

16.5 Off-center Placement

A design technique that works as well in Relational Presentation as it does in painting, floral arranging, and every other form of visually artistic expression is *off-center placement*. Recall the example of the bouquet with the red flowers. Off-center arrangement causes the eye to be pulled in different directions simultaneously, potentially leading to a more interesting visual display. Off-center strategies with slide content work the same. That's not to say centered, symmetrical arrangements are bad. Ideally, designs in your network should contain both kinds of placement.



Figure 16.11



Figure 16.12

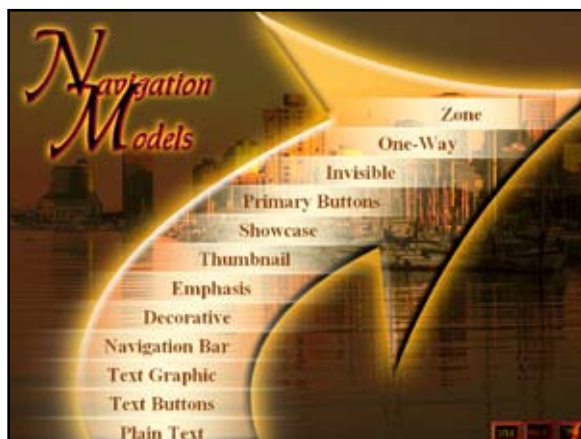


Figure 16.13

In Figure 16.11, the bold mountain draws your gaze upward and to the left, whereas the hiker's image draws it down and to the right. This is called creating *visual tension* because your eyes are drawn in two directions at the same time.

On a PowerPoint slide, using opposing diagonal corners is the most common way of creating this effect, although stacking items on either side of the slide or at the top or bottom can work as well. Figure 16.12 is an illustration of how the primary buttons on this slide work — what switchboards they open. This design combines top stacking and diagonal corner tension. If you use panels as Navigation Elements, slides naturally have an off-center design to some extent, especially with Nested Navigation.

As demonstrated in Figure 16.13, off-center, unbalanced designs work well for creative Graphical Switchboards or content illustrations. There is no reason, necessarily, why Navigation Elements must be in a straight line or column, especially on switchboard slides. They can be artistically placed and interwoven into designs. We also sometimes refer to these artistic styles of navigation as Decorative Switchboards.

There is one more interesting fact to point out about off-center design. Even though the slide's design components are askew in various ways, they normally still contribute to an overall sense of balance across the slide; tension pulls in at least two directions. For example, in Figure 16.13 *Navigation Models* pulls left and the arrowhead pulls right.

16.6 More Lighting Effects

Creating glows and shadows in PowerPoint 2007 is relatively easy. If you don't find the effects you want using the built-in picture effects, try using shapes for more flexibility. These techniques do not require any graphic design knowledge, and can significantly enhance the aesthetic appeal of your network components. Many varied effects are possible. In this segment we look at several common examples. All effects use shapes that have been given a **Two-Color Fill Gradient**, with one of the fill colors increased to **100% Transparency**. As a clarification of terms, *glow effects* generally are placed on top of dark slide backgrounds or pictures (to lighten certain areas), whereas *shadow effects* normally sit atop light backgrounds (to darken certain areas). Both are referred to collectively as *lighting effects* and use identical procedures, except for color choice.

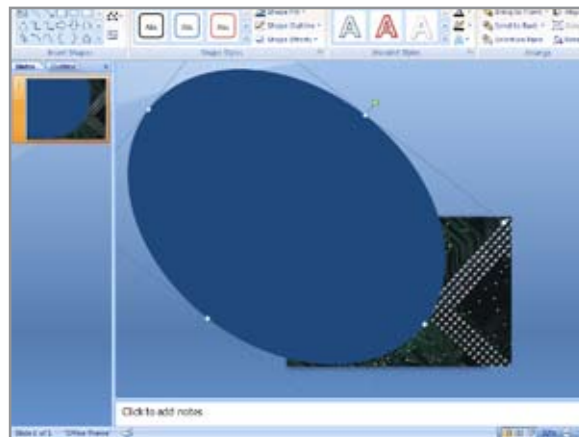


Figure 16.14

Radial Glow: To form a soft radial glow on a slide, typically from one or more of its corners, use a very large oval that has been rotated to approximately a 45-degree angle. Allow at least half of the shape to hang off into the blue area outside the slide pane (Figure 16.14). Fine tuning of positioning usually occurs after the transparency is added.

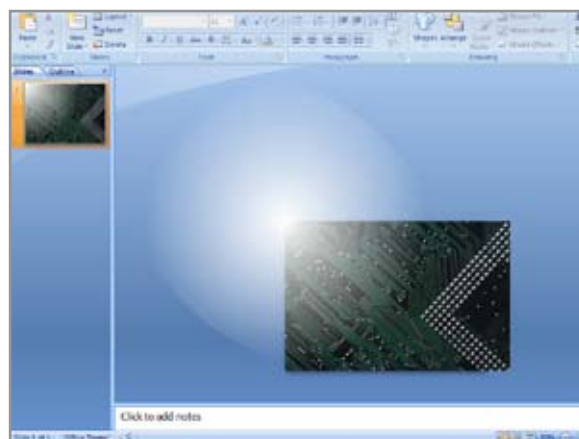


Figure 16.15

Format the shape with a **Two-Color Fill Gradient**. One of the colors doesn't matter, considering it will be invisible. Slide the **Transparency** bar for one of the two colors to **100%**. Change the other color to the desired shade (Figure 16.15). We often use white or a very light yellow to simulate natural lighting, but other bolder colors create nice effects too, especially when two or more such shapes overlap and have different colors (or gradients are multicolored).

Make sure the **Type** is **Radial**, the **Direction** is **From Center** and the nontransparent color is in the center radiating out. Remove the shape's outline also. In Slide Show mode, you should obtain an effect similar to Figure 16.16.

You may need to play with the **Stop positions** somewhat, to get the effect you want. Or move the oval further into the blue area and increase/decrease its size. This distributes the glow differently. In Slide Show mode you see only the portion of the oval that overlaps the slide pane.



Figure 16.16