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Public Relations



Harry Zlokower

**PowerPoint madness:
A mixed reputation**

PowerPoint, the slide show presentation program on which many of us depend, has a deserved mixed reputation. Descriptors such as "Death by PowerPoint" and "PowerPoint Poisoning" have been with us a long time. If you ever sat through a presentation with repeated blocks of texts you cannot read or a speaker who insists on reading them all to you, you will know what I mean.

So why the widespread abuse? The answer, and many of us are guilty, is that PowerPoint is easy. An administrative assistant cannot get hired today without knowing the program. Invited to speak at a real estate conference or lunch? No problem. Just update an old PowerPoint. Need to impress a prospective client or a group of them? Create pages of charts, graphs and to do lists that demonstrate how complicated life would be without you.

So the next time you speak, decide what you want to communicate and whether or not you even need PowerPoint.

This is not to say the use of PowerPoint to enhance your speech or presentation is bad. To the contrary, it is an excellent tool for communicating with and engaging your audience. Some of the best PowerPoints pull in audiences with their beautiful renderings and photos of buildings, their creative use of graphic design, or their ability to explain complex real estate trends and concepts. These PowerPoints were created to enhance what the speakers had to say, not the other way around.

So the next time you speak, decide what you want to communicate and whether or not you even need PowerPoint. You may surprise yourself and leave it at home.

Harry Zlokower is president of Zlokower Company and immediate past president of the New York Chapter of the Public Relations Society of America, New York, N.Y.

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