10 COMMON ERRORS IN POWERPOINT PRESENTATIONS

1. Lack of a slide (first slide after title slide and or disclosure slide) that contains either learning objectives for the presentation or a presentation outline.

2. Not using all of the space on your slides – typical font size should be 40 or 44 point for the title and 28 to 36 point for slide text.

3. Using fonts that are hard to read (e.g., Times New Roman) rather than the easier to read Arial font.

4. Not using the “shadow” function on all text.

5. Cramming “too much text” on a slide—resulting in small (and unreadable) font size. The text on a slide should serve as “talking bullet points”, and not prose text. Simple rule of thumb: look at your slides on a screen BEFORE your talk. If you envision yourself saying “I know you can’t read this, but . . . .” – don’t use that slide!!!

6. Pictures and scanned figures – too many presenters try to “stretch” pictures and images to fill the slide space and in the process it distorts the image.

7. Lack of contrast between text and background – the background should be dark and not “busy” (e.g. plain dark blue), and the font should be light in color (e.g., white or yellow).

8. Using bullets that do not have enough contrast to the slide background (or that are too small) so that they don’t stand out.

9. Going overtime. It is amazing how some speakers seem to think they can have 50 slides for a 25 minute talk!! Practice your talk and time it!!! A good rule of thumb is 1.25 slides per minute of presentation time. Also, don’t waste time at the beginning of your talk to tell the audience how you topic can’t be covered in 25 minutes!!

10. Lack of a summary slide – presenters should conclude their presentations with a slide that contains the key points that they would like the audience to remember.