SLIDETOWN

tell remarkable stories

POWERPOINT IS NOT THE ENEMY

POWERPOINT IN THE JURY

There are times that many people criticize PowerPoint for being responsible for boring presentations. Aside from being a tremendous myopia, it is a lack of information about what we can be done with this tool. When you watch a bad advertisement, do you blame your TV and throw it in the trash?

> PowerPoint performs two very useful tasks: It quickly allows you to compose notes for the presenter and create slides showing visual language.

The problem begins when people confuse the two jobs. Presentations that do not have a good story prepared in advance will not be saved with PowerPoint and will not be harmed, since they have already started wrong, at the moment of creating your reasoning logic.

This means that many presentations would be bad with or without PowerPoint. There is nothing wrong with jotting down the key points for a little help in your memory.

No! 😣

The problem is when people project these notes for all to see.

The author Edward Tufte became an enemy of PowerPoint. Professor Tufte attacks PowerPoint in part because of his "relentless sequentiality, one slide after another," and partly because of the asymmetrical relationship between the speaker and the "followers". He blamed PowerPoint for the crash of the Challenger spacecraft.

This is because in the presentation the crew had about a problem, it was presented in a horrible slide with the real issue just showed in the last bullet-point with type font number 8. This is at the very least strange because the person responsible for the inappropriate use of the tool is its author.

The responsibility to show problems and solve them comes from the presenter and his team. In some companies, their leaders even banned the use of PowerPoint. A great nonsense and proof that they cannot find the true responsible for the problem. It would take very little to improve the quality of the presentations of most companies, much less than would be necessary to improve the quality of the speeches of the executives of this company. So why ban PowerPoint?

The real problem is much more worrying. It is that in a corporate environment, we are invited to read texts by people who cannot write and watch presentations by people with no talent to perform. For some reason these amateurs are better paid than most writers and artists. There is something depressing about all of this, but the fault cannot be from PowerPoint.

THE ORIGIN OF BORING PRESENTATIONS

Before the overhead projector existed, the was a tool called the slide carousel. Just had a little price problem. To produce slides in 35mm a lot of money was spent. But the presenter had to tell stories because he could only project images.

Then came a tool that awakened the lazy side of the human being. The v. A big piece of device that projects on the wall a transparency with notes so that the presenter does not forget what he has to say. And to separate one topic from the other was invented the bullet point. This made the performances more boring. The overhead projector was the solution for many years.

Until 1984, Bill Gates christened software called Presenter "PowerPoint" ("good argument", yes, this was the intention of the name). But people started using PowerPoint to do the same thing they did with transparencies, designing bullet-shaped topics. And to make matters worse, people began to feel empowered without the ability to do so.

Then the slides were decorated with cliparts and images without any idea of design and zero connection with some kind of Story, after all, what reigns in the executive world of presentations is the absence of Story. The merely logical rhetoric, with only the positive points on the slides, makes the presentations lose their credibility.

Yes! 😊

Today there is hope. The world is becoming more aware that PowerPoint is a powerful tool since it is used with the mindset of a movie. It is no longer about bullet-points but rather about Visual Language which, in sequence, conducts a subjective experience in the audience, conquering it by emotion.

THE STORY IS THE KING

In the '60s, Kodak had a communication problem it needed to solve. Kodak owned the "ferris wheel" that projected 35mm colored slides. This case was well illustrated in episode 13 of the first season of MAD MEN.

Advertiser Don Draper made a brilliant presentation. With the idea that the "carousel" refers to a nostalgic trip for children, which also takes the form of a wheel, Draper drove his audience (Kodak) to a journey back in time rescuing emotions and feelings.
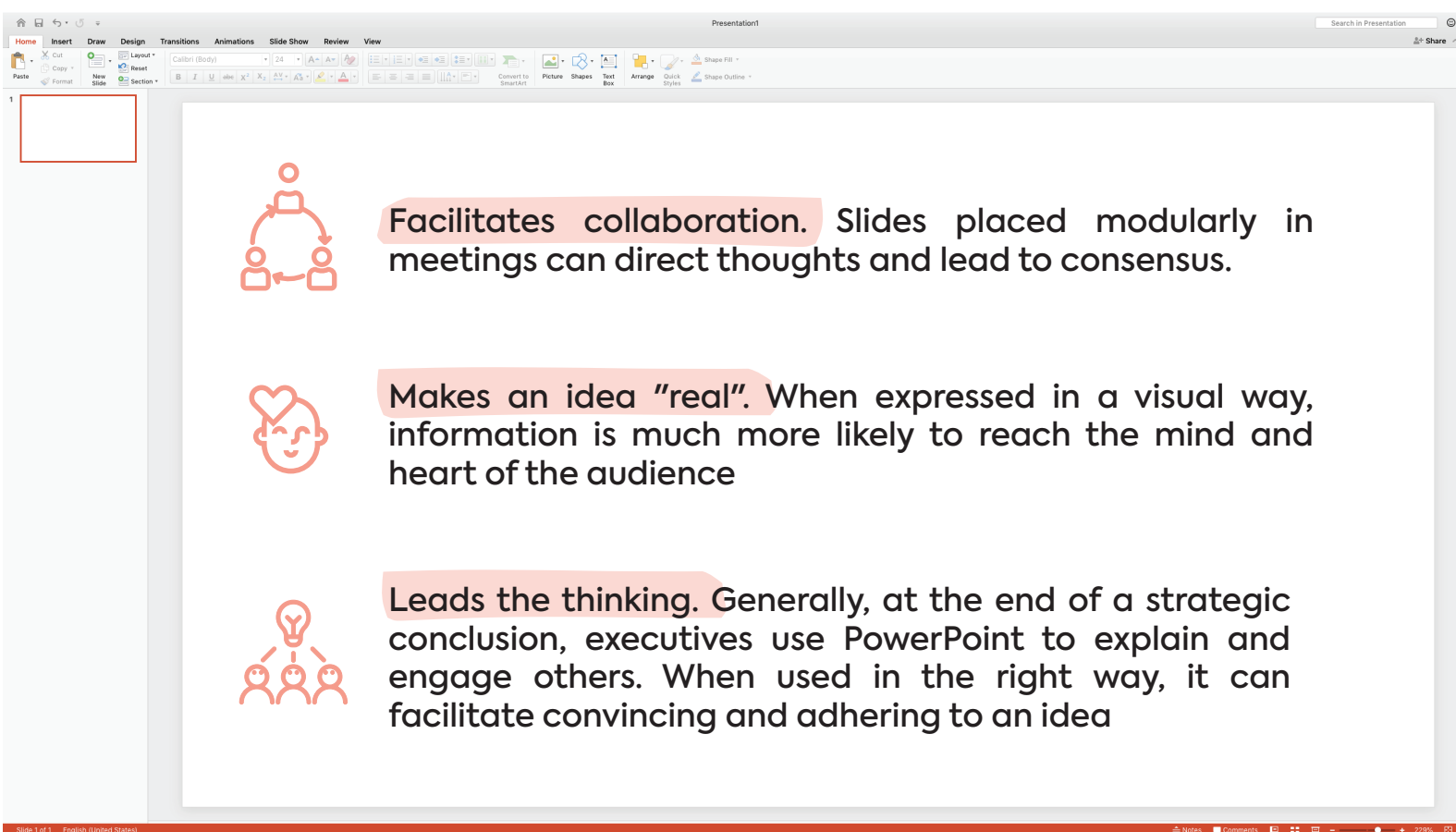
Using the "wheel" (which would later be renamed to carousel), only with images, speech in the head, fluency in narrative, emotion and reason coexisting together, and in the end the eye shining from the audience with the mouth open, literally. This is proof that the art of telling a good story is what matters. And that the tool is just one way of expressing this story.

The biggest competition we are experiencing today is people's attention. Whether internally or externally, people in companies fight for attention, budget and ideas. But where does PowerPoint come in?

POWERPOINT AND STRATEGY

Sarah Kaplan of the University of Toronto has published an article entitled "PowerPoint and Strategy". And that's the way we see this software. An ally that can help executives discuss and disseminate strategic ideas.

In this study, Kaplan wrote about 3 roles that PowerPoint has in strategic direction:

Facilitates collaboration. Slides placed modularly in meetings can direct thoughts and lead to consensus.

Makes an idea "real". When expressed in a visual way, information is much more likely to reach the mind and heart of the audience

Leads the thinking. Generally, at the end of a strategic conclusion, executives use PowerPoint to explain and engage others. When used in the right way, it can facilitate convincing and adhering to an idea

It is worth mentioning here that I am not advocating the use of software in any situation. Of course, on some occasions it is highly recomended.

OK 😀

But in some cases, a good story well told only with the dramatization of the presenter is more than enough.

To further support proper use let's go to other reasons for you to use this tool to your advantage:

Visually elaborate slides are a shortcut to understanding

An interesting presentation makes information easier to remember

People think about images. When we read a novel, we imagine each scene. When we watch a PowerPoint, if there is no visual targeting on the slide, we will do it anyway in our mind because we need to represent the idea

The same part of the brain used to process images we see (the cortex) is also used when imagining something without being in our field of vision. So, do you want your audience to imagine something far from your message or do you want them to have a visual representation that leads to your desire (and audience's desire also!). If it is the second answer, try to choose well the image you are going to put to illustrate your story.

And of course, it is worth remembering that PowerPoint is part of "Telling" in the term "StoryTelling". If the "Story" part is not well resolved, there is no "Telling" that will solve your problem.

Putting together the two things:
(1) A good PowerPoint with (2) a good story.

Result: More "Power" to your "Point"!

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