



## Mastering Technical Sales

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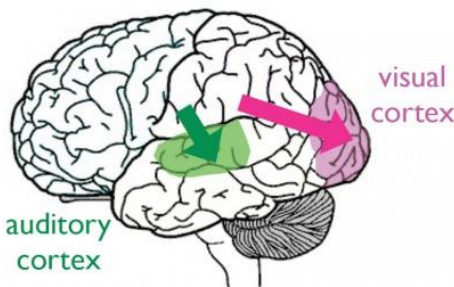
## Images In PowerPoint

### A Primer For The SE : How To Get Started

#### **MORE IMAGES, LESS TEXT.**

That is easy to say yet much harder to accomplish. So exactly how does the Sales Engineer revamp an existing presentation to make it visually more appealing and more effective? After a brief primer on why you should use images, I'll outline a process you can use to "smarten up" the most boring marketing presentation in the world. (Note: You should use this document together with [Best SE Practices For Using Images in Power Point.](#))

#### **Why use images?**




The human brain has two major systems for handling information. They are the Visual Cortex (VC) and the Auditory Cortex (AC) – think of them as the two major highways your sales message can travel down. The Auditory system processes language, both written and spoken. The Visual system processes what we see. So when you show a slide with bullet points or a lot of text then the Auditory system is working hard as the audience is both reading the text and listening to you. The Visual system is underutilized – although the audience is looking at the slide there is nothing of interest for the VC to process. In effect, one highway has a major traffic jam, and the other is wide-open.

The brain also deals better with smaller chunks of information than larger chunks, especially written and spoken information. Yet the VC can handle larger, but focused, chunks of information such as an image, notably if it reinforces whatever input the AC is receiving. So by using words and pictures together you can split the brain workload. This all implies reducing clutter and packing your message into small chunks.

What Is Easier To Remember?	
This?	Or This?
J FKFB INAT OUP SNA SAI RS	JFK FBI NATO UPS NASA IRS

## How Do I Start?

1. **Does Your Topic Support Using Images?** Not every section of a presentation lends itself to rich imagery. When you are trying to convey a large amount of information or present something complex such as financial information you may need to use significant amounts of text and numbers. Presenting an income statement or reviewing a scientific equation are two common examples. Do not try to force fit a visual – if it doesn't happen naturally then just try to strip the slide of clutter.
2. **Decide On A Visual Theme.** Every image-rich presentation needs some kind of theme that runs through it. It is important to decide this before you make any changes, or your imagery will be random and confusing. As an example, when I present on “Selling Solutions for Sales Engineers” one of the key concepts is helping your customer move from their current state to their desired state. Every sales methodology has their own way of explaining this, but fundamentally you are bridging your customer from bad (where they are now) to good (in the future with your solution). So ... my theme for the module is bridges. A rope bridge for a poor solution, a six-lane highway for a clear profitable solution, a foggy bridge for poor vision. You get the idea.

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3. **Print Out Your Presentation.** On each slide write down the key point you want to emphasize. That point will become the focus of the reinforcing imagery. Changing a presentation “on-the-fly” in electronic format is incredibly difficult and you will need the old-fashioned paper copy.
4. **Build the Headlines.** Cross-out the title of each slide and replace it with the equivalent of a newspaper headline. This means changing single-word titles like Alarms, Standards, Architecture and integrations with something more descriptive. Standards becomes “Certified To The Latest ISO-9452 Standards” if that is the important point.
5. **Accept That You May Actually Need More Slides.** You will discover from item #3 that many of your slides should actually be two or three slides. Instead of spending five minutes on a single slide you can spend one minute each on three slides and still get the information transferred in a more efficient, chunked, manner.
6. **You Have to Start Somewhere.** Do not try to change your entire deck at one time. It will be simply overwhelming. Start with the framework which means applying your visual theme to the agenda slide, the grabber slide, introductions to major topics and summary slides. If you're looking for a completely different way to structure your presentation I'd suggest the book *Beyond Bullet Points*. Once you have introduced images into the framework you should stop and familiarize yourself with the deck for a week or two before making any additional changes. Especially the first two-three times you change someone else's deck.

7. **Attack The Screenshots.** If you have a screenshot, make sure it helps to tell your story. Remember that although you know what your product does and how it does it, that may not be immediately obvious to the audience. If there is something very important on a screenshot, highlight it for the audience. It is perfectly acceptable to crop and then expand a screen. As a rule, if you do show a screen it should take up the entire slide.

8. **Attack The Text.** Look for slides which have a large amount of text or a bulletized list of items. Is all that text needed? Instead of listing fifteen different standards that your product or service conforms to, just itemize the two or three which are important to the customer (you did perform discovery, right?). Then support that with a graphic to assist the sticky-ness of your point. You can always place all the other standards you support in the notes so that they are visible to you when in presentation mode.



9. **Review All Existing Images.** Ensure all existing images fit in with your theme. They should follow Best Practices and be legal, relevant and consume at least half the slide. If the image serves no purpose other than to take up space strip it out. If you do find a perfect image but it is not large enough, it is acceptable to repeat it two to three times to emphasize a point.



10. **Test Your Concept.** Test your deck on a projector instead of your laptop, and then test your deck against a colleague's brain rather than your own. Do they get it?

## In Summary

Start slowly, especially when changing someone else's deck. Create a theme that remains constant throughout the presentation so that you are creating a storyline for the audience. First change the framework, simply as many slides as possible and then test out the finished product.

**"The Perfect Presentation is not created when there is nothing left to include, but when there is nothing else you can remove."**

Talking Points is a monthly column authored by John Care, Managing Director of Mastering Technical Sales. For more information on this and other Sales Engineering topics visit the website at [www.masteringtechnicalsales.com](http://www.masteringtechnicalsales.com). To receive the monthly Talking Points Newsletter, email [info@masteringtechnicalsales.com](mailto:info@masteringtechnicalsales.com) or sign up from the front page of the website.

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