

## **PowerPoint [Stinks]! No It Doesn't!!**

By Dave Paradi, MBA, co-author of "Guide to PowerPoint"

PowerPoint bashing has reached an all time high with major media picking up on the story and reports of PowerPoint being banned in some organizations. What a bunch of hogwash. PowerPoint is not the problem, the people who use it are.

It has become popular to blame the tool when something goes wrong instead of looking at the real cause of the issue. PowerPoint is just the latest example. People see poor presentations done using PowerPoint and instantly blame the tool. It seems to escape their attention that the presenter was the one who delivered the message (or failed to in many cases).

Too many presenters use PowerPoint as a crutch for their own lack of preparation or skill. Instead of investing time in thinking through and planning their message, they simply fire up the software and start banging away.

You can see this in almost every airport waiting lounge on any day of the week. It is pretty easy to look around and spot a professional looking businessperson madly creating PowerPoint slides as they wait for their plane to board. And you know that at the other end of the flight, they will hop into a rental car and drive to a meeting where they will read every word off the screen – boring their audience to tears.

Poor presentations are due to the presenter, not PowerPoint. Presenters need to take the time to plan their message and then determine what visual support will enhance what they want to say. PowerPoint is a wonderful addition to a well created message, but it can never substitute for the message.

Don't blame PowerPoint for the millions of poor presentations that are delivered every day. The hundreds of millions of dollars wasted every year in boring meetings with mind numbing presentations is the fault of professionals and organizations not wanting to put in the hard work it takes to craft a clear, compelling message.

Next time you are asked to present, craft your message first, then see how PowerPoint can add a visual dimension that reinforces your message. It is a powerful tool when used properly.

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