you have four points to be made, don't put them all in one slide. It is human nature to read all four points rather than wait for the lecturer to get down to point four. Thus the attention is lost. Instead, we suggest a technique called progressive disclosure or "build slides." The first slide has only the heading and point one on it. The second slide would be the same as the first slide except an additional point would be added. This second point would be highlighted and the first point would drop to a subdued color. The third slide would add an additional highlighted point, and the first two points would be subdued.

The final slide would contain all four points, with the first three subdued and the final point highlighted. This allows the speaker to have control of the audiences' attention, as well as having the ability to refer to any of the previous points at any time.

Slides are meant to only be on the screen a short time, so the message must come across quickly. Charts and graphs help the viewer realize the message easily. A colorful bar graph showing year-end profits will create a fast realization for the corresponding numbers. Just presenting numbers alone makes too much work for the audience.

To provide more sophisticated slide presentations, you can offer your clients special effects: slides with photos scanned in and added to their text, and x-rays or logos to enhance their show. Many of the presentation programs today have a special effects section that allows drop shadows, sweeps, 3-D and perspective control.

Be sure to remind your customers that slides should be horizontal in design, with an aspect ratio of 2:3. Stress contrast between the background and the actual text. Remember that slides are not supposed to be reference materials, so don't put the encyclopedia on one.

If you can get the message across to your customers that their lecture slides should be concise, with lots of contrast for maximum legibility, then you have done your job well. In return, they will order more slides to be created or imaged from their files, so the photo lab prospers. Knowledge can be a profit-maker.

Jack and Sue Drafahl own and operate a custom lab in Portland, OR. They are also professional photographers, specializing in underwater photography.