

## Suggestion 1 (Figure 10.9)



Figure 10.9

For basic text, include a slide label at the top of the content area and center the text both horizontally and vertically. Use a simple font style such as Verdana or Arial—fancy fonts are just harder to read. Make sure the text color contrasts sharply with the content area's color, either dark-on-light or light-on-dark. If contrast between the two is minimal, add shadow or highlighting to your text. Options for doing so are far more advanced in PowerPoint 2007, but PowerPoint 2003 supports rudimentary text shadowing and highlighting as well.

Make the text font size as large as possible, while still leaving a reasonable amount of space above, below, and off to the sides—to avoid an overly cluttered appearance. As a general rule, give the text a 60-point font size, or higher, but leave at least as much space around the text as the height of its capital letters. Place as few words as possible on slides; then supplement missing details with verbal words. Remember, only one idea per slide no matter how tempting it may be to lump together several bullet points. The only exception is when points need to be compared or contrasted. Then having them together on the same slide is acceptable.

## Suggestion 2 (Figure 10.10)



Figure 10.10

Combining text with a diagram or graph is fine, as long as both are reasonably simple and the overall display is easily understandable. For more complex displays, consider using a *hanging presentation* instead (a strategy we'll discuss later in this chapter) so that the slide pane's entire real estate is available.

## Suggestion 3 (Figure 10.11)

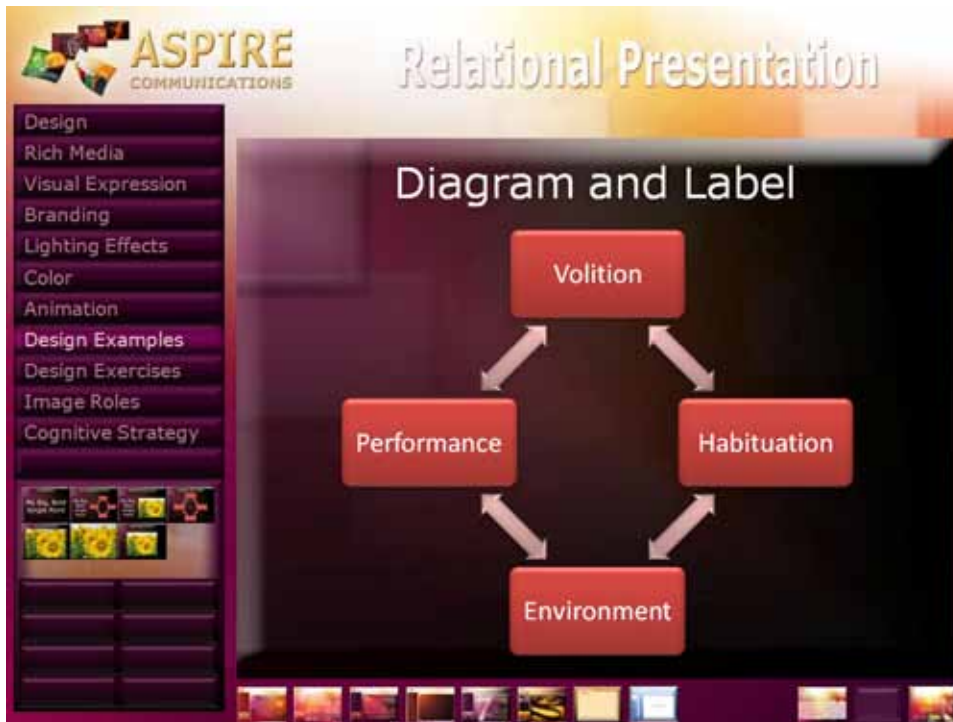


Figure 10.11

On the other hand, a diagram or graph all by itself without text often looks better and can lead to superior mental processing. Guard against the tendency to pack slides full of extra facts and specs. Keep the initial display simple, and either give the details verbally or have supplementary displays available on demand.

With a little creative trickery, you can even link the individual elements of a chart or diagram to separate slides containing relevant detail—or at least appear to do so. Such functionality really impresses viewers because they see you have the ability to dig more deeply into any number or spec, on demand. In a sense, you are able to provide information customer service on the spot—and all the while your chart or diagram still looks as innocent and simple as the day it was born.

A large, single diagram or chart looks good covering the entire slide pane of a regular slide. Again, though, don't fill that extra space with stuff. That's what handouts are for. Make the slide's object as large as possible and keep the layout clean.

## Suggestion 4 (Figure 10.12)



Figure 10.12

Combining text and a picture is OK, too, and is a common practice. Again, stick with only one idea per slide in general. The picture, ideally, should do something more than just sit there and look pretty. It should communicate meaning, as discussed previously.

Another good practice is to make the picture as big as possible, without overly crowding the text. Sometimes it's possible to overlay text on the picture itself, especially if there is a high degree of contrast between the text and picture.

In a scientific, medical, or engineering context, the picture often appears centered in the content area, surrounded by text labels and arrows pointing to important features—similar to the layout style found on the back cover of this book, by the way.

## Suggestion 5 (Figure 10.13)



Figure 10.13

Well, then, how about eliminating the **Big Bold** text altogether and replacing it with a descriptive picture, an image that says the same thing in a visually meaningful way. Is that possible? Absolutely it is, most of the time, anyway.

Is it always easy? No. Becoming skilled at using pictures to express meaning usually takes more work and creativity than typing bullet points. No one's going to kid you there. And, yes, getting rid of text might feel like you are violating some form of sacred PowerPoint law. But don't worry, you'll get past the guilt as soon as you notice audiences being more engaged by your performances, not to mention the improved sales stats.

It's OK for a little bit of text to stay. Having a short label above such pictures usually is good, to help explain meaning and provide context. You PowerPoint 2007 folks might want to make such showy pictures look even more attractive, too, by taking advantage of the software's marvelous picture effects. We applied the **Soft Edges** effect here.

## Suggestion 6 (Figure 10.14)



Figure 10.14

And for the grand finale ... rrrrrrrrrrr ... (that's a textual drum roll, in case you're wondering). Some pictures can be featured as grandiosely as possible, without any text or labels whatsoever. Doing so surely must be illegal, judging by the fact that extremely few presenters ever dare to be so audacious.

You, nevertheless, must be brave and try it. Fill the entire content area with big, showy, informative pictures. Or, if using external shows, fill the entire slide pane without a single scrawny word anywhere to be found.

Large pictures that stand alone in all their glory, without text distracting from their impact, can be particularly dramatic. Use such a layout when a picture's message is self-explanatory, or when you want to convey aesthetic, emotional, or persuasive force.

Adding special effects might add appeal, but certainly is not absolutely necessary. Much more important is what the picture depicts, and how that visual meaning relates to your message.