

## Tips for Using PowerPoint to Engage People in Dialogue

PowerPoint. We love it. We hate it. We abandoned it to flirt with *Prezi*. Then we came back.

It's like that relationship we know is not good for us, but we keep it on speed dial.

So, we won't give you the long list of how *not* to use PowerPoint. You've been there and you could write that one.

Here is a list of how *to* use PowerPoint and still get the kind of engagement you want with your presentations.

1. **Consider not using it.** (Sneaky, I know, but at least consider it). If it does not enhance your presentation in meaningful ways, don't use it at all. It has a bad reputation and people have come to expect that they will be passive and unengaged when the first screen comes up. You will have to work against that in the first few seconds.
2. **Set it up with an open question.** For example, "As you look at the numbers, be thinking about how they will impact the work in your own department in the short term."
3. **Use it to visually communicate** what you are presenting (that is not the same thing as communicating through written text). Images stick in our minds, for instance, and some graphs can help people to make meaning or better see the story from the data or complex concepts.
4. **Use text that the group needs to see in order to react to it** (and then give them time to do just that) i.e. "Review the chart with intake data from the last six months. What jumps out at you? What figures are important to consider?" (Hint, if the text is too long to fit on a slide, use a handout or a pre-read instead.)
5. **Intersperse it with dialogue.** For example, "Which of the statistics that we've reviewed so far are having you reconsider how we do intake? Why?"
6. **Divide it into short chunks** (no more than 10 minutes) around core concepts. People won't stay with you much longer than that.

Above all, remember this.

*Your PowerPoint is **not** your presentation. It is a visual aid **to** your presentation.*