

think-cell 

# PowerPoint Best Practices

A primer for professional  
PowerPoint users



## Acknowledgments

PowerPoint is one of the most ubiquitous software tools for businesses around the world. Microsoft released its first official version of PowerPoint in 1990 and for more than 30 years it has been changing the way organizations share information and make decisions. This eBook is intended to bring to life the foundational best practices required to put your best forward. We would like to thank the professionals, partners, and friends of think-cell Software highlighted throughout, who have contributed to this effort, paving the path for everyone who uses PowerPoint to create expert presentations.

## Table of Contents

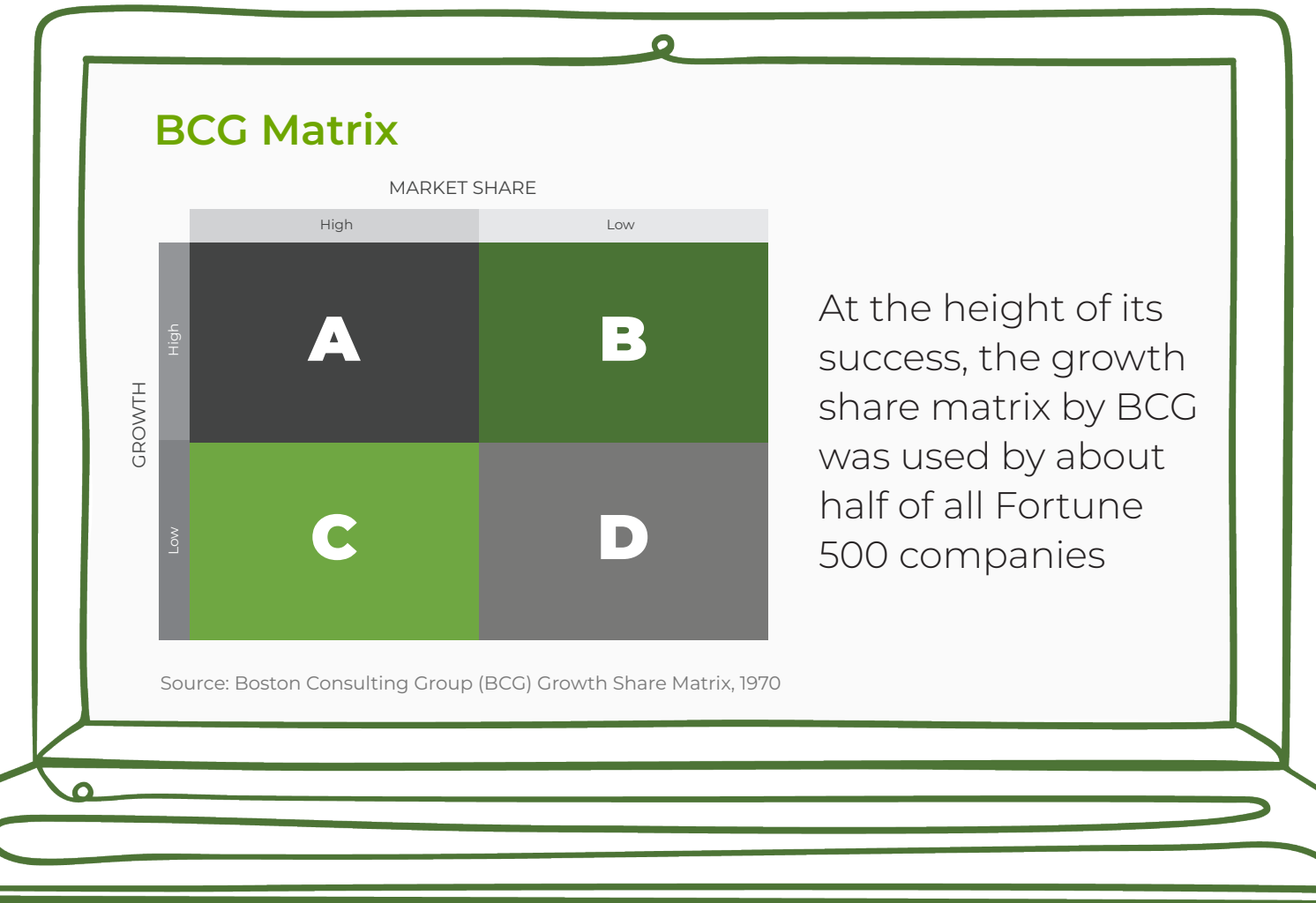
<b>How Presentations Transform Businesses .....</b>	<b>3</b>	<b>Iconography and Images.....</b>	<b>31</b>
<b>Presentation and Slide Types: The Basics.....</b>	<b>6</b>	<b>Transitions and Animations.....</b>	<b>32</b>
Key Message Presentations.....	8	<b>Common PowerPoint Mistakes .....</b>	<b>33</b>
Recurring Reports.....	9	<b>Basic PowerPoint Skills and Shortcuts.....</b>	<b>39</b>
Insights, Documentation and Research Outcomes .....	10	<b>10 Must-Have Elements for Compelling PowerPoint Slides.....</b>	<b>41</b>
<b>Structuring Your Slide Deck.....</b>	<b>11</b>	<b>Best Practices Cheat Sheet.....</b>	<b>42</b>
The MECE Principle .....	12	<b>Resources .....</b>	<b>45</b>
The Profitability Framework .....	12	<b>think-cell Trial.....</b>	<b>46</b>
Common Slide Deck Components.....	13	<b>About think-cell .....</b>	<b>47</b>
Should You Use Slide Templates?.....	17		
<b>Building Your Presentation Slides .....</b>	<b>18</b>		
One Slide, Idea, and Key Message .....	18		
Charts and Graphics.....	19		
Slide Layout and Spacing .....	21		
Bullet Points .....	23		
<b>Visualizing Your Data with Charts.....</b>	<b>24</b>		
<b>Using Color in Your Charts .....</b>	<b>29</b>		
<b>Font Considerations .....</b>	<b>30</b>		

# How Presentations Transform Businesses

Every day, business professionals across the world create millions of PowerPoint slides used in everything from high stakes pitch decks and financial analysis to routine weekly team reports and project plans.

While building presentations may seem like just another ordinary task, the truth is that presentations can—and have—changed how the world does business. That is, when the information is presented in a way that creates value, as often achieved with a chart.

Consider, for instance, the famous Boston Consulting Group (BCG) Growth Share Matrix. First published in 1970, this chart reshaped how companies prioritize investment in businesses and products.



Tools such as the BCG Matrix and the Gartner Magic Quadrant create value not just because of the information they provide. It's also about the way the information is presented, driving change by helping people see the meaning behind the data in a clear and concise way.

What's more, presenting information in a compelling way doesn't require a high level of technical expertise or sophisticated visuals. It does, however, require following a set of basic principles for creating presentations that ensure your message is clear, concise and meaningful.

To help you get there, this eBook covers basic PowerPoint best practices for communicating your message and delivering actionable insights to business audiences. PowerPoint's success has birthed a variety of competitive solutions for presentation creation. Yet, it still remains far and away the primary business tool to share ideas, results and drive business decisions.

### Gartner Magic Quadrant

Gartner's Magic Quadrant is another example of a visual that has driven investment strategy in the software industry.



Source: Gartner, Inc. ([www.gartner.co.uk/en/methodologies/magic-quadrants-research](http://www.gartner.co.uk/en/methodologies/magic-quadrants-research))





This eBook aims to help you be more effective with your presentations, providing examples of what to do—and what not to do—plus tips for how to make more compelling slides faster.



# Presentation and Slide Types: The Basics

Businesses use a number of presentation types from standard reports to executive presentations to pitch decks, each of which have unique goals and formats. Below we discuss the basic categories of presentations, exploring the core characteristics of each and how to consider the audience's needs when creating them.

It's important to note that these presentation types aren't mutually exclusive, and some slide decks may be a blend of one or more categories. It's also useful to think about slides on a continuum from lighter to heavier in content, as well as the level of repetition involved in presenting the information.

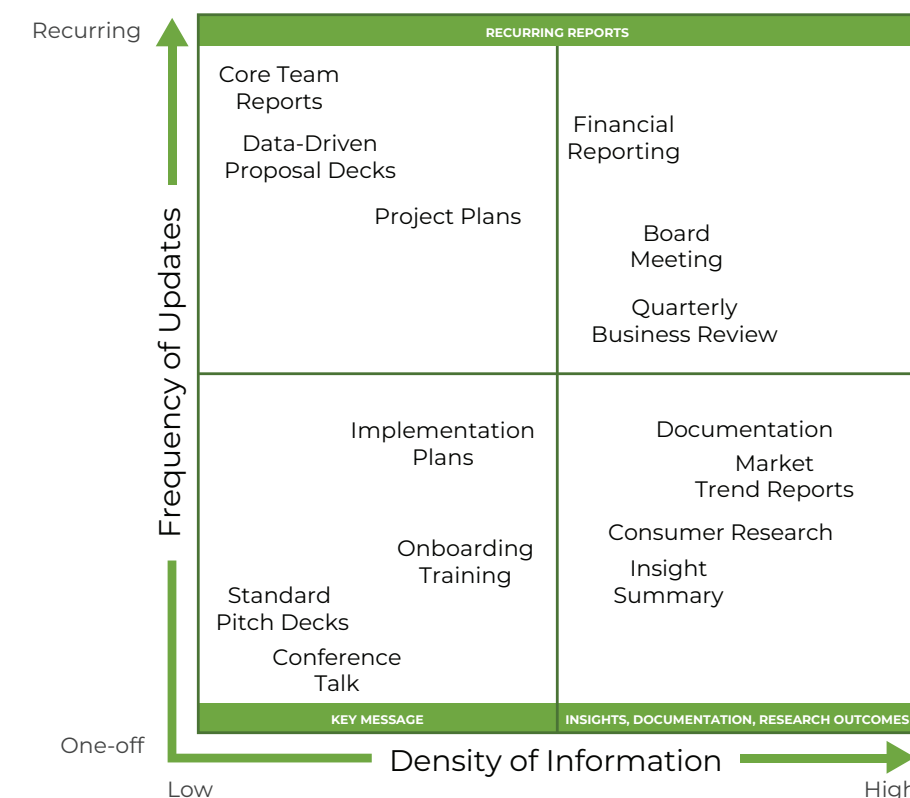
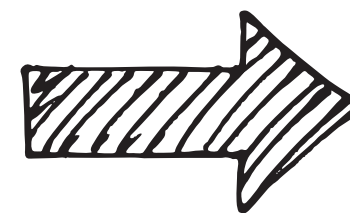
Generally speaking, presentations and slides fall into one of three categories:

1. Key message presentations
2. Recurring reports
3. Insights, documentation and research outcomes

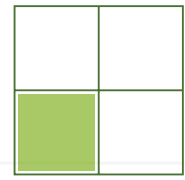
These categories exist on a continuum from a **low to high density of information**, as well as **presentation frequency and the overarching goal**.

There are several different ways to think about the types of presentations produced in PowerPoint. The below are just 3 examples of many. Starting with these high-level classifications we came up with a visual way of looking at presentation types across two axes.

Lighter → Heavier  
 One-off → Recurring  
 Persuade → Inform



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### Key Message Presentations

Key message presentations or slides are lighter in content and typically tell a persuasive story. Compared with recurring reports, these are typically one-off in nature.

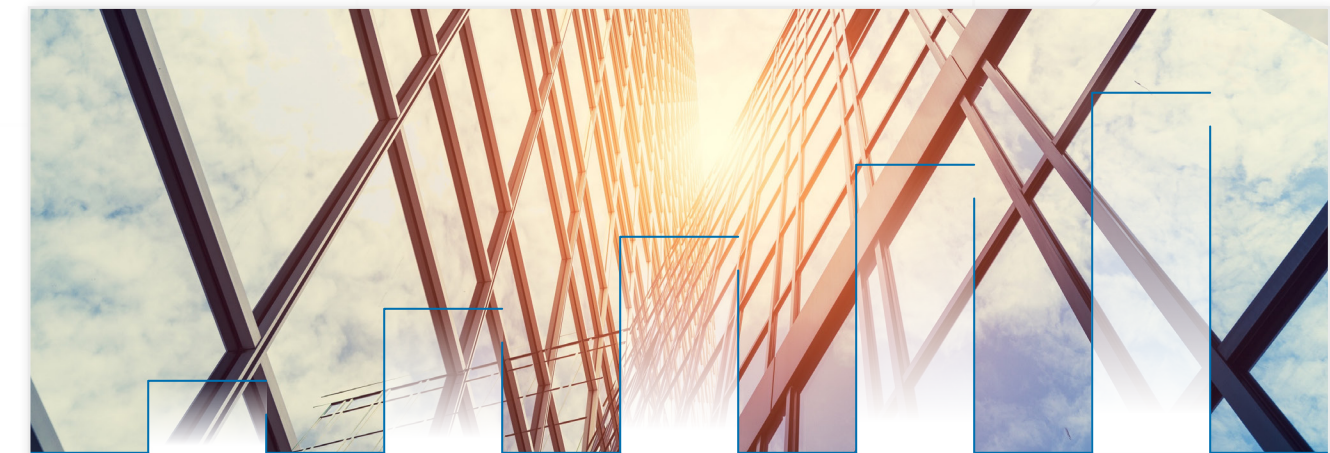
Examples include:

- Pitch decks
- Conference talks (may overlap with insights)

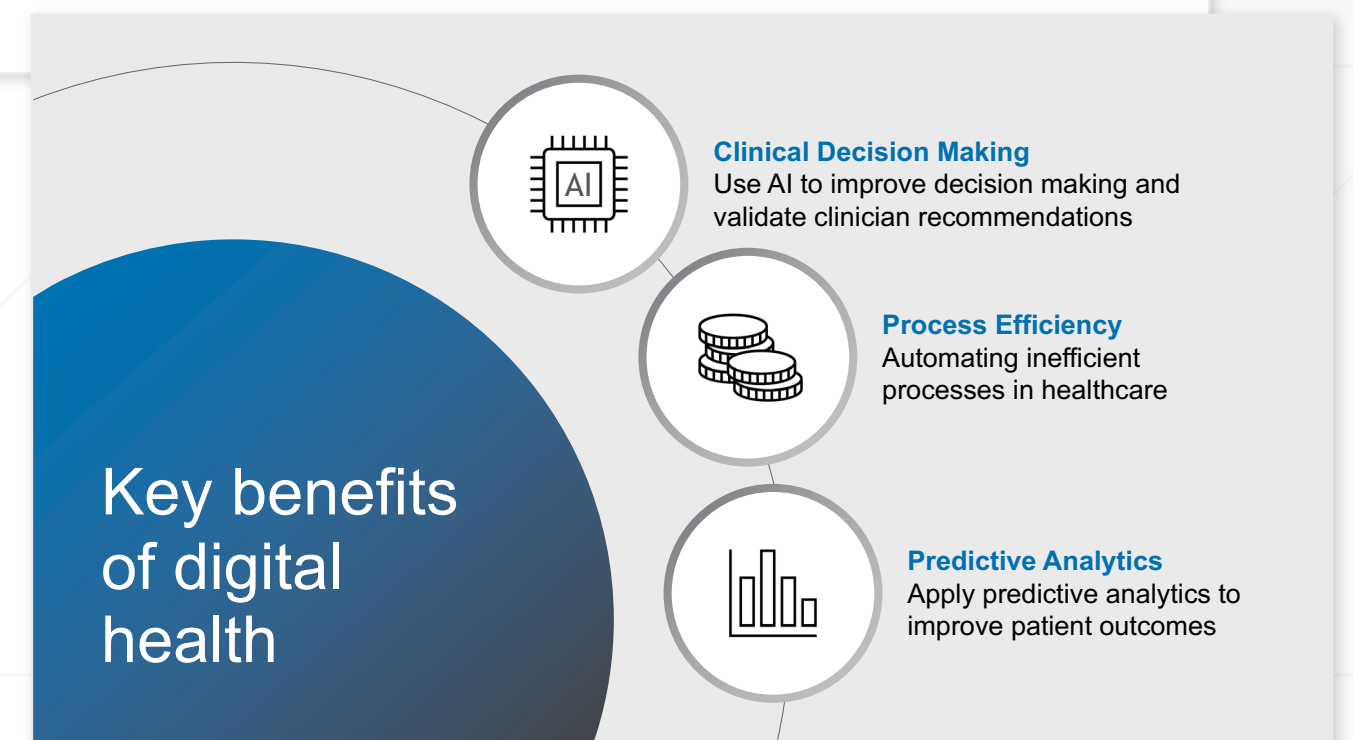
Some of the most memorable presentations fall into this category, such as TED Talks or a Steve Jobs presentation.

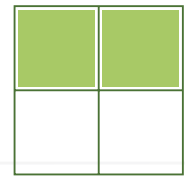


**Key Action:** Focus on storylines and good use of action titles.



It's time to soar  
**>\$10 BN**





## Recurring Reports

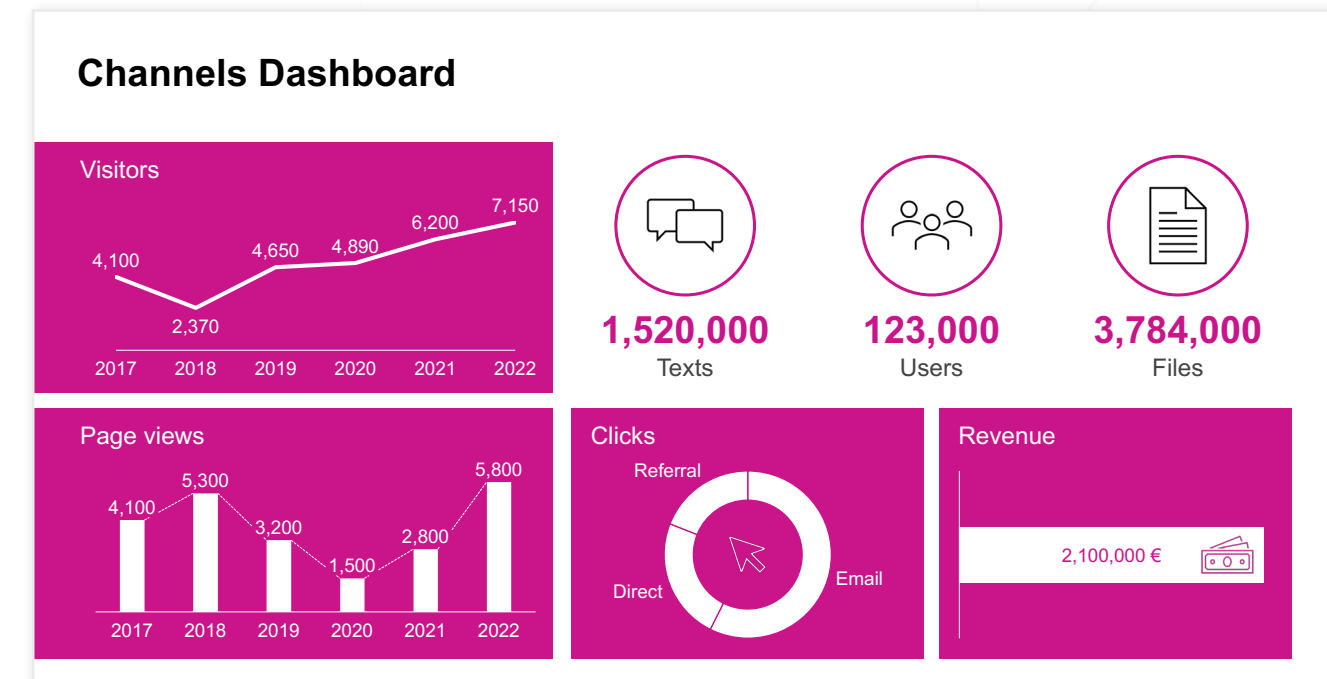
Standard or recurring reports are more repetitive than other presentations and generally include more detail. With recurring reports, there can be some overlap with documentation presentations or slides, since these meetings may involve documenting results, trends or other activities.

This type of presentation can include:

- Monthly or quarterly reports
- Recurring corporate reports
- Board or steering committee presentations (may overlap with documentation)



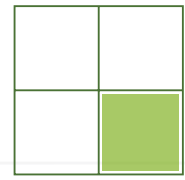
**Key Action:** When creating these types of presentations focus on defining the templates and presenting information in a similar way every time.



### Financial Report

	2017-2018	2018-2019	2019-2020	2020-2021
<b>CURRENT ASSETS</b>				
Cash and cash equivalents	\$153.533	\$153.533	\$258.533	\$165.533
Account receivable	\$226.256	\$226.256	\$226.256	\$226.256
Inventory	\$256.587	\$256.587	\$256.587	\$259.587
Plants and machinery	\$361.981	\$228.981	\$186.192	\$313.981
<b>Total assets:</b>	<b>\$998.357</b>	<b>\$865.357</b>	<b>\$927.568</b>	<b>\$965.357</b>
<b>LIABILITIES</b>				
Accounts payable	\$98.257	\$74.869	\$110.664	\$155.432
Taxes payable	\$101.665	\$125.791	\$130.279	\$133.882
Common stock	\$298.970	\$309.478	\$304.541	\$259.587
Long-term bonds issued	\$499.465	\$355.219	\$382.084	\$416.456
<b>Total liabilities:</b>	<b>\$998.357</b>	<b>\$865.357</b>	<b>\$927.568</b>	<b>\$965.357</b>





## Insights, Documentation and Research Outcomes

This type of presentation conveys business insights or research outcomes, often presenting large datasets distilled into key messages used for business decision-making or the complete dataset as documentation.

Examples of this type of presentation include:

- Consumer research
- Survey data
- Market trends
- Management and internal consulting presentations



**Key Action:** As these can be text and/or data heavy, create “fact packs” such that the information can be easily extracted and used for other purposes.

### Energy Survey Insights

€5.0 bn

ESTONIA NET SPEND  
RENEWABLE ENERGY

4,500

KW HOURS WASTED



55,000

PARTICIPANTS



SUBURBAN  
FOCUS

Demographic Impact

5,500

< 35 YEARS OLD

> 55 YEARS OLD 6,600

2,600

< 25 YEARS OLD

400 TERRACED  
HOUSES



17

DAYS CONSUMED

24

CSAT RATING

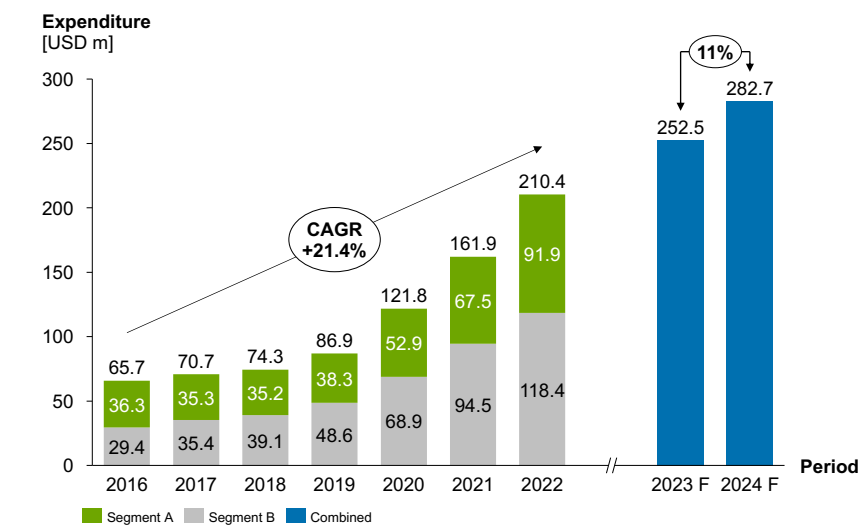
SOLAR ENERGY ADOPTION  
27% increase over prior year

4,500



CURRENT HOUSE INSTALLS

### Question 5 – Household Expenditure



#### Comments

Provisional results indicate:

- Segment A remained largely flat for the initial 3-years
- Early growth driven exclusively by Segment B
- Segment B is still marginally outperforming Segment A

# Structuring Your Slide Deck

When building your slide deck, the most important thing to remember is that it must tell a story. That means first crafting your story, then building your slides around that story.

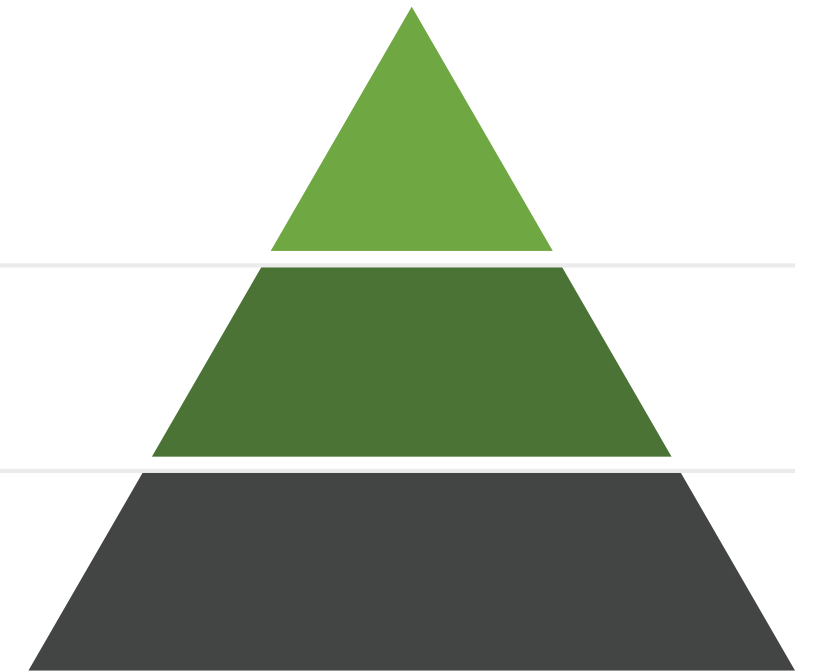
Barbara Minto's classic book, *The Pyramid Principle*, explains a powerful strategy for compelling business writing that involves presenting your most important idea or governing thought first. This is followed by supporting thoughts, starting with your strongest point and backing each supporting thought with data and facts.

Key to Minto's approach is structuring your information according to the MECE principle. That means presenting topics in a way that's mutually exclusive and collectively exhaustive (MECE), creating a logical structure where topics are covered comprehensively but don't overlap.

## The Pyramid Principle

Building slides that tell a story

- 1 Key Message: The Answer
- 2 Supporting Arguments
- 3 Supporting Data or Facts



## The MECE Principle

The MECE principle is useful for organizing your thoughts into logical groups and is useful for breaking down complex issues into smaller pieces.

- Mutually exclusive: groupings are distinct and do not overlap
- Collectively exhaustive: groupings presented cover all possible options

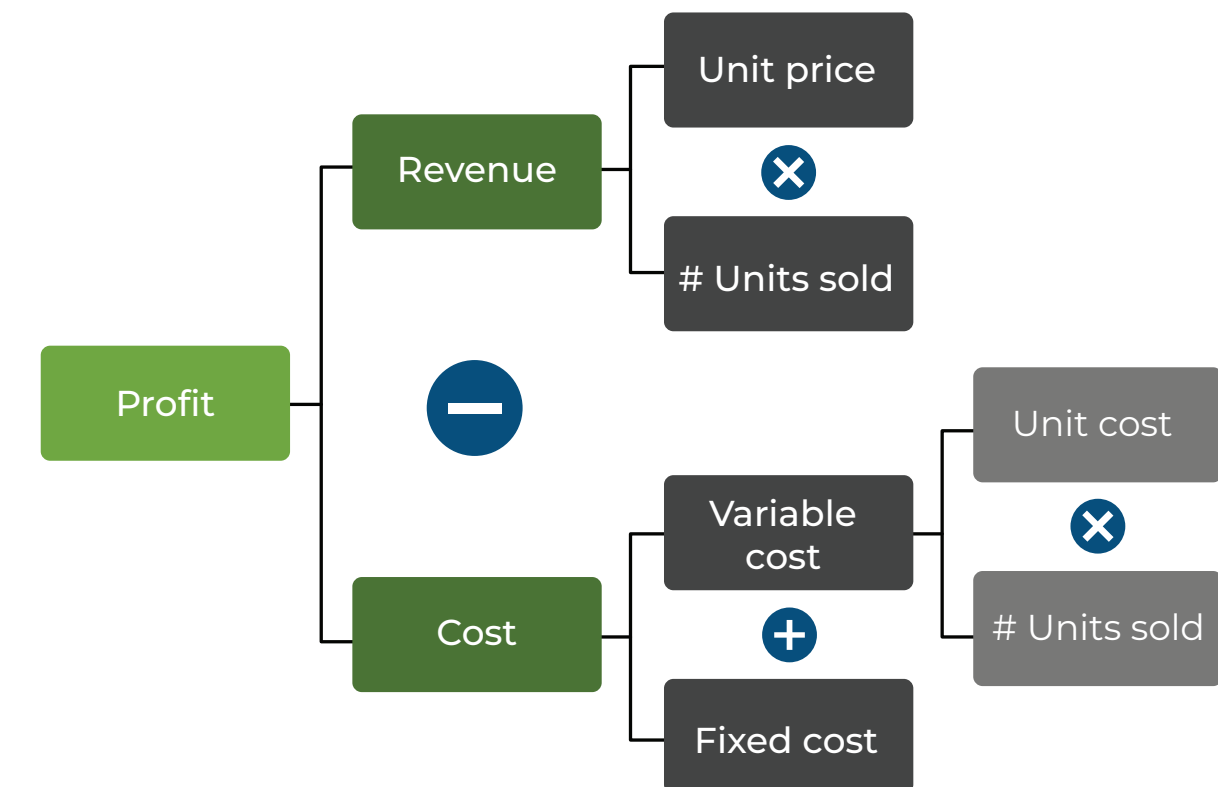
## The Profitability Framework

One of the most common examples of the MECE principle can be seen in the profitability framework. Here profit breaks down into revenue and cost. Revenue is impacted by number of units sold and unit price. Cost is comprised of units sold and cost, which is itself impacted by fixed vs. variable unit cost.

Breaking down the components of profitability in this way can drive a more effective presentation or discussion on the different factors driving a decline in profits.

### The MECE Driver Tree

Example applied to profitability framework



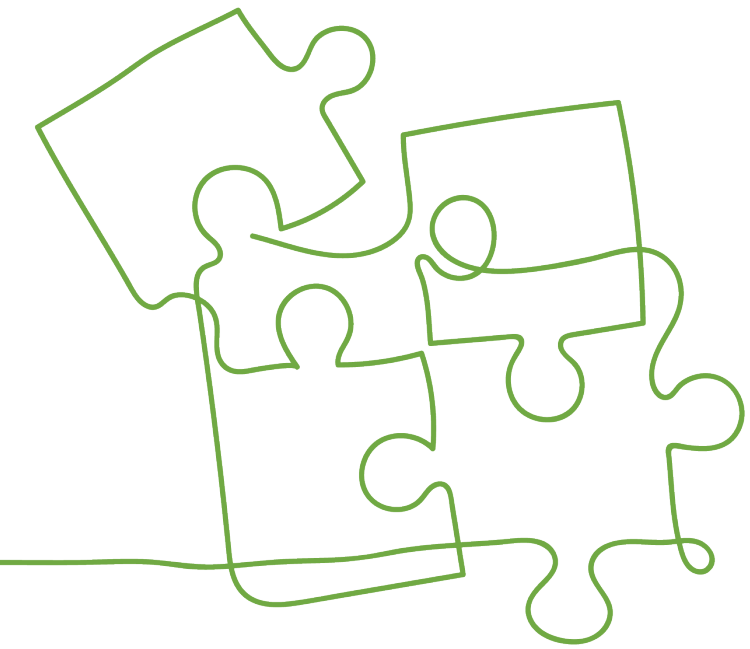
### Common Slide Deck Components

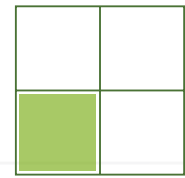
Generally speaking, all PowerPoint presentations should incorporate the following core elements:

- Presentation title and subtitle if necessary
- Name and role of presenter, publisher or author
- Table of contents or agenda to provide an overview of the content
- Visual elements such as graphs, diagrams and flow charts
- Optional progress marker for longer presentations

Presentations may be comprised of a blend of slide types. For example, key message presentations can include both key message slides and documentation slides with detailed data backing them up.

It's helpful to think about which type of slide you're creating on an individual basis. What story does the slide tell, and what is the best way to convey that message? Next, we discuss elements common to different presentation types and slides to help you decide.





### Key Message Presentations

Key message slides and presentations use strong wording and images to spark emotion and persuade the audience. Visualizations are more simplistic, omitting detailed tables and data. Slides are light on text, though the presenter may use a more detailed slide deck as speaker notes or a post-presentation debriefing document to share.

#### Situation, Complication, Resolution Framework

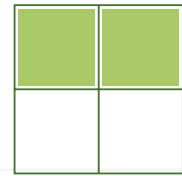


Key message presentations may include one or two slides of executive summary, with an introduction that states:

- **The situation:** What is the problem being addressed?
- **The complication:** What is the reason for the problem? Why should people care?
- **The resolution:** What is the key point or recommendation that you want to communicate?

From there, the presentation should give an overview of key supporting points and evidence according to the Pyramid Principle. If the presentation requires decision-making, you might include slides outlining different scenarios and options for discussion.



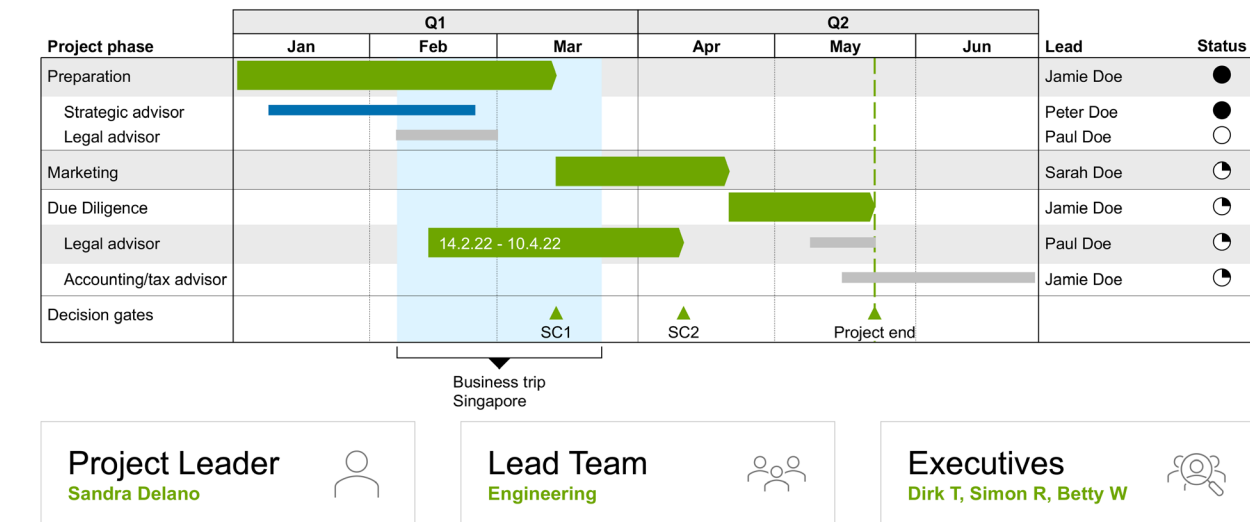


## Recurring Report Presentations

Recurring reports are aimed at transparently and correctly presenting information in a descriptive way, as opposed to persuading an audience. As such, recurring reports typically include numerous charts and tables with descriptive headlines highlighting any key trends contained in the data.

Recurring report slides should follow a format consistent with previous reporting presentations. This makes it easier for the audience to digest slides and quickly identify changes over time. Conversely, adding meaningless difference in visuals, fonts and layouts forces the audience to try to figure out if the difference carries meaning or not.

### Week 34 – Project Timeline



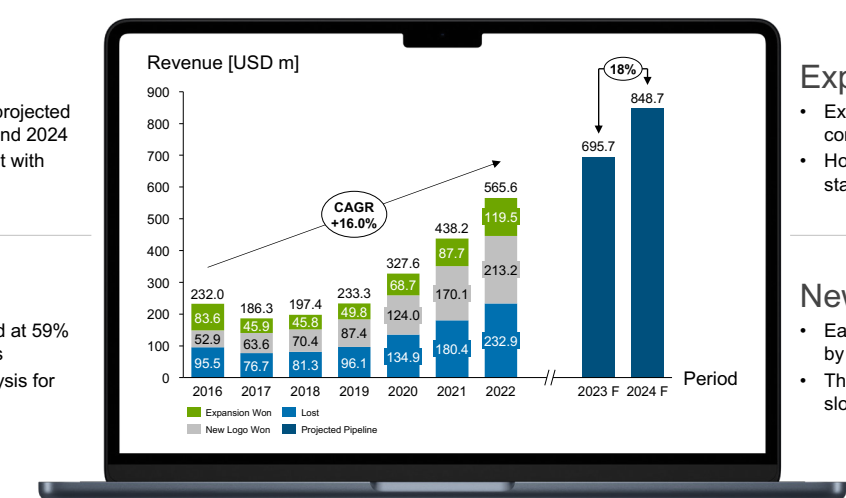
### Annual Sales

#### Pipeline

- Pipeline growth projected to slow in 2023 and 2024
- 18% is consistent with current plan

#### Win/Loss

- Win rate has held at 59% over past 7 years
- Conducting analysis for deeper insights

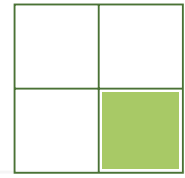


#### Expansion

- Expansion business continues to lag but less
- However, CS investment starting to pay off

#### New Logo

- Early growth was driven by new customers
- This has shown no sign of slowing down



### Insights, Documentation and Research Outcomes Presentations

Insights, documentation and research outcomes presentations can contain high-level conclusions drawn from larger datasets, just the data-heavy slides built around tables and charts or a combination of these. It is essential to provide context around that data, including:

- Where the data came from
- How it was collected, e.g., survey methodology
- When the data was collected

Users should consider captioning each slide and chart with the data source and date, if only as a light gray watermark. This provides critical context should slides be shared individually after the presentation.



### Should You Use Slide Templates? (Not to be confused with Master Slides)

Slide templates can help you build presentations faster, with many organizations providing a company-branded master template or a repository of earlier presentations for staff use. Factors to consider before deciding whether to use these types of templates include:

- ✓ **Efficiency:** Using templates lets you quickly rework slide elements, reducing the need to create custom icons and images. At the same time, it can be time-consuming to sort through a library of hundreds of slides to find what you need.
- ✓ **Branding:** This approach ensures consistent use of branding elements like logos and colors, but if a template library isn't well-maintained the branding may be outdated.

- ✓ **Design:** Starting with a master template or existing slide deck can help produce a more professional-looking presentation, especially if you don't have design skills or access to design resources.
- ✓ **Content Fit:** Avoid trying to fit the idea or findings to the template. If it doesn't fit, consider a bespoke design instead.





# Building Your Presentation Slides

Staring down a blank page can feel daunting as you begin creating your slides, but it's important to remember the goal is not a visually sophisticated presentation. The goal is to tell a compelling story that effectively communicates your ideas, using the best practices outlined below to build your slides one element at a time.

## One Slide, Idea, and Key Message

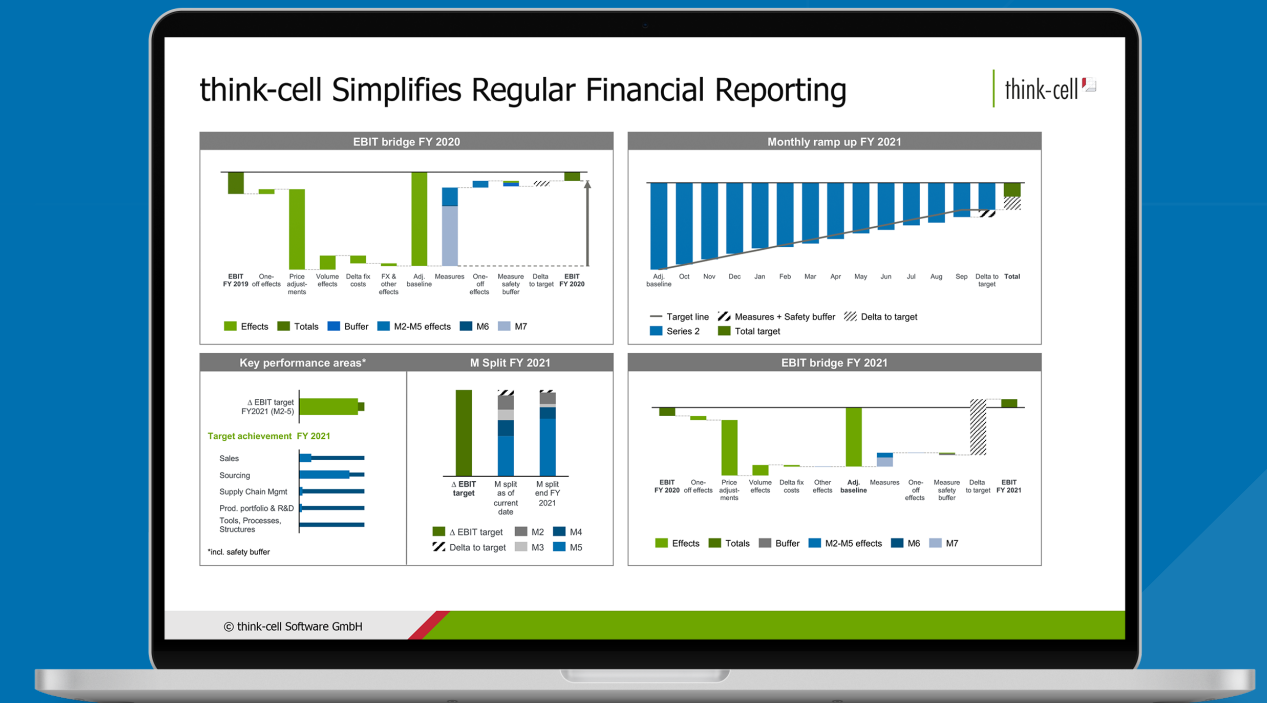
The number one thing to keep in mind when building a slide is that it should convey precisely one idea. This idea is summarized with an action title on each slide, with details reserved for the body text. To write your action title, ask yourself—what is the one idea your audience should take away from this slide?

Action titles shape the story or message of each slide. You can even structure your presentation around this strategy, first writing action titles on each slide before going back to fill in the details. Taken in total, your action titles should tell a cohesive story, such that they would be easy to reorder if viewed on their own.

## Charts and Graphics

Each slide will usually have one or more charts or graphics that convey one message supporting the action title. For charts, keep in mind these three governing principles:

1. Nothing on the chart should be irrelevant to the action title
2. Charts should speak for themselves, so the reader should be able to interpret a chart's meaning without explanation
3. Focus on making your message shine, rather than using fancy formatting or effects



Getting the labels, axes and legends correct on a PowerPoint can take a lot of manual work and calculations. **PowerPoint add-ins such as think-cell provide greater control and automation of chart elements for more impactful and visually appealing slides.** This includes automatic calculation of CAGRs, value lines, difference arrows, derived percentages and more.

Try think-cell



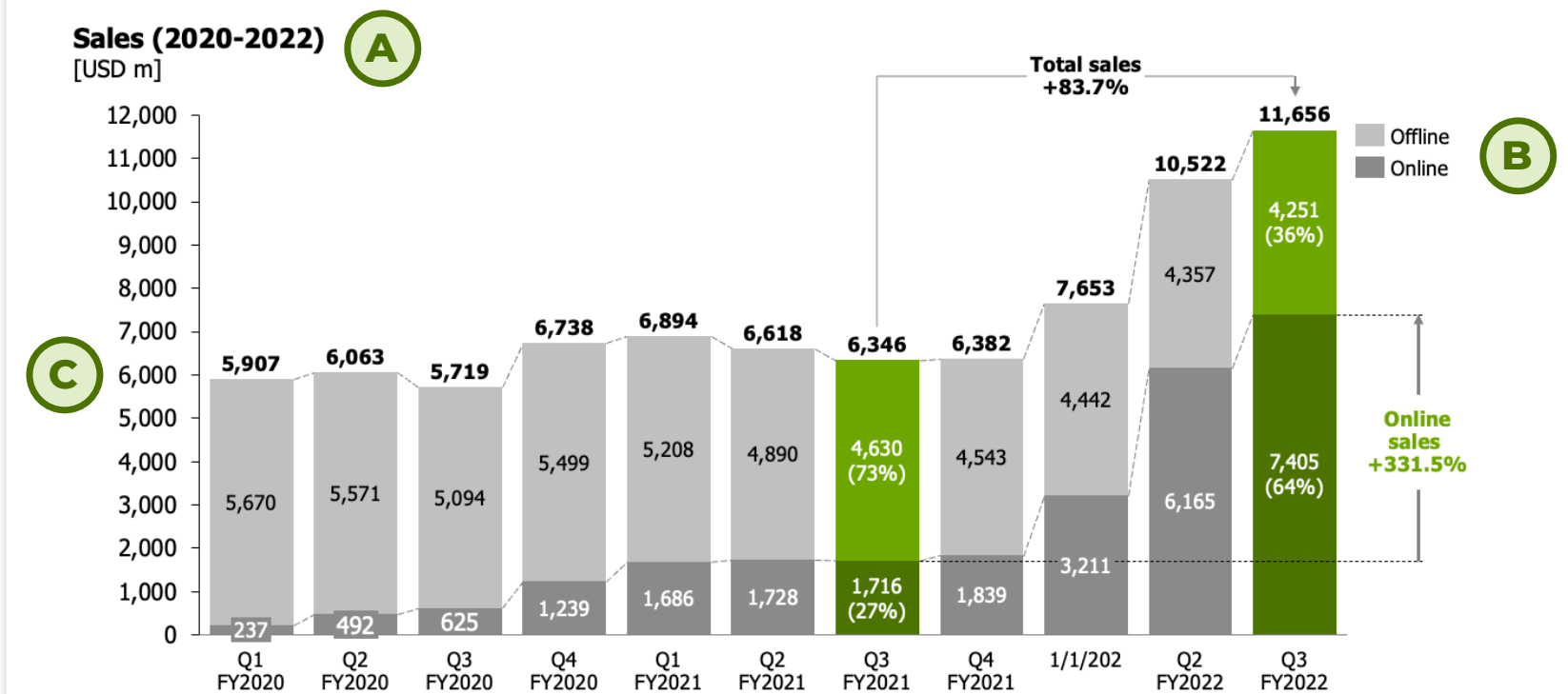
As you create your charts and graphics, you'll want to make sure they have:

- A** A chart title describing the data
- B** The correct labels, including for graph axes and a legend if necessary
- C** Measurement units
- D** Source and date for any data cited, especially for research-focused presentations

The types of charts and graphics used will vary according to the presentation. For instance, for documentation and recurring report slides, people tend to use large tables and sophisticated charts where the audience has time to read each slide and look for changes. Presentation slides, on the other hand, contain less detail and require the speaker to explain the message.

## Core Chart Elements

Make your information more consumable



**D** Source and date for any data cited, especially for research-focused presentations

### Slide Layout and Spacing

When arranging your slide elements, remember that people will generally read them from left to right and top to bottom.

Heinrich Rusche, former McKinsey strategy consultant and founder of Firm Learning, recommends thinking of slide layout in terms of a grid made up of columns and rows. Every slide is essentially structured like a table, with elements aligned in rows and columns to make the information easier to digest.



Get more of Rusche's tips on his [YouTube channel](#)

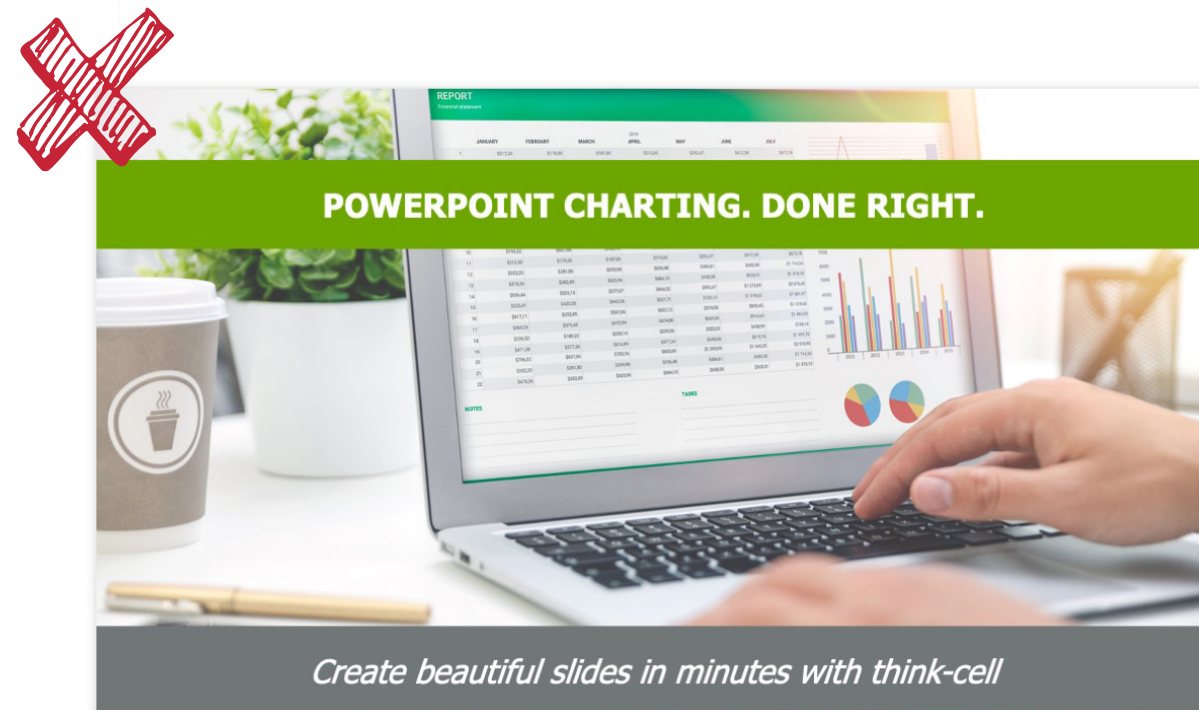


For creating complex slides, the **think-cell PowerPoint add-in** can make the process faster with smart grids that eliminate the need for manual alignment and resizing.

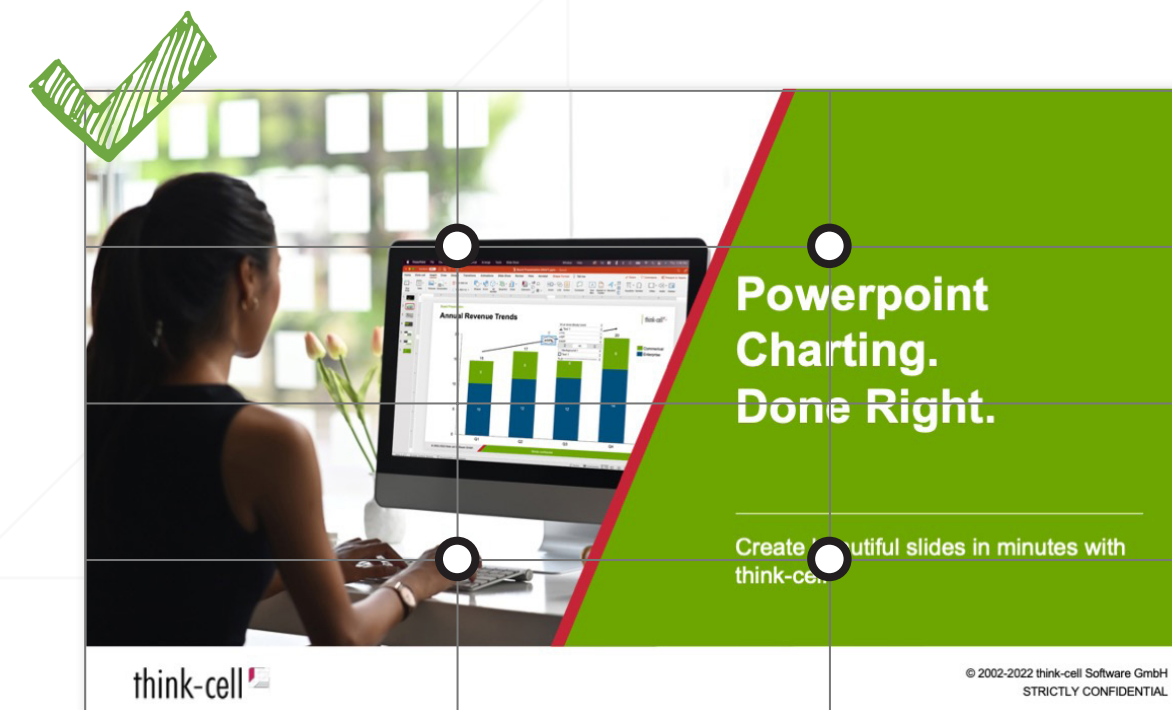
The rule of thirds is also a universal composition rule useful for structuring slides. Imagine a slide divided into nine equal boxes along gridlines placed one-third of the way from every edge. Placing slide elements at one-thirds or two-thirds from the edge, and especially where these gridlines intersect, makes for a visually appealing composition.

Sufficient white space is key to a visually engaging slide, and you can also use separation lines to create boundaries between different elements.

Slide layout should also take into account the type of presentation or slide. For recurring reports, stick to simpler layouts where you can just refresh the data. Key message slides may be more sparse, compared with documentation slides that may contain more information.



Undisciplined Layout



Rule of thirds

### Bullet Points

Avoid using a laundry list of bullets, instead grouping your thoughts into logical order or categories. Again, thinking of your slide in terms of tables and rows can help you organize and arrange your thoughts. A good rule of thumb is three or five bullets, no more than seven if necessary, as that's generally the maximum people can absorb.

Sets of bullet points should follow a parallel structure, making your ideas easier for the audience to understand. So, if bullets use sentences, all items in your list should be sentences. If bullets start with nouns, all should use nouns. The same principle applies if you are using sentence fragments or even single words, starting every item with the same part of speech.

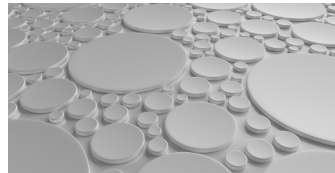




#### Market Considerations

- Organic segment is growing at 29% YoY
- City centers are out-performing rural communities by 15%
- Inflationary pressures impacting consumer demand
- Develop criteria for a potential partner that is aligned with the company's goals and objectives
- Identify potential partners through networking and research into industry trends and competitive landscape
- Vet potential partners to confirm they are a good fit for the company in terms of values, goals, and objectives
- Contact potential partners to learn more about their capability and capabilities
- Determine if the partnership is mutually beneficial
- Negotiate terms and conditions of the partnership agreement
- Monitor the partnership performance regularly to ensure it is meeting expectations and evolving in accordance with the company's goals and objectives
- Create joint marketing programs to involve both partners in promoting each other's products or services
- Develop an incentive reward system to ensure both partners are getting their fair share of the benefits
- Leverage the partnership by attending tradeshows, seminars, and similar events together to increase exposure
- Conduct an audience analysis to understand your target audience and identify demographics such as age, gender, occupation, income level, and location
- 23% of current partners in Latin Quarter
- 37% of potential partners within 5-mile radius of Latin Quarter
- Property prices is 10% more than surrounding areas
- Segment your audience into different groups based on their demographics in order to create more targeted campaigns
- Utilize customer surveys and research to better understand the wants, needs, and desires of your different demographic segments
- Leverage digital channels to reach out to different demographics with highly-targeted messages in an efficient and cost effective manner
- Develop content that speaks directly to one or more demographics and use appropriate language, images, and visuals that appeal to that group
- Utilize influencers who align with your target demographic's interests to spread your message
- Incorporate location-targeted marketing tactics such as geo-fencing and geo-targeting to reach customers in specific areas or locations
- Develop custom campaigns that focus on specific demographic elements such as age or lifestyle preferences in order to increase relevancy of content and improve engagement levels
- Monitor customer feedback or review websites for insights about customer preferences or experiences that you can use for developing marketing initiatives for different demographics
- Analyze campaign results from different channels in order to continuously adjust campaigns and make improvements for each demographic segment



#### Market Considerations

<p><b>Size</b> Market segments are morphing quickly</p>  <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Organic segment is growing at 29% YoY</li> <li>• City centers are out-performing rural communities by 15%</li> <li>• Inflationary pressures impacting consumer demand</li> </ul>	<p><b>Demographic</b> Aging population and low growth impact</p>  <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Average customer age is 59-years old</li> <li>• Millennials are migrating to organic products, accelerating trend</li> <li>• Male-Female ratio holding steady</li> </ul>	<p><b>Location</b> Partners clustered in Latin Quarter</p>  <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• 23% of current partners in Latin Quarter</li> <li>• 37% of potential partners within 5-mile radius of Latin Quarter</li> <li>• 10% premium on property prices than the surrounding areas</li> </ul>
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# Visualizing Your Data with Charts

Creating compelling charts is itself an art form, but again doesn't need to be complicated to be effective. Below we discuss some basic principles of data visualization, including how to choose the right chart as well as guidelines for colors, text and iconography.

## Choosing Your Chart Type

Gene Zelazny's classic book *Say It With Charts* provides a helpful strategy for choosing which type of chart to use when presenting different kinds of data. This approach follows three simple steps:

**1. Identify the message:** Here you choose which aspect of the data you want to highlight with your chart.

**2. Find the comparison:** Next, determine whether you're comparing components or items, looking at change over time or identifying whether a correlation exists.

**3. Choose the chart:** Each comparison identified above corresponds with a specific chart type.



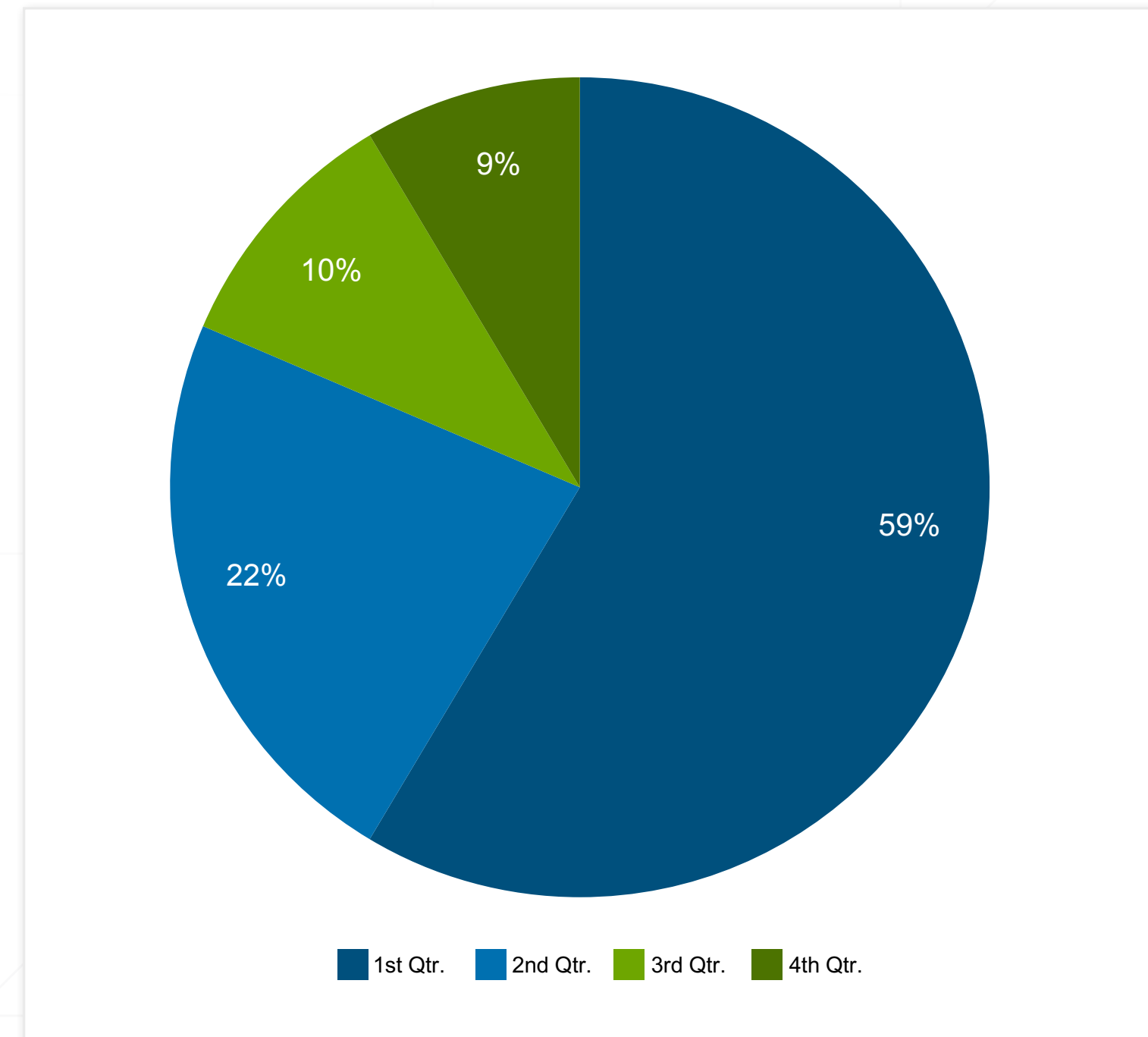


**PowerPoint add-ins such as think-cell can dramatically reduce the time it takes to create charts without extensive customization.** This tool also allows you to automatically import and update data from linked Excel files, reducing errors and broken charts.



### Pie Charts

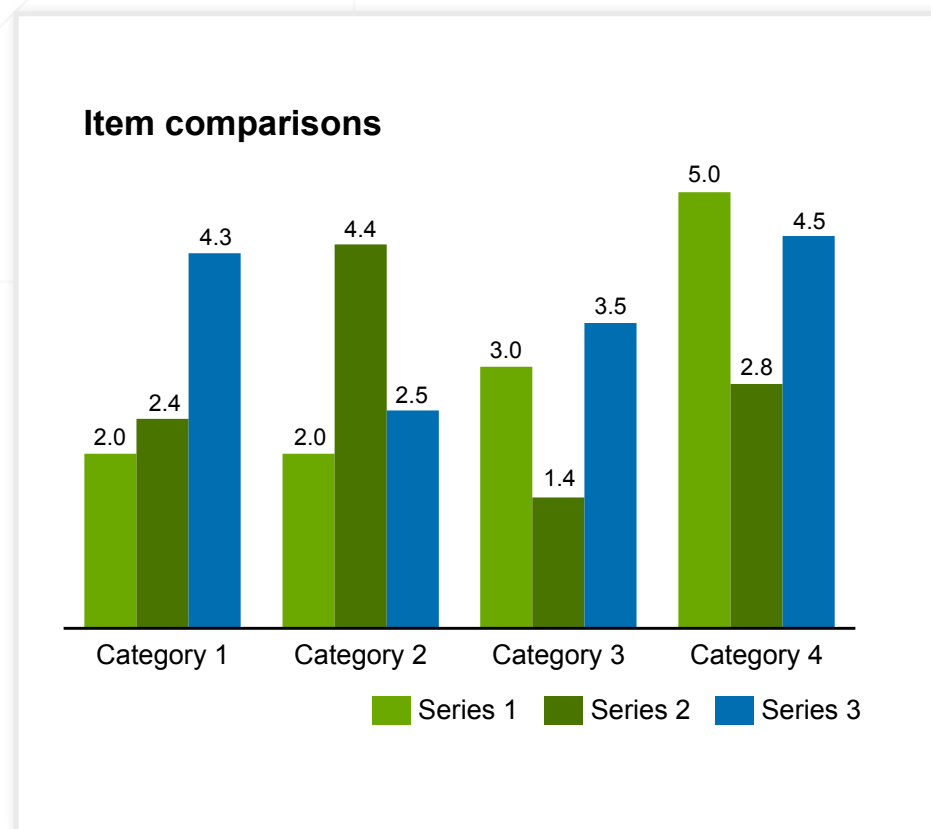
Pie charts are used for comparing component parts such as percentages. Segments should be arranged in clockwise order of importance, with the most important segment at the top. Try not to use more than 5-6 data points in a pie chart, otherwise the chart may look messy and be difficult to read.



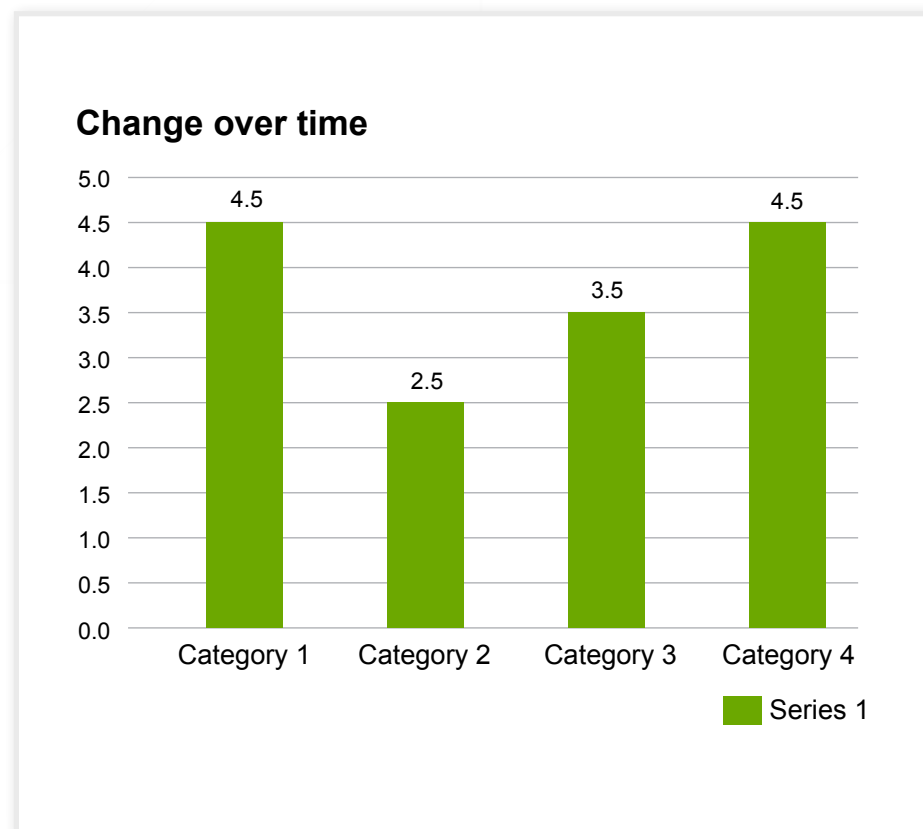
## Column Charts

Column charts can be used for a variety of situations, including:

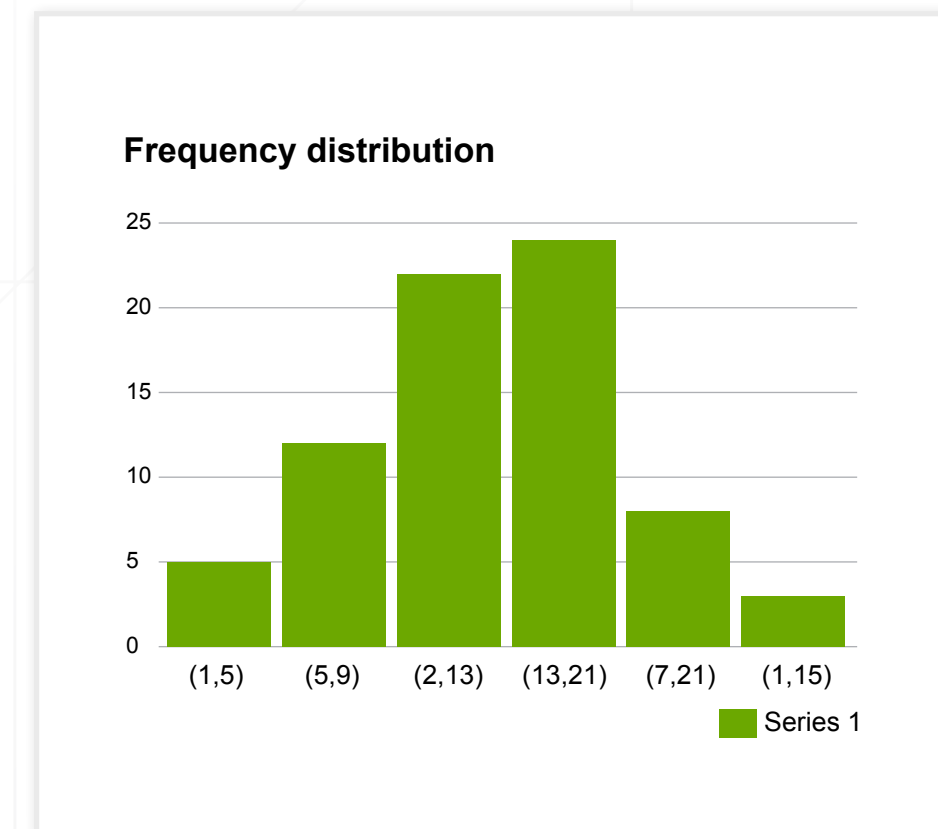
### Item comparisons



### Change over time

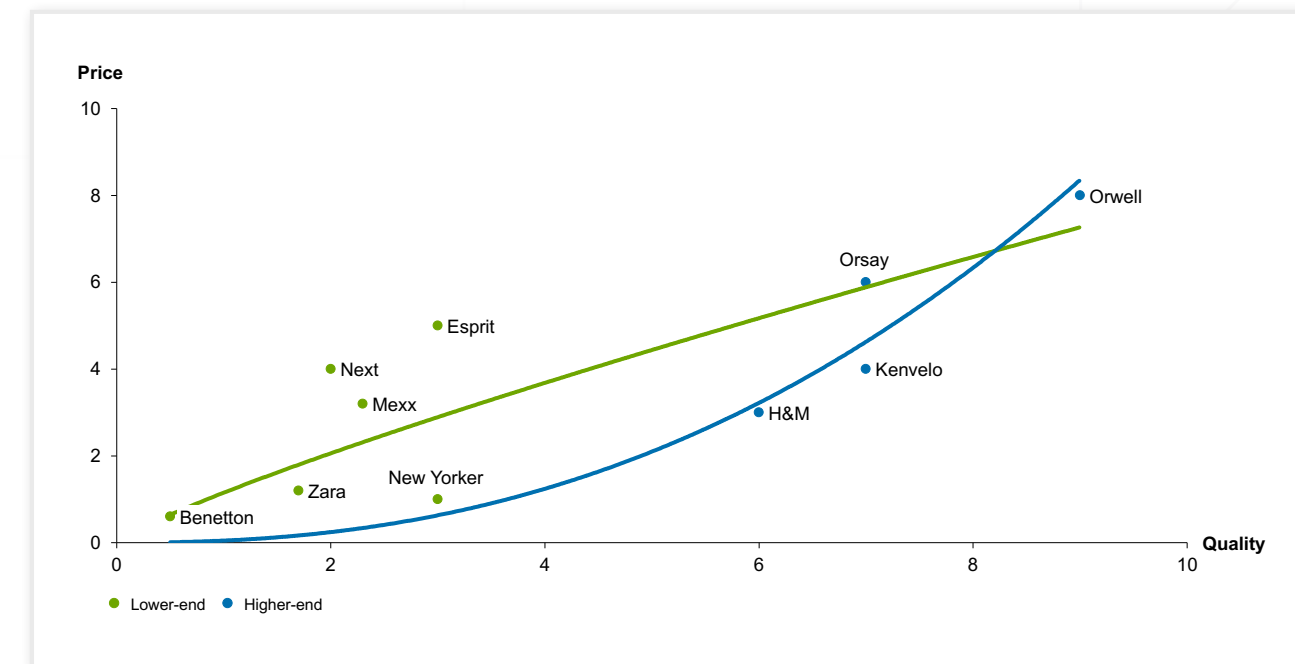
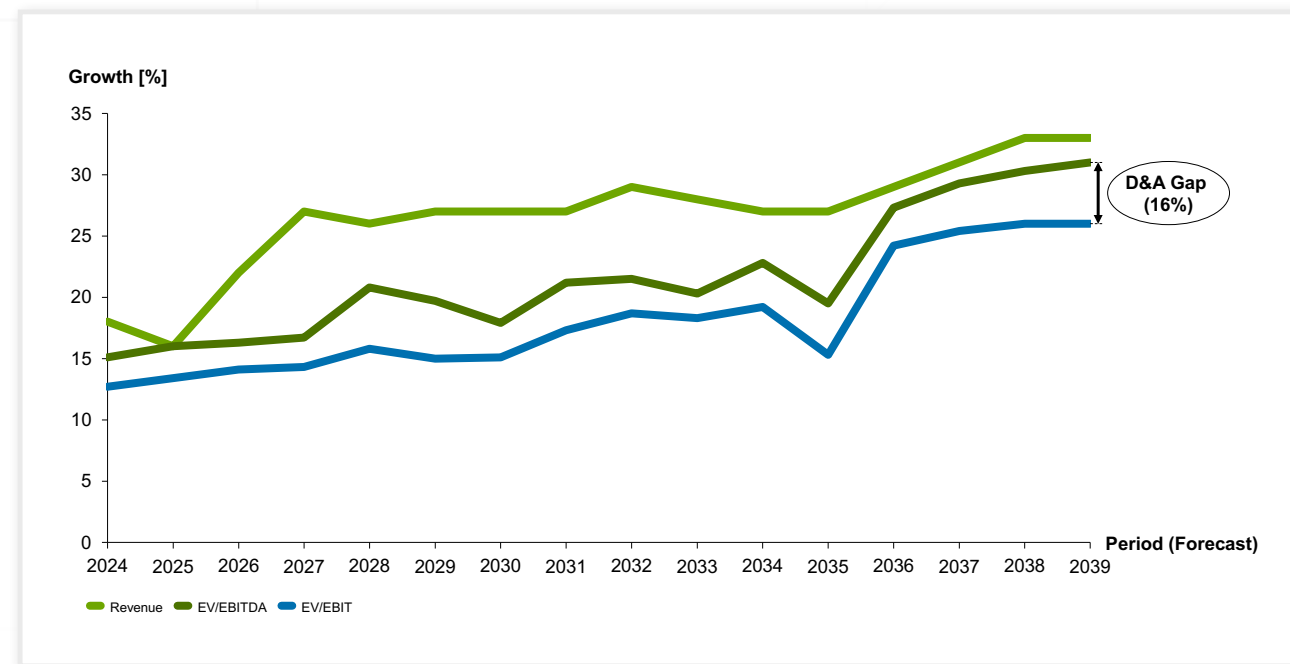


### Frequency distribution



## Line Charts

Line charts are one of the most common chart types in PowerPoint presentations and are typically used to show time-series data. In addition to standard line charts, you can also use grouped line charts to compare two sets of time-series data or a surface chart to show how component totals change over time.



## Scatter Plots

Scatter plots show whether a correlation or connection exists between two sets of data. For example, a scatter plot would be useful for showing that as employee turnover increases, revenue per employee decreases. When creating a scatter plot, plot your independent or causal variable on the x-axis and the dependent or resulting variable on the y-axis. Subtypes of this chart include the grouped dot chart and bubble chart.

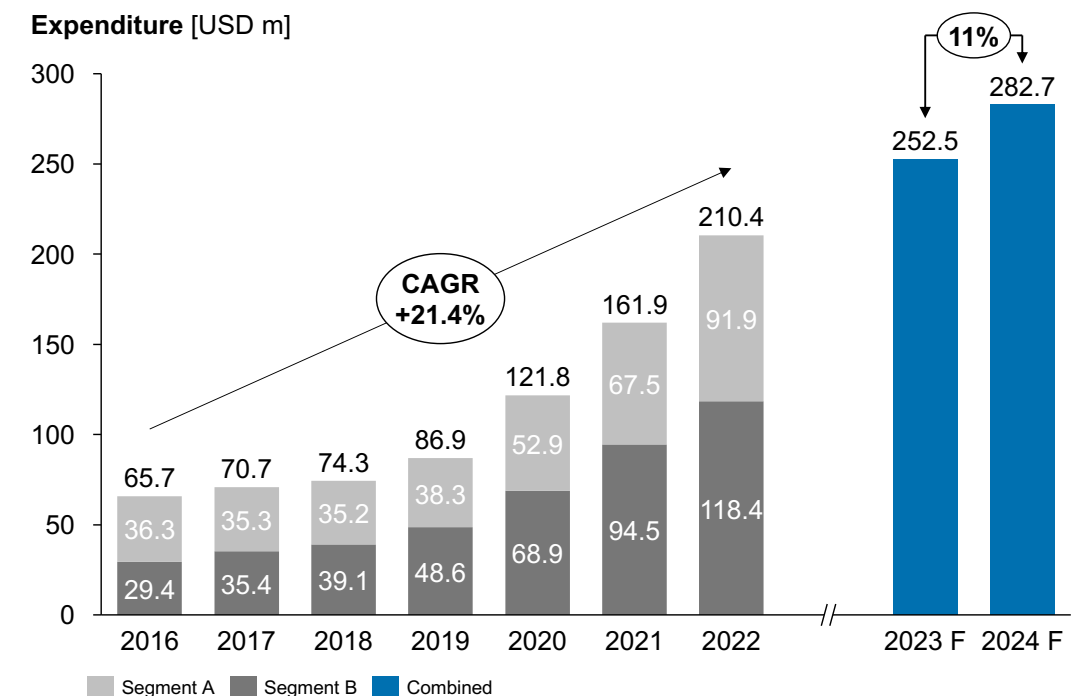
# Using Color in Your Charts

Avoid using colors just for the sake of visual interest. Any colors you use should have a meaning. For instance, you might have a bar chart with muted gray bars and a single navy blue bar showcasing the one year on the chart you'd like to highlight. This use of contrast will draw the eye to the data supporting your idea. Well-designed templates will already have chart colors specified, and most of the time you will want to use these defaults.

In general, use a light background with darker text rather than a black background with white text. Consider what the slides would look like as a printout, which is common for recurring reports or documentation presentations.

## Color Strategy

An intentional palette makes charts pop



Analogous







## Font Considerations

Color and font size should be consistent for titles, headings and body text across all slides. Slide titles should be 20 to 24 point, preferably in a clean, sans serif font such as Arial. Body text should be 12 to 18 point depending on the type of presentation or slide. For instance, large fonts are more common on key message presentations, while documentation slides may contain more information with a smaller font size.

When considering font size, also consider how the presentation will be consumed. Presenting on a large projector screen in person will be different to presenting content on a web meeting or if the content may even be consumed on a mobile device. Font size matters in each of these contexts.

### Color and Font Size

The right font helps tell your story

**Slide Title Arial Bold 20**

**Slide Title Arial Bold 24**

---

Body Text Arial Regular 12

Body Text Arial Regular 14

Body Text Arial Regular 16

Body Text Arial Regular 18

# Iconography and Images

Iconography can be helpful when expressing thoughts such as category groupings or interrelated ideas. Using the same set of icons to refer back to ideas presented earlier can also help strengthen your message in the audience's mind.

In addition, callout elements can be helpful for drawing attention to an important idea, for instance:

- Adding a column to the right highlighting the implications of your data
- Using an icon or bubble to set an idea apart from the rest of the text
- Adding a sticker on the top right of the slide to qualify the data, e.g., “preliminary data”


## Our Services

 PowerPoint


 Illustrations

 Microsites

 Maps


 Brochures

 Interactive visuals

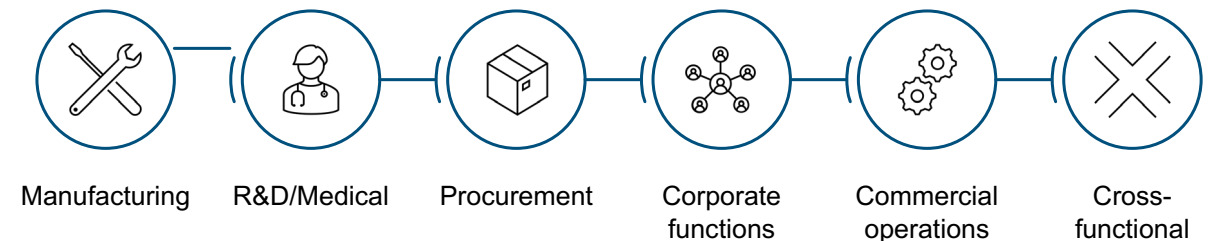
 Videos and animations

 Posters and placemats

 Infographics

 Surveys

## Digital Healthcare Operational Benefits



While large images may be used in key message presentations such as pitches, keynote presentations, TED Talks etc., they should be used minimally or not at all in recurring reports and documentation slides. In general, you want to avoid large background images and placing text over photos.

Smart Art options in PowerPoint can be helpful for process visualizations or other concepts, but it can be difficult to make these look natural. **think-cell, a PowerPoint add-in, can provide more and better designed options for elements such as process flow diagrams.**

## Transitions and Animations

In most cases, you'll want to avoid using transitions and animations because they can be distracting. If you do use animations, keep it simple. For instance, you might make blocks of content appear on a slide sequentially as you present them, only using this technique sparingly on a minimal number of slides. It's most useful if you don't want people to read ahead as you unveil content on the slide. One exception on slide transitions would be using the fade transition to create a smoother movement between slides. Even so, only do this if presenting in person as online presentations may not deliver the same smoothness of transition.

# Common PowerPoint Mistakes

PowerPoint users can instantly make their presentations more effective by avoiding the top mistakes people make when using the software.

## Too Much Information Packed Into Slides

Resist the temptation to add too much information to slides. The result is often a slide so full of text and charts that it's impossible to grasp the slide's overarching message. If you have to, split up the content into multiple slides.

Trying to fit too many messages into a slide or presentation is also a common problem. For example, you don't need a dozen supporting arguments to get your point across.

**Trends Report**

Retail Channel Impact

Year	Impact
2019	5
2020	3
2021	2
2022	3
2023	6

Sales  
**7,525,174**

- A shift to a more digital-centric market
- Increasing demand for personalized customer experience
- Growing adoption of new technologies such as AI and IoT
- Increase in mobile usage for commerce and entertainment
- Emergence of new business models such as subscription services
- Growing focus on sustainability
- Growing demand for convenience
- Increasing focus on data privacy and security
- Emergence of alternative payment methods
- Growing appetite for experiential consumption
- Consumers are becoming more diverse
- Growing demand for online services
- Consumer habits are changing rapidly
- Sustainability becoming a top priority
- Companies are investing in digital transformation
- Increasing demand for data-driven products and services
- Trends toward greater personalization of products and services
- Emergence of new technologies such as 5G, AI, robotics, and IoT
- Growing importance of customer experience and engagement
- Companies embracing automation to reduce costs and improve efficiency
- Emergence of new markets and consumer segments
- Shift in consumer values towards sustainability and ethical practices
- Growing trend of personalization in products and services

**Trends Report**

Retail Channel Impact

Year	Impact
2019	5
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2021	2
2022	3
2023	6

Sales  
**\$7,525,174**

Good by Material

Material	Percentage
Leather Goods	50%
Organic Canvas	30%
MuSkin	20%

Orders  
**932,109**

- 01 Retail channel is recovering  
Emergence of new markets and segments
- 02 Competitive impact growing  
Growing trend of personalization in products
- 03 Leading in eco manufacturing  
New technologies such as 3-D printing
- 04 Delivering to plan  
Increase in digital transformation initiatives



## Nancy Duarte's Slide:ology

argues that when too much content is on a slide, it's no longer a presentation but a document that just happens to be created in PowerPoint.

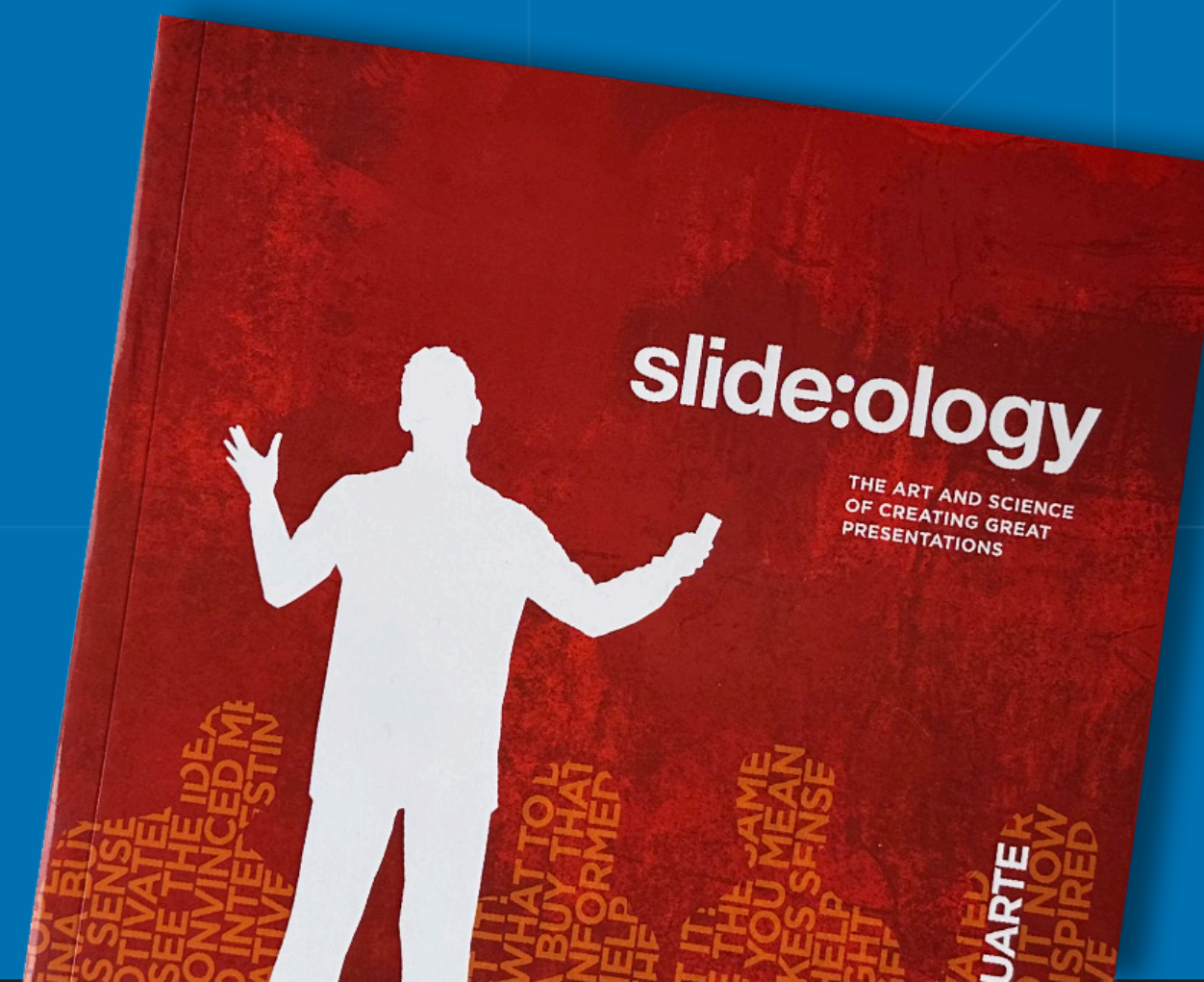


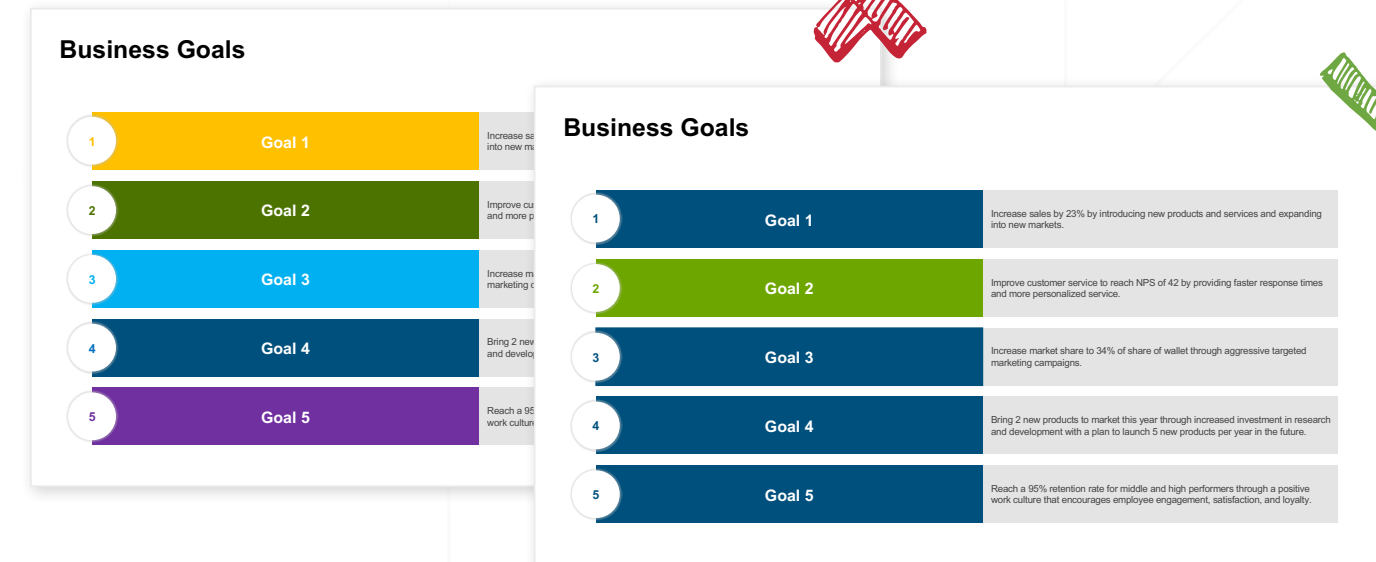
Image source: duarte.com



## Common PowerPoint Mistakes

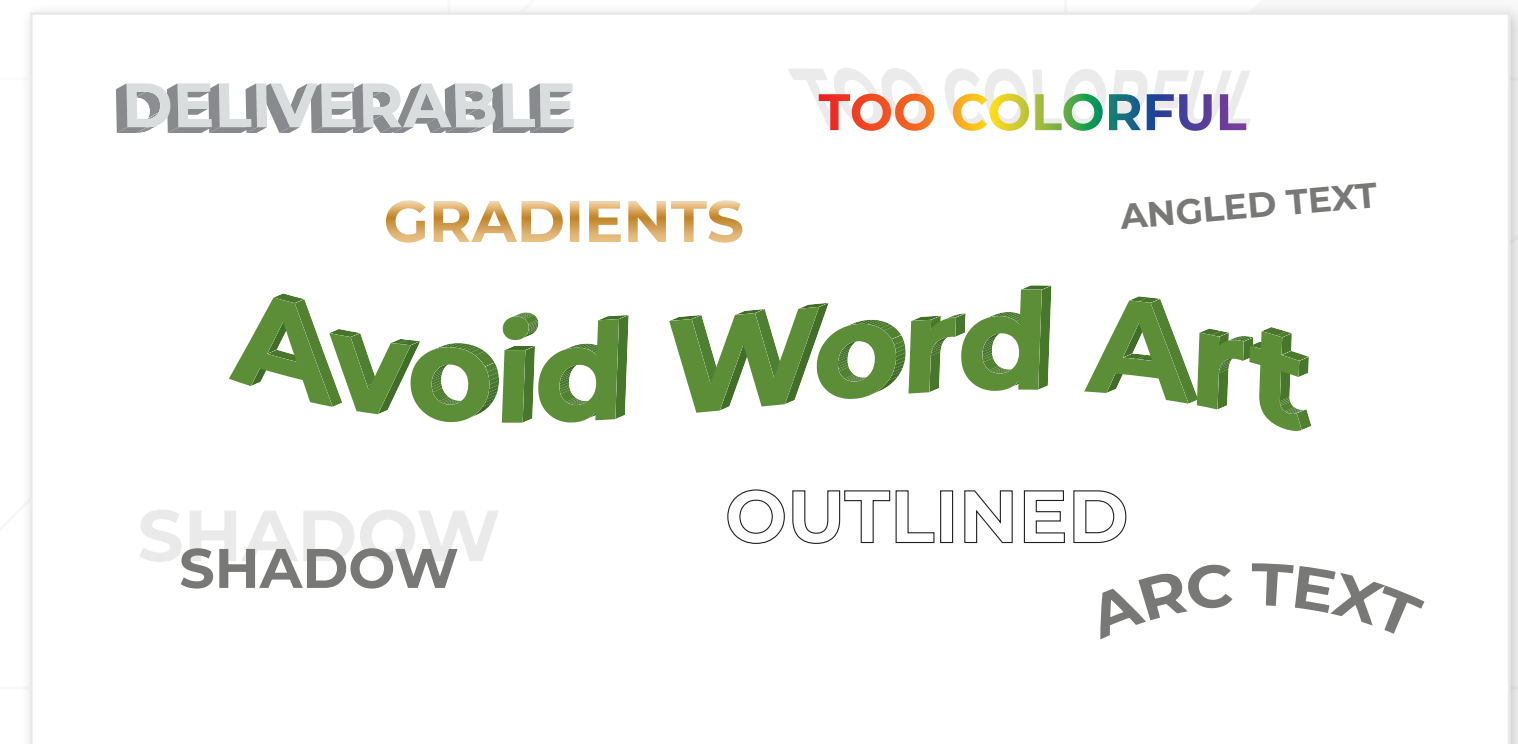
### Arbitrary Colors

Using colors at random can be distracting, whereas using color strategically can help highlight the idea you're presenting.



### Flashy Formatting

Special effects and flashy formatting should be avoided, as they only distract people from the message you're trying to communicate. This includes 3-D charts, transitions, animations, SmartArt and WordArt.



## **(A) No Action Title**

Without an action title, it's unclear what your audience should take away from the slide.

## **(B) Chart Doesn't Match Action Title**

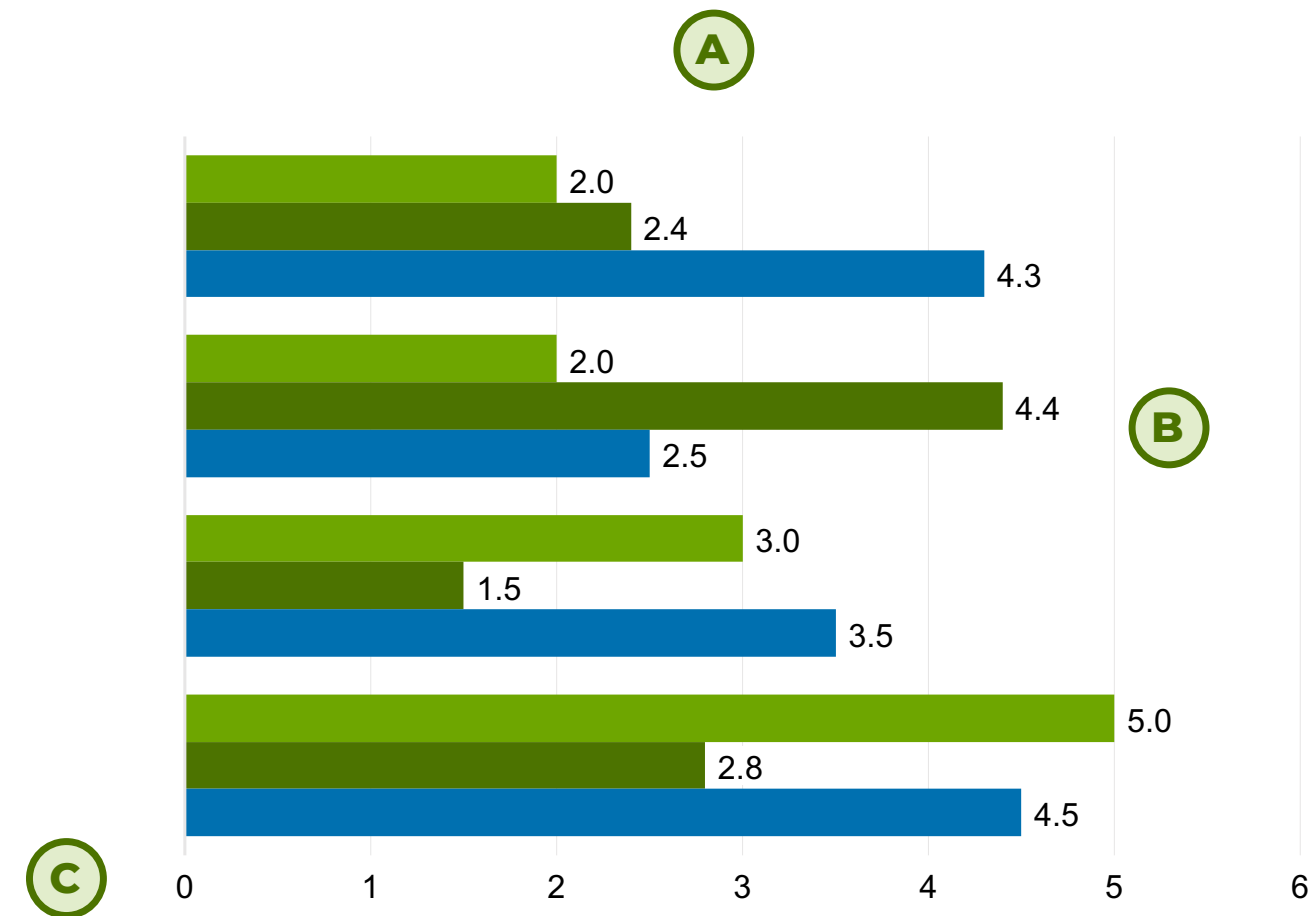
If what your chart shows isn't aligned with the action title, your audience may wonder whether your data or the conclusion you've drawn from it is erroneous.

## **(C) Unlabeled Charts**

Neglecting to include information such as titles, measurement units and axis labels makes it hard for the audience to read and understand your charts.

### Unlabeled Chart

A lack of labels impacts your story

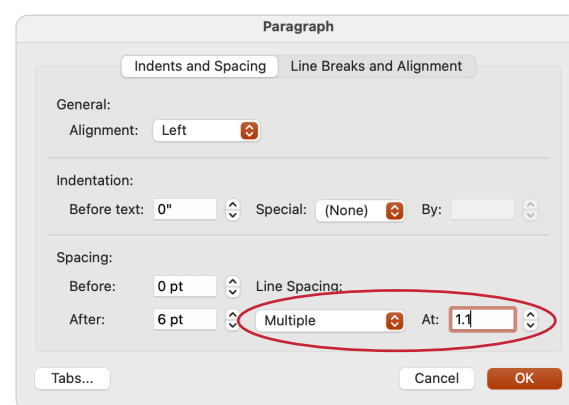
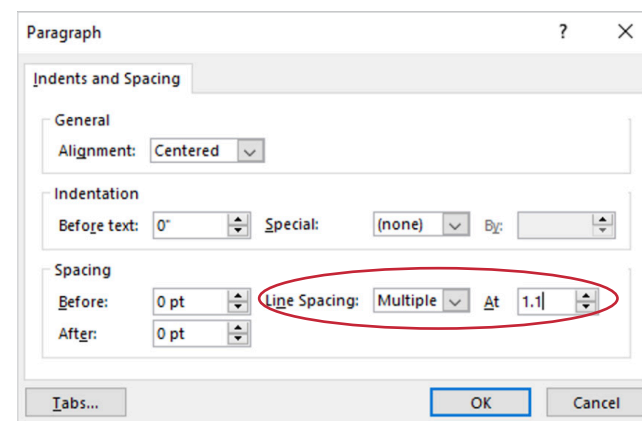


## Not Enough White Space

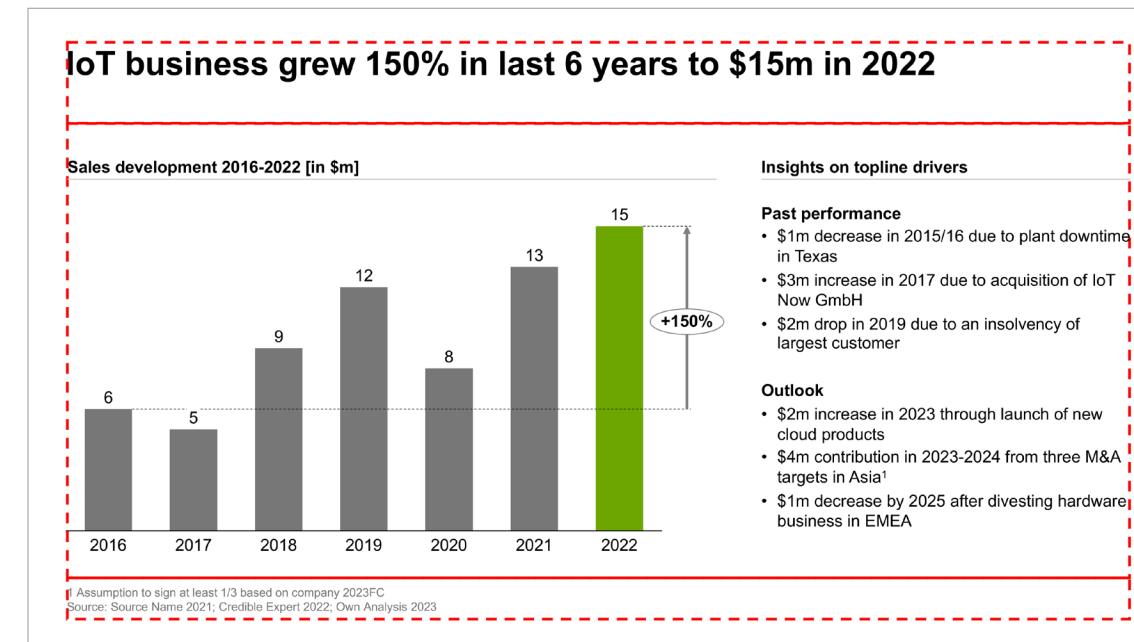
Crowded text and line spacing hurts readability and can overwhelm your audience, who will struggle to read the text rather than listening to your message.

For line spacing, use the Paragraph option on the Format menu to check the line spacing, making sure it is at least 0.9 (if Multiple is selected). PowerPoint automatically adjusts this value down to make a large amount of text fit the text box, so watch out for this.

### Check Line Spacing in the PowerPoint Paragraph settings



### Use PowerPoint Guides to set visual markers for slide margins.



Another area to watch when it comes to white space is slide margin. While PowerPoint itself does not have the concept of a margin, typically a slide template will have pre-established boundaries for where content should go based on default objects such as the title and any placeholder boxes. Don't break these implied margin rules just to fit more text on the slide.

## Visual Clutter

Disorganized slides cluttered with too many messages or visuals makes it difficult for the audience to digest the information you're presenting. Arranging slide elements in columns and rows reduces confusion.



### BYOD Computer Preferences

- Mac offers a sleek design and a wide range of features and options, while Windows offers more customization options.
- Macs tend to be more secure and less vulnerable to viruses, while Windows is more susceptible to being hacked.
- Macs are typically more expensive and come with matching accessories, while Windows PCs tend to be less expensive and offer more variety in terms of hardware and software.
- Macs have fewer hardware requirements than Windows, making them simpler to maintain and upgrade.
- Macs are user-friendly and well-suited for creative projects, while Windows is better suited for gaming and business applications.
- Windows machines offer a wider range of applications and software that can be used for any type of project.

A	Consideration 1	Cost of hardware and software
B	Consideration 2	IT support overhead
C	Consideration 3	System compatibility
D	Consideration 4	Employee productivity
E	Consideration 5	Employee personal preference



Bring your own device is a growing trend that has driven much debate within IT teams of the relative benefits of the Mac OSX and Windows operating systems.

## Laundry List of Bullets

Disjointed lists of bullets are visually distracting and tough for audiences to take in. Compare this with the same information presented in logical groups of bullets with parallel structure.



### BYOD Computer Preferences

Bring your own device is a growing trend that has driven much debate within IT teams of the relative benefits of the Mac OSX and Windows operating systems.

#### Mac

- Mac offers a sleek design and a wide range of features and options
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#### Windows

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- Windows machines offer a wider range of applications and software
- Windows is better suited for gaming and business applications
- Windows is better suited for gaming and business applications





# Basic PowerPoint Skills and Shortcuts

Getting comfortable with a few basic PowerPoint shortcuts can reduce the time it takes to create presentations, while also helping make them more visually appealing.

## Adding New Slides

Use Control + M on Windows / ⌘ + Shift + N on Mac to insert a new slide. Alternatively use Control + Shift + D on Windows / ⌘ + D on Mac to duplicate your current slide. This function can be helpful in case you want to make changes to a slide but still keep the earlier version in case you change your mind.

## Select Multiple Elements

Use Control + Shift + Click on Windows / ⌘ + Click on Mac to select multiple slide elements at once. This can be useful for moving a group of items or applying other actions to them such as grouping, alignment, copy + paste or nudge.

## Copy + Paste Formatting

Once you've formatted a text box or other element, you can reuse the formatting with a simple copy + paste rather than creating a new element.

## Align and Nudge

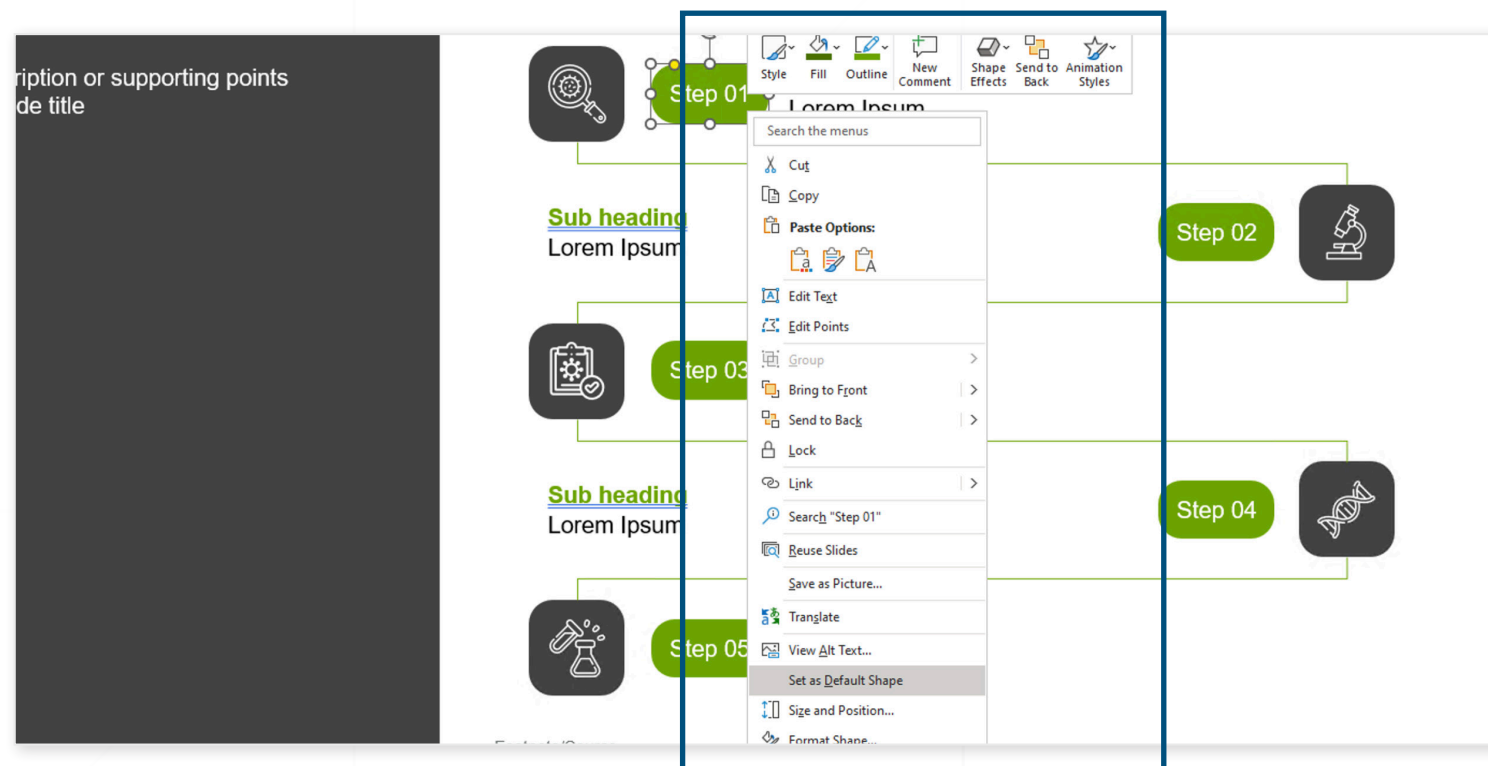
You can select multiple items and align them from the Arrange drop-down menu in PowerPoint. Using Guides in PowerPoint allows you to add guidelines for aligning elements in the same location across multiple slides.



You can also use your keyboard arrows to nudge slide elements by small degrees, which can be helpful when trying to achieve your desired alignment and spacing.

### Default Shapes

Once you've formatted a shape, text box or other element as you want it, right-click on the element and select Set as Default Shape. This will give all subsequent shapes the same settings such as color and outline.



### Group

After selecting multiple items, you can right click + Group to turn the elements into a single movable piece.

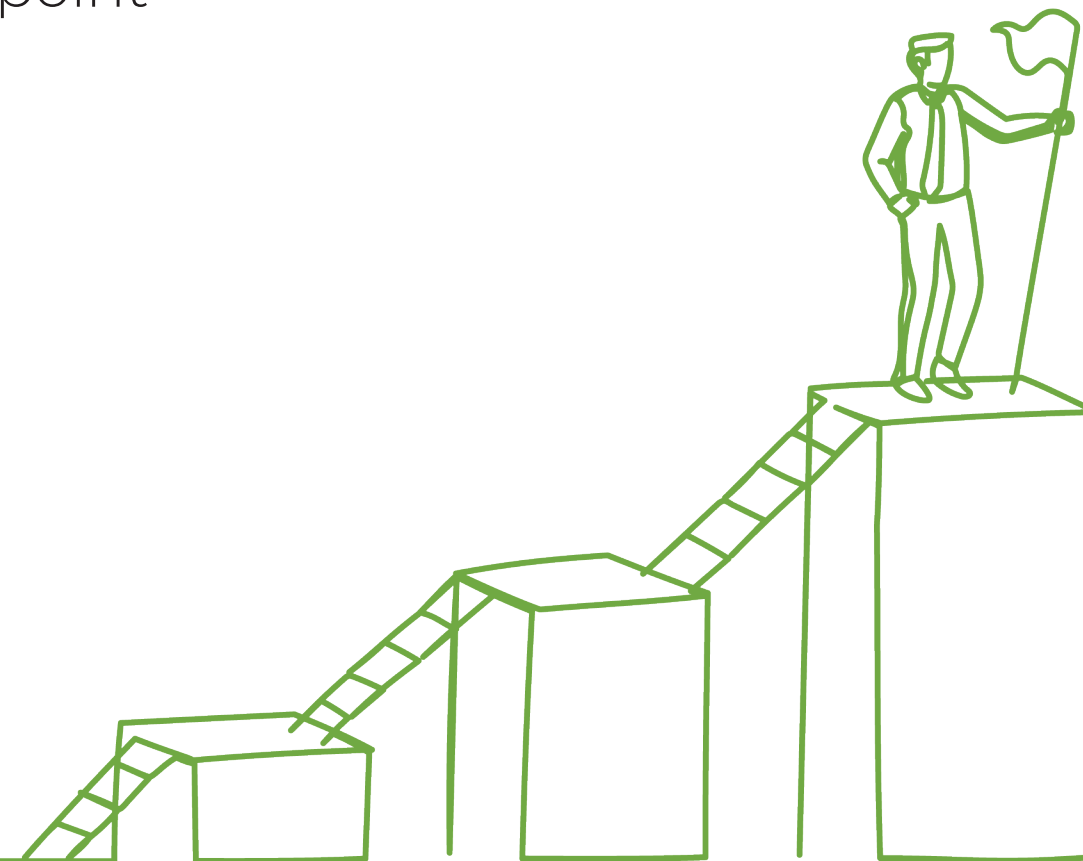
### Duplicate Elements

Control + shift + Drag on Windows / Control + Drag on Mac will duplicate a selected object in a single stroke. Control + D on Windows / ⌘ + D on Mac duplicates an element similar to copy + paste, and is useful for duplicating an object multiple times. Using Control + D after control + shift + Drag on Windows will duplicate the object at the original spacing as your first duplicate.

Note that if you duplicate an element that is already part of a group (rather than creating a new element), the duplicated element is automatically added to the same group.

# 10 Must-Have Elements for Compelling PowerPoint Slides

1. One idea for each slide
2. Each slide has an action title
3. Any charts or graphics support the action title
4. Charts and graphics are labeled, including axes, measurement units and data sources
5. Color palettes are simple, using contrast to highlight to the chart's message
6. Slides have sufficient white space to ensure readability
7. Elements are aligned in rows and columns
8. Bullets follow a parallel structure and are organized into logical groups
9. Slides have a light background with darker text
10. Titles are 20 to 24 point with body text 12 to 18 point



# Best Practices Cheat Sheet

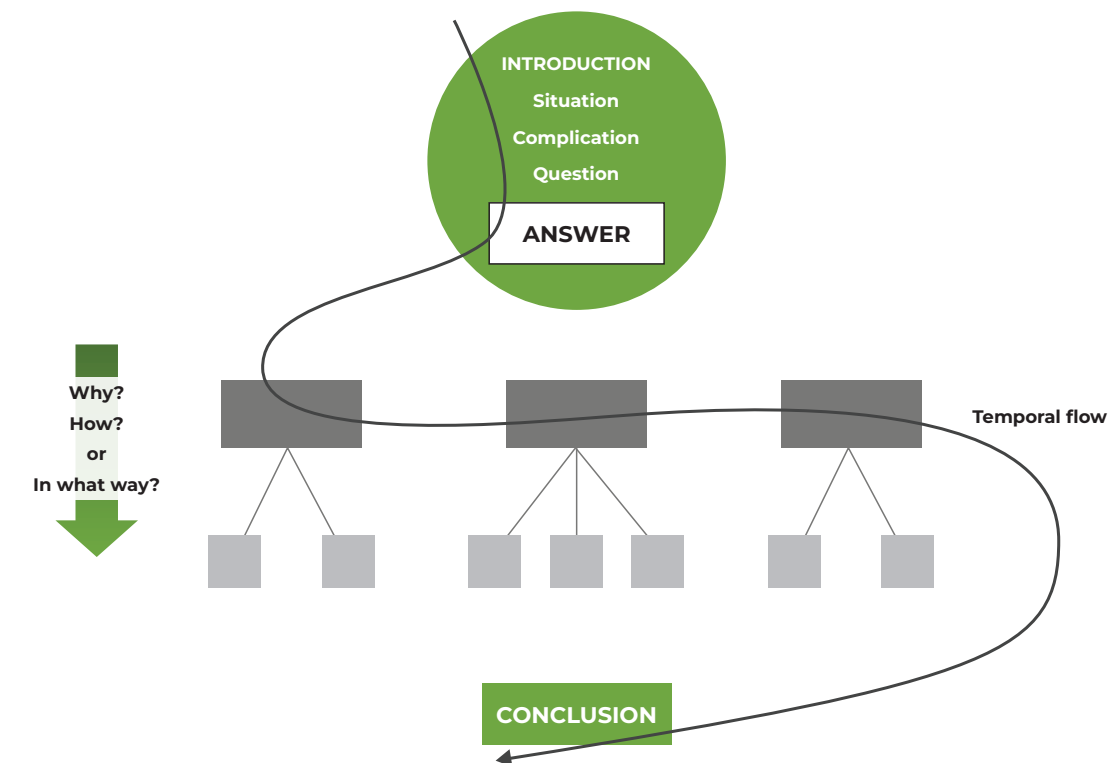
## 1. Identify your goal

- Persuade or sell an idea (Key message presentation)
- Distill ideas from a large dataset (Insights and research outcomes)
- Update your team or company leadership (Recurring report)
- Document your work or other activities (Documentation)

## 2. Build your story

- Use the pyramid principle to craft the overarching story of your presentation

### Structure Presentations as a Pyramid



Logical structure is **M**utually **E**xclusive and **C**ollectively **E**xhaustive “**MECE**”

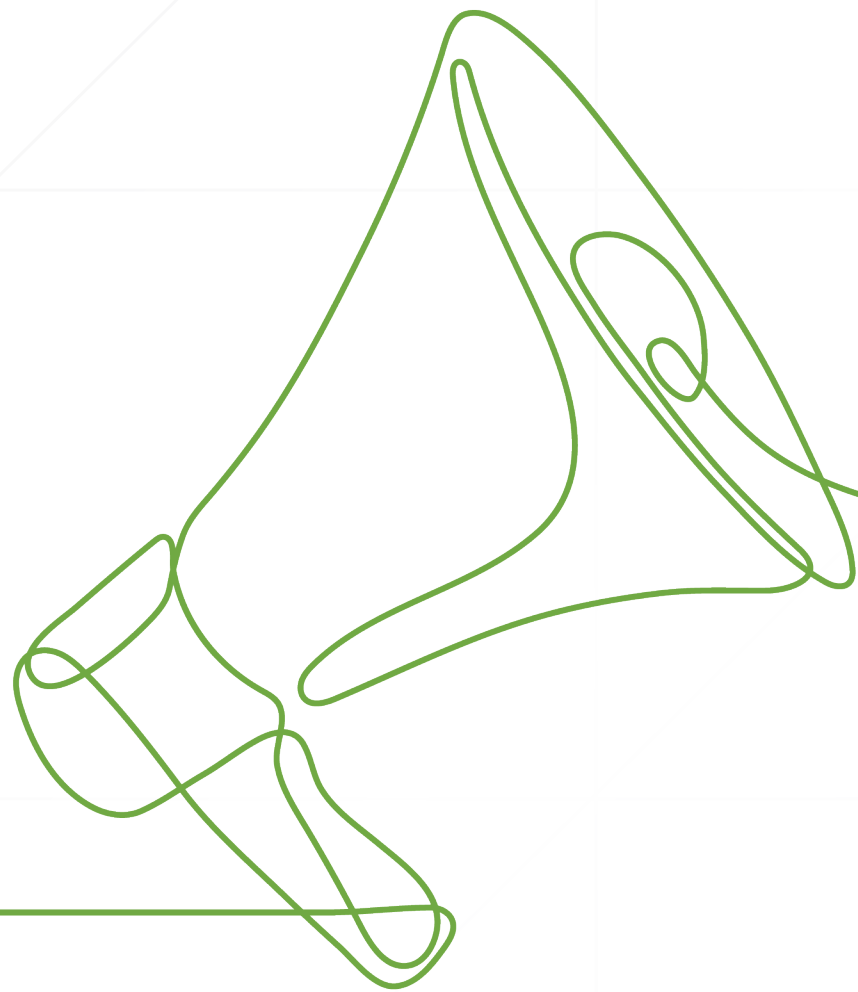
### 3. Write your action title(s) first

- Use the action title to determine what information belongs on the slide

### 4. Choose your charts

Identify what you're comparing and choose the appropriate chart

- **Pie chart:** Component comparison
- **Bar chart:** Item comparison, change over time, frequency distribution, correlation
- **Line chart:** Change over time or time-series data
- **Scatter plot:** Correlation



## Slide Do's and Don'ts

### Do:

- ✓ Convey one idea per slide
- ✓ Include an action title on every slide
- ✓ Align slide content in columns and rows
- ✓ Use color strategically
- ✓ Label your charts
- ✓ Use Sans Serif font (title 20-24 pt, body 12-18 pt)
- ✓ Follow parallel structure for bullets

### Don't:

- ✗ Pack multiple ideas into a single slide
- ✗ Place your conclusion at the bottom of the slide
- ✗ Crowd slides with excessive text, charts or images
- ✗ Use colors at random
- ✗ Add transitions or slide animations
- ✗ Use white text on a black background
- ✗ Make text smaller than 12 pt





## Resources

If you're ready to take the next step in your PowerPoint journey, check out these resources that will help you create better presentations and learn new skills.

### Free Tutorials

- Watch Heinrich Rusche of [Firm Learning](#) as he creates a slide from scratch.
- Leila Gharani is a Microsoft Excel and PowerPoint expert and has both paid course and free tutorials including free think-cell tutorials. You can check out her videos at [XelPlus](#).
- Geetesh Bajaj is a Microsoft Most Valuable Professional for PowerPoint and his [Indezine](#) site contains various tutorials and PowerPoint related articles.

### PowerPoint Courses

- [LinkedIn Learning](#) offers a free 30-day trial as well as a PowerPoint learning path with courses PowerPoint tips and tricks, slide design and more.

# think-cell

## think-cell Trial

Download a free 30-day trial of think-cell to see how much faster you can create compelling charts, layouts and presentations in PowerPoint.

### Learn how to:

- Design Gantt charts, waterfall diagrams and other complex visuals in minutes
- Create flexible, precisely aligned workflow diagrams that eliminate the need for SmartArt
- Automatically update charts from Excel spreadsheet data, ideal for recurring reports

[Try for free](#)





# About think-cell

Founded in Berlin in 2002, think-cell is the defacto standard for creating professional presentations in PowerPoint. With productivity tools and support for 40+ chart types, 9 of the top 10 global consulting firms rely on think-cell, it's the software of choice for the Fortune 500, DAX 40 and taught at 9 of the top 10 business schools.



**Download a fully functional 30-day trial  
to learn more about think-cell.**

[Get Free Trial](#)