"Garr has done it again. Don't go onstage without him." Seth Godin

presentationzen DESIGN

A simple visual approach to presenting in today's world

Garr Reynolds

presentationzen DESIGN

A simple visual approach to presenting in today's world

Garr Reynolds

New Riders
VOICES THAT MATTER™

Presentation Zen Design, Second Edition
A Simple Visual Approach to Presenting in Today's World
Garr Reynolds

New Riders
www.newriders.com

To report errors, please send a note to errata@peachpit.com
New Riders is an imprint of Peachpit, a division of Pearson Education
Copyright © 2014 by Garr Reynolds

Senior Editor: Karyn Johnson
Production Editor: Katerina Malone
Copy Editor: Kelly Kordes Anton
Compositors: Garr Reynolds, Danielle Foster
Proofreader: Rebecca Rider
Indexer: Jack Lewis
Design Consultants: Mayumi Nakamoto, Mimi Heft
Book and Cover Design: Garr Reynolds

Notice of Rights
All rights reserved. No part of this book may be reproduced or transmitted in any form by any means, electronic, mechanical, photocopying, recording, or otherwise, without the prior written permission of the publisher. For information on getting permission for reprints and excerpts, contact permissions@peachpit.com.

Notice of Liability
The information in this book is distributed on an "As Is" basis without warranty. While every precaution has been taken in the preparation of the book, neither the author nor Peachpit shall have any liability to any person or entity with respect to any loss or damage caused or alleged to be caused directly or indirectly by the instructions contained in this book or by the computer software and hardware products described in it.

Trademarks
Many of the designations used by manufacturers and sellers to distinguish their products are claimed as trademarks. Where those designations appear in this book, and Peachpit was aware of a trademark claim, the designations appear as requested by the owner of the trademark. All other product names and services identified throughout this book are used in editorial fashion only and for the benefit of such companies with no intention of infringement of the trademark. No such use, or the use of any trade name, is intended to convey endorsement or other affiliation with this book.

ISBN-13: 978-0-321-93415-4
ISBN-10: 0-321-93415-6

9 8 7 6 5 4 3 2 1

Printed and bound in the United States of America

To our children, who remind us always
to embrace the beginner's mind.

Table of Contents

Acknowledgments, vii

INTRODUCTION
Design Matters, 5

COMPONENTS
Presenting with Type, 29
Communicating with Color, 63
Using Images to Tell Stories, 93
Making an Impact with Video, 127
Simplifying the Data, 147

PRINCIPLES
Seeing and Using Space, 181
Creating Purpose and Focus, 203
Achieving Harmony, 221

THE JOURNEY
Slide Samples, 241
Continuous Improvement, 257

Photo Credits, 272
Index, 273

Photo: TEDxKyoto, Mai Morokawa.

Acknowledgments

This book would not have been possible without a lot of help and support. I'd like to thank the following people for their contributions and encouragement:

Nancy Duarte and Mark Duarte and all the wonderful staff at Duarte, Inc., in Silicon Valley, including Paula Tesch and Tracy Barba, for their support.

At New Riders: My great editor Karyn Johnson for her fantastic suggestions and unbelievable patience. Mimi Heft for her help with the design and the cover. Katerina Malone (production editor) for her talent and patience, as well as Danielle Foster for her great production work. Sara Jane Todd for her wonderful marketing efforts.

Guy Kawasaki, Seth Godin, Daniel Pink, Jim Quirk, and Deryn Verity for their enlightened advice and content in the early stages of the process.

To Jumpei Matsuoka and all the cool people at both iStockphoto.com and Pixta for their tremendous support with the images and the special offers that are included at the back of this book.

Designer Mayumi Nakamoto for always being there when I need her.

The Design Matters Japan and business community, including Toru Yamada, Shigeki Yamamoto, Tom Perry, Darren Saunders, Daniel Rodriguez, David Baldwin, Nathan Bryan, Jiri Mestecky, Doug Schafer, Barry Louie, Michael Bobrove, and Keizo Yamada. Thanks to Markuz Wernli Saito for his beautiful garden photos. To Daniel Kwintner and IDA Japan for their contribution.

To Patrick Newell for his contribution and friendship.

A special thanks to Scott Kelby, John McWade, Maureen Stone, Stephen Few, David S. Rose, and Nancy Duarte for their very kind contributions to the book.

Back in the States, a big thank you to those who contributed ideas and support, including Debbie Thorn, CZ Robertson, and to my buddies in Silicon Valley, Ric Bretschneider and Howard Cooperstein. Also to Mark and Liz Reynolds for picking me up in the snow.

Thank you to Mark Templeton and the amazing folks at Citrix.

I'd like to thank the thousands of subscribers to the Presentation Zen blog and to all the blog readers who have contacted me over the years to share their stories and examples, including Les Posen in Australia and Olivia Mitchell in New Zealand.

A very big thank you to Reiko Hiromoto at Kansai Gaidai University for her insights and suggestions.

Although I could not include all the slides in this book, I want to thank all the people who submitted sample slides, including Jeff Brenman, Pierre Morsa, Scott B. Schwertly, Dr. Aisyah Saad Abdul Rahim, Marty Neumeier, Nancy Duarte, Naveen Sinha, Dr. Bonnie Bassler, and Elissa Fink and all the talented guys at Tableau Software.

And of course my biggest supporter in all of this is my wife Ai, who is always understanding and supportive (and who kept me well fed, too).

I am blessed indeed to be surrounded by such great people. Hontoni Arigatou!

4

Using Images to Tell Stories

When I was 17, I created my first multimedia presentation. It consisted of slides for a big project for my high school biology class. The presentation was on issues related to the effects of pollution on the environment. The slide show was a visual affirmation of all the natural beauty around us juxtaposed with the needless manmade destruction to showcase the hypocrisy of human actions.

I created this presentation before the dawn of the digital age, when personal computers were not yet used in schools. So, when I say slides I mean real slides: 35mm transparencies that loaded into a round slide projector called a carousel. The presentation used two carousels working in sync to achieve the effect of a smooth cross-dissolve transition between slides. I added a prerecorded sound track and synchronized the music and images with the transitions on a single screen. It was simple, beautifully visual, and highly effective. The resolution of the photographic images was fantastic. It looked nearly as good as anything created today—but it was a ton of work and the presentation could not really be shared unless I lugged around a bunch of equipment with my teacher's help.

This was about eight years before Microsoft released PowerPoint, so I had no examples of how to create and deliver a multimedia presentation. Instead, I tried to glean visual storytelling and reporting techniques from network news programs and documentary films. The idea of using bullet points and long lines of text never occurred to me. The slides, after all, were to be a visual complement to the narrative. The slides were meant to illustrate, show evidence, and evoke emotions. I told the story.

Instead of titles and bullet points, my instructor talked about research, evidence, structure, and story—about having a point that moves people from point A to point B. The photographic slides produced by my 35mm camera were the only visuals I was allowed to use for the assignment.

Because film was expensive—and I had to wait two weeks for the slides to return from the lab—I thought carefully about the story I wanted to tell and the types of images I needed to support my argument, make my case, and tell my story. Only after I did my research and completed the plan on paper, did I set out with my camera to find evidence of the problem, taking pictures of what society had to lose (the beauty) and evidence of the threats to it (the pollution).

Long before I ever heard of concepts such as the cognitive load theory or the dual channels of cognition, like most students, I knew intuitively and through experience that quality images plus narration was better than narration plus a lot of text onscreen, even though I was years away from experiencing "death by PowerPoint."

These slides are from an updated version of that first multimedia presentation I did back in high school. I used the lyrics from a Tower of Power song called "Can't Stand to See the Slaughter" to introduce the theme of the talk. (Images in slides from iStockphoto.com.)

The Visual Matters

Traditional literacy is important, of course, but today multimedia literacy—text, audio, and images, including video—is just as important for learning, teaching, and communicating both complex and simple ideas. Some might consider it even more important. Multimedia is immediate and rich, and it enables us to amplify and clarify the meaning of content in ways text or narration alone cannot. The language of the 21st century includes images like never before. The legendary Will Eisner writes in his book *Graphic Storytelling and Visual Narrative* (W.W. Norton & Co., 2008): "The proliferation of the use of images as a communicant was propelled by the growth of technology that required less in text-reading skills...visual literacy has entered the panoply of skills required for communication in this century."

High-quality images make it possible for us to become true digital storytellers. The late Dana Atchley, the father of the digital storytelling movement, coined the term *digital storytelling* and according to him, "...digital storytelling combines the best of two worlds: the 'new world' of digitized video, photography, and art, and the 'old world' of telling stories. This means the 'old world' of PowerPoint slides filled with bullet point statements will be replaced by a new world of examples via stories, accompanied by evocative images and sounds."

Atchley was right. While there are still too many uninspiring presentations that use a strict bulleted format or are overly cluttered, more and more people are getting the message about the need to become better storytellers. They are starting to understand the profound power the effective use of multimedia has for helping us tell better stories.

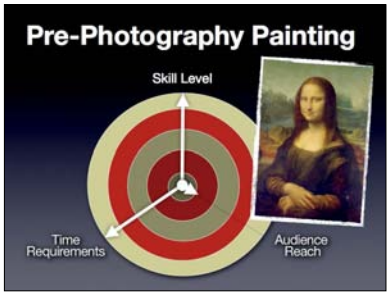
Storytelling is a shared experience between speaker and listener. Images can help make that experience more powerful because they help us connect better with our audience. In the book *Going Visual* (Wiley, 2005), authors Alexis Gerard and Bob Goldstein have this to say about using images:

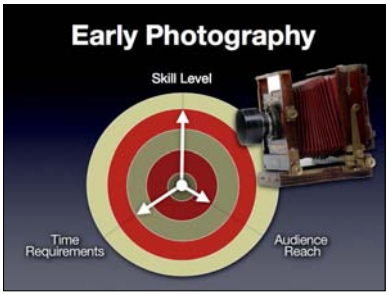
> *...images have a unique power not just to convey information, but also to build unity and consensus around that information to promote action and decision making.... Because images are complete and detailed and deliver an information experience that has greater impact than words, a common base of visual information proves to be the most efficient form of shared experience from which to make decisions.*

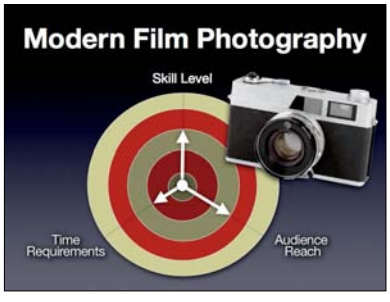
Gerard and Goldstein explain that the evolution of visual communication technology consists of three main elements:

- Skill level—technology has made visual communication easier to produce.
- Time requirements—creating and using images takes less time today.
- Audience reach—technology now allows us to communicate with more people visually.

In one of my past presentations I showed the evolution of visual communication as explained in *Going Visual.* To do this, I created these simple slides that were very effective at instantly showing that we have indeed come a long way in the evolution of visual communication.



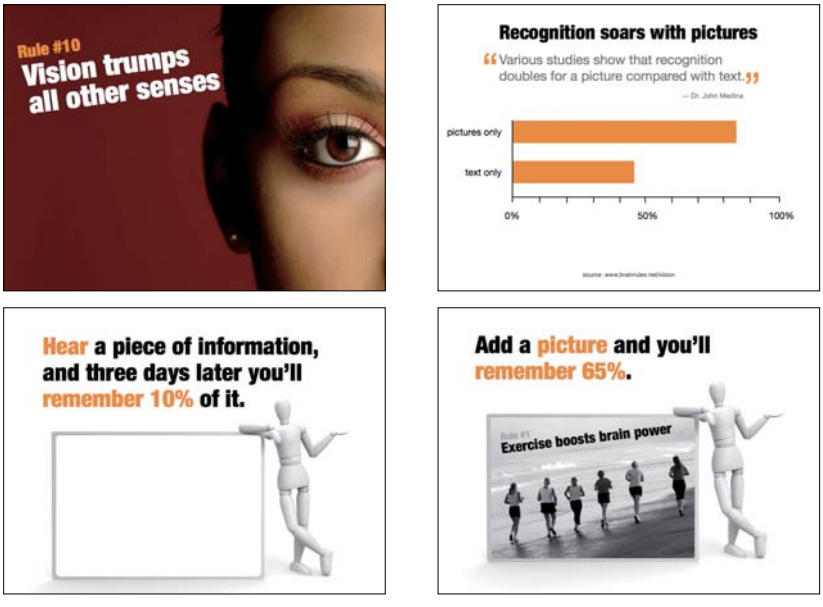




Slides adapted from *Going Visual* by Gerard and Goldstein. (Images in slides from iStockphoto.com.*)*

We Are Visual Beings

Vision is our most powerful sense. Therefore, designing messages that include images is a highly effective way to get people's attention and help them understand and remember your content. Most live slideware presentations today still contain a lot of text. However, according to Dr. John Medina, author of the best-selling *Brain Rules: 12 Principles for Surviving and Thriving at Work, Home, and School* (Pear Press, 2008), this is inefficient because our brains are not as good at identifying letters and words as identifying and remembering pictures. Says Medina, "Professionals everywhere need to know about the incredible inefficiency of text-based information and the incredible effects of images." Dr. Medina says that all professionals should "burn their current PowerPoint presentations" and instead create slides that take advantage of our incredible ability to understand images. Each presentation case is different; however, evidence shows that we should strongly consider the use of images in the design of presentation visuals.



Slides adapted from *Brain Rules* by Dr. John Medina.
(Images in slides from iStockphoto.com.)

Power of the Photograph

I love still images because the photograph captures a moment in time, allowing the viewer to slow down and think and wonder and reflect. Many filmmakers—especially documentary filmmakers—use still photos as a complement to motion pictures or video. Photos allow for greater emphasis and may have less distracting elements, giving the presenter or narrator/filmmaker more freedom to augment the photo for a desired effect. Still images also allow the viewer time to interpret their own meaning from the image. We can learn a lot from documentary film, especially from the kind created by Ken Burns, whose films rely heavily on still images.

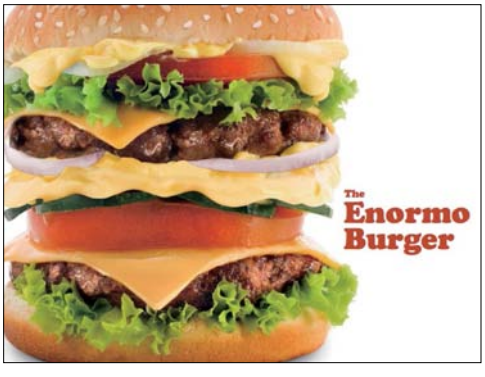
One tip is to avoid the usage of imagery only as ornamentation. What you see in a Ken Burns film is a simple and powerful use of photos and other imagery that support the narrative and illuminate the story on a visceral level, thereby making the experience richer and more memorable. When we hear a story that is amplified by compelling photography, the issue in the story becomes less of an abstraction. The issue becomes more concrete and emotional. The next time you give a presentation about an important but complex topic—especially a social issue—see if you can illuminate the general topic by focusing on a particular story. This is a technique that storytellers, such as filmmakers, often use. Powerful images plus thoughtful narration—and maybe even a bit of text—can help you tell your story in ways that bullet points never can.

The use of large images in these slides make an especially powerful impact. (Images in slides from iStockphoto.com.)

Full-bleed images offer ultimate impact

Margins around an image give it a sort of protective frame. When you compare two or more images on slides, margins are necessary to clearly differentiate among the images. Generally, however, people use images that are too small, making it hard for audiences to see the content, thereby reducing the impact of the photo.

When it makes sense to do so, I suggest you *bleed* images off the edge of the slide frame. That is, fill the entire slide area with the image. (Bleed is actually a term that comes from the printing world. In a book like this one, when you want to fill an entire page with an image, you must use an image that is just a tiny bit larger than the area of the page. In other words, you bleed the image off the page to make sure none of the underlying paper color shows through the trimmed page, which would destroy the effect.) With slides, all you need is an image that is exactly the same size as the slide. If your slides are 1024 x 768 pixels, for example, then the dimensions of the image need to be at least this large to fill the screen. A full-bleed or full-screen image gives the illusion that the slide is bigger than it is. This is especially true if part of the subject in your image runs off the screen. For example, a burger shop may make a poster featuring a picture of their "Enormo Burger," but with part of the burger bleeding off the edge to suggest that it's so big it can't fit within the frame. This makes the image more compelling and it draws the viewer in.



The image in this slide bleeds off the edges, making the slide feel bigger. (Image in slides from iStockphoto.com.)

Here is an example of a smaller image producing less impact. Which slide better reflects the idea of an enormous burger?

Here, the image is framed against the background slide template. The background is a distration.

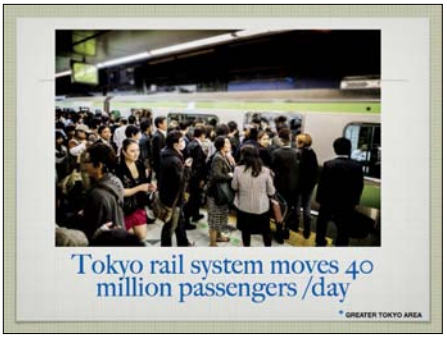
Using a white background creates more of a formal border, which emphasizes the photo.

This is a partial bleed. The photo makes a bigger impression, yet still has a border at the bottom.

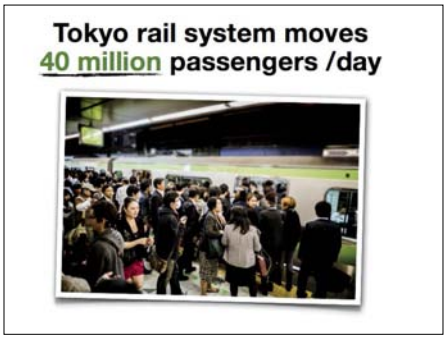
I prefer a white partial border as it seems more harmonious with this image and more professional.

With a full-bleed (or full-screen) image, the background slide is gone. Now the image becomes the background and the type becomes part of the image, creating a more dynamic, engaging visual that is easily seen from the back of the room.

Here, the image is rather small and the background template from the slideware is “noisy” due to all the gridlines.



The image is at least larger, as is the text, but it is still not a very clean slide.



This is not bad. The template is gone and the image has a frame, which makes it seem like a snapshot from the station. The text is easy to see.

Here, the image is even larger, filling the whole screen from left to right, and the text looks good. The highlight color (green) is taken from the train.

Now the image takes up the entire screen for a more dynamic effect. The type is easy to see in both cases, but a black box is added to the version on the right for even better legibility.

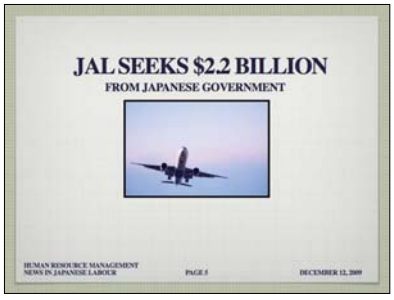
BEFORE

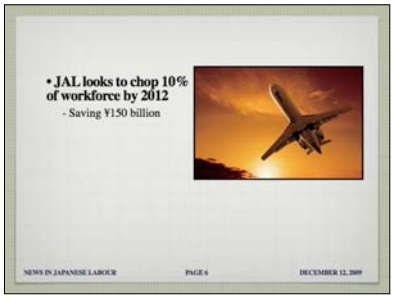
This is an example of taking a busy slide and breaking it up over several slides (in this case, four slides). The slide on the left repeats many of the things the presenter will share with the audience before he describes the efficient rail system that moves an incredible amount of people all around the city each day. But instead of using loads of text on a slide, he uses large dynamic visuals in harmony with the flow of his narrative. There are now four slides. First he explains what is meant by "Greater Tokyo." Then he takes the audience onto the train platform to give them a feel for the crowds. The slide than fades to a blurry version of the same photo so that the text—his key point— can be seen easily. The last side appears as he emphasizes just how large a number 40 million is by comparing it to the population of New Zealand.

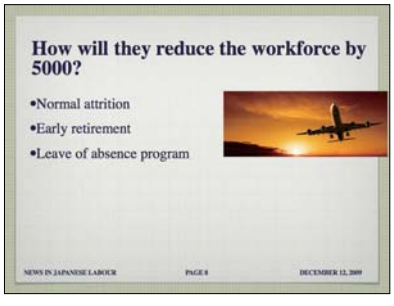
AFTER

(Images in slides from iStockphoto.com.)

BEFORE





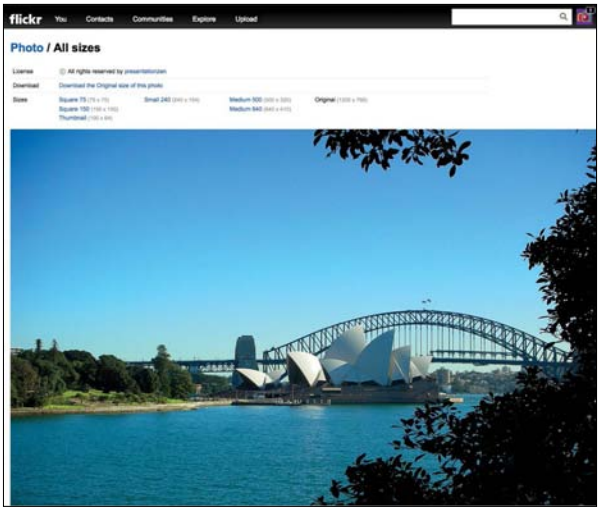


AFTER

The slides in the left column are the originals. Note how the message in each slide has greater impact when the image fills the slide (right column). (Images in slides from iStockphoto.com.)

The ideal resolution for projection

As a general rule, use images that are 72 ppi to 100 ppi with dimensions that are the same or very close to the slide dimensions. For example, 800 x 600 or 1024 x 768 when you want to use an image that fills your entire slide (a slide with an aspect ratio of 4:3). For slides with a more cinematic aspect ratio of 16:9—an aspect ratio increasingly common at large events such as TED or professional conferences—photos may need to be at least 1280 x 720, a popular resolution for a 16:9 screen.

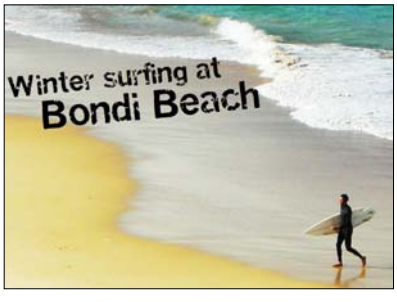


Flickr offers millions of searchable images with a Creative Commons license. When you find an image you like, right-click (Control-click) the image to see all the sizes available for that image. In the example on the left (one of my snaps from Sydney), the largest size in this case is 1200 x 768. My slide dimensions are 1024 x 768, so this image will work fine. Once in slideware (below left) you can see that the image is a bit wider than the slide, but I can simply move the image to the left to get the framing I want. Simple.

Improve images through cropping

Cropping is a technique for reframing or adjusting the composition of an original photograph. Of course, it's always better to take the perfect shot or purchase the perfect image, but that does not always happen. Cropping changes the image to better suit your needs. For example, you may have images of interesting subjects, but the composition is not what you had hoped. I have loads of holiday snapshots that are not that great, but can be improved with a bit of cropping.

I took this shot of Bondi Beach in Australia a few years ago using a simple digital point-and-shoot camera. The original resolution was 300 ppi, measuring 2816 x 2112 pixels. The size of the file was 4.2 MB. For images that will be placed in slideware, a resolution of 72 ppi or 96 ppi is usually fine. So I first reduced the resolution to 72 ppi, which decreased the file size to 1.9 MB. Next, I decreased the dimensions of the slide to something closer to 1024 x 768, the size of my slides, using basic photo-editing software. Because I started with such a large image, however, I can go inside the photograph and frame it in a way that is a little more interesting and specific. Using the cropping tool, I selected an area of the photograph that shows only the surfer, leaving plenty of empty space in case I want to place text inside the image. Now, the image measures just a bit over 1024 x 768 and the JPEG file size is about 300 KB. I could reduce the file size further through more compression, but this would decrease the quality of the image.



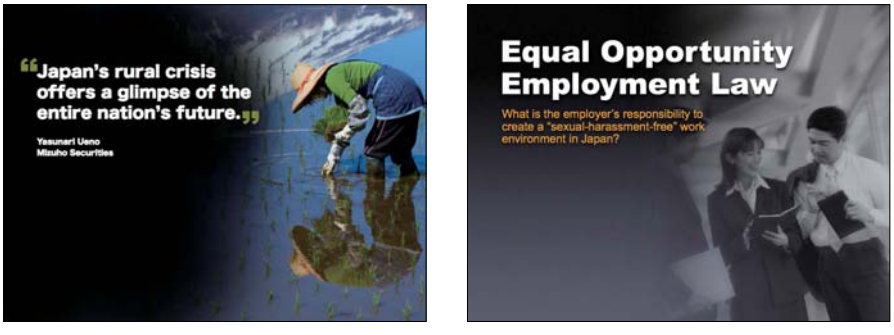
The large image is the original snap I took at the beach. The image below is the cropped version of the image, which is now the same size as the slide on the right (1024 x 768 at 72 ppi).

Basic image file types

Of the many different image file formats, you really only need to be familiar with a few:

- **JPEG.** The most common image file format you will work with is JPEG (.jpg). JPEG stands for Joint Photographic Experts Group, but you do not need to remember that part. Just remember that JPEGs (jay-pegs) use "lossy" compression, which means that a bit of image quality is lost during compression. Usually, the loss in picture quality is only noticeable when you are using a high level of compression. JPEG is the preferred format for photographs used on Web pages. Small JPEGs may look great on a Web site, but they usually look horrible if you significantly increase the image size for a slide. When you're selecting large images for slides, make sure the size and resolution of the original image will work. JPEG compression does a good job with photographs, especially when you have lots of colors blending into each other, soft shadows, and so on.

- **PNG.** PNG, which stands for Portable Network Graphics, features lossless compression. While I most often use JPEGs for onscreen presentations in slideware, I do occasionally use the PNG (.png) format to achieve a transparency effect, such as those shown below.

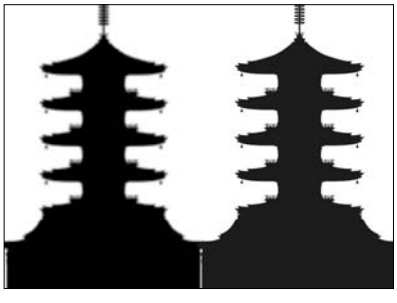


The images in these slides are PNG files. I created the gradient transparency effect in Photoshop. The PNG and TIFF formats support these kinds of transparency effects. (Images in slides from iStockphoto.com.)

- **TIFF.** If you need to print images, I recommend the TIFF format (.tif), which stands for Tagged Image File Format. Use TIFF files for printing images in CMYK. (TIFF files can include an alpha channel for transparency effects and can work in slideware, but the TIFF files are much larger than PNG files.) TIFF files can be compressed without losing picture quality; however, compared to JPEGs, TIFF files can be much larger. Larger file sizes will not usually create problems, especially with newer computers, but there is no reason to create unnecessarily large files. On older computers, larger image files can slow things down a bit.

- **GIF.** GIF, which stands for Graphics Interchange Format, is a file format used mainly for the Web. The GIF format may be appropriate for line art with very sharp edges and large areas of the same color. GIF reduces the colors in an image down to 256, so it is not good for photographs.

- **EPS.** EPS stands for Encapsulated PostScript. You may run into the EPS format when you purchase line art or vector graphics or create your own line drawings in an application such as Adobe Illustrator. An EPS file can hold photographic information as well, but you are most likely to see this format used for vector graphics. The advantage of vector graphics is that you can greatly increase the image scale without decreasing the image quality. To illustrate this, I took a vector graphic from iStockphoto and converted a copy of it to a small bitmap (JPEG) image. When I scale up the bitmap image, you see the quality is reduced as the pixels get larger. The vector image, however, looks great scaled because it uses mathematical formulas to make sure all the points on the paths maintain their original relationships. The EPS format is good for drawings, but for photographs you'll stick primarily with good-quality JPEG files.



In this slide, the image on the left is a small JPEG that I stretched, resulting in some horrible pixelation. The vector version of the image on the right stays crisp at any size.

John McWade

Designer, author, world's first desktop publisher

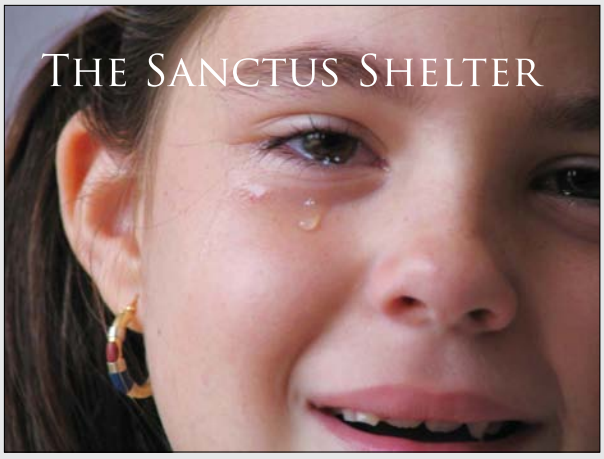
www.bamagazine.com

John McWade is the founder and creative director of Before & After *magazine and the author of numerous books on graphic design. His latest book is* Before & After: How to Design Cool Stuff *(Peachpit Press, 2010).*

Picture your presentation

Better than charts and bullet points, photographs give your audience an emotional connection to your words. As presenters, we *love* data! Fifty-two base hits, 23 abandoned children, Class 3 hurricanes. We track data, we analyze it, we graph it—and we cheerfully present it to snoozing audiences everywhere. What's funny is that data alone has no value. Only in the context of real life does it have meaning. And real life is conveyed best not with data but with *story.*

To tell a story, you need the help of photos. Photos communicate on many channels. They wordlessly *draw the audience into your world,* make emotional connections, and prepare your listeners for what you have to say.



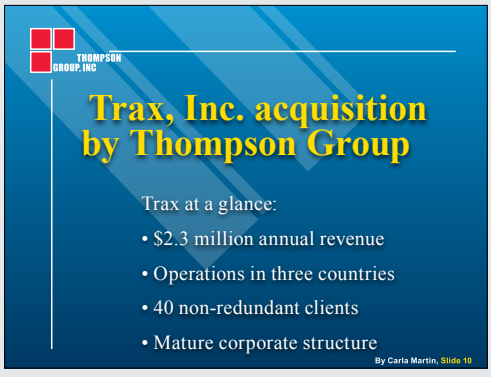
It's easy to find generically happy images, but the unseen sadness that everyone bears will rattle each audience member's soul. When pitching a program like the proposed shelter above, think first not in terms of dollars or "social units" or other statistical data but about who you're helping and why—then find an image to express it.

The top slide consists of only a fancy list of notes. The bottom slide with the orange inside the apple is surprising and familiar at the same time. The simple question—not a statement—gets the audience thinking and ready for what you'll say next.

You are the show

The first thing to understand is that you are the show; your audience has come to hear you, not read slides. Use a slide to fill the listener's mind with an image, then fill in the details orally. It's fun!

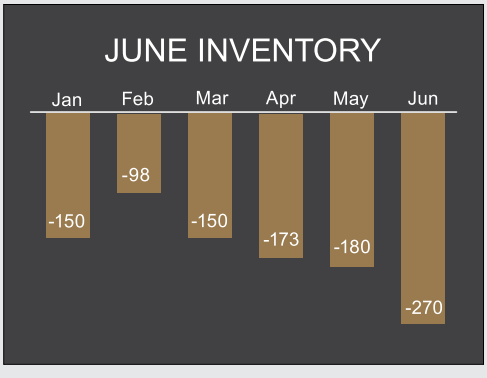
BEFORE



This slide, which is basically the presentation notes, is visually useless. The information is fine, but it should come from you, where it can be accompanied by your personality, body language, and nuance. The correct use of a slide is to make a visual statement that words alone can't make.

AFTER

Use a metaphorical image. Many topics don't have literal imagery that can be photographed. In these cases, you might try using visual metaphors. Think of your talk as having chapters, and use an image to introduce each one. The image provides a visual "hook" for the audience, who will relate everything you say back to the image.



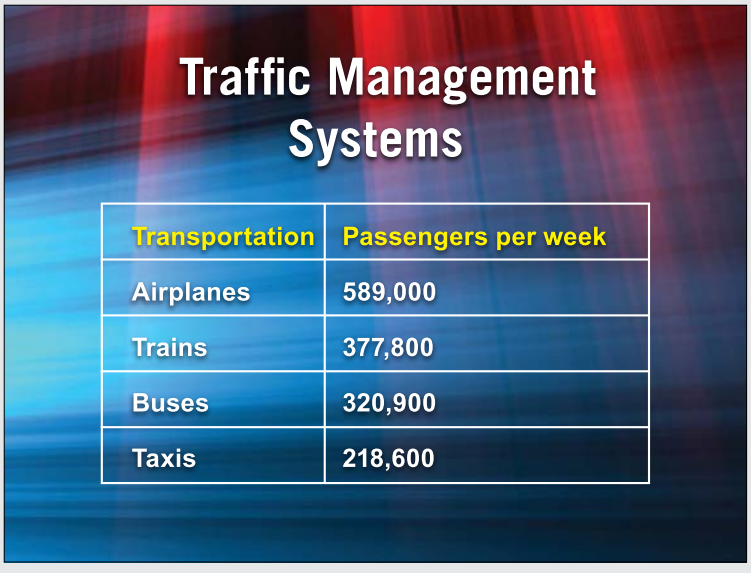
Although it has no photo, this is a good slide because the chart is simple and clearly shows a trend. But oy vey! It's been a terrible year! It started bad and got worse, and, well, it's now so bad that the only thing to do is laugh…

…which is what a carefully selected image will have your audience doing. They'll remember this picture long after they've forgotten your charts, and because it's funny, you'll have their sympathy if not their help in solving your problems.

One thought at a time

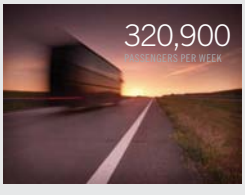
Make one point per slide, even if you have room for more. This gives the viewer room to think and to "own" what you're saying, which are keys to good communication.

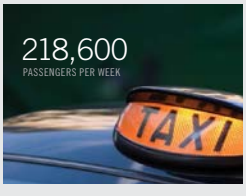
BEFORE



Planes, trains, buses, taxis, 589,000; 377,800; 320,900; 218,600—quick! got all that? It's useful information, but who will be moved by it, much less remember it? Put the data on four slides, one topic per slide, each accompanied by a descriptive, full-screen photo. This gives your viewer room to think and to own what you're saying.

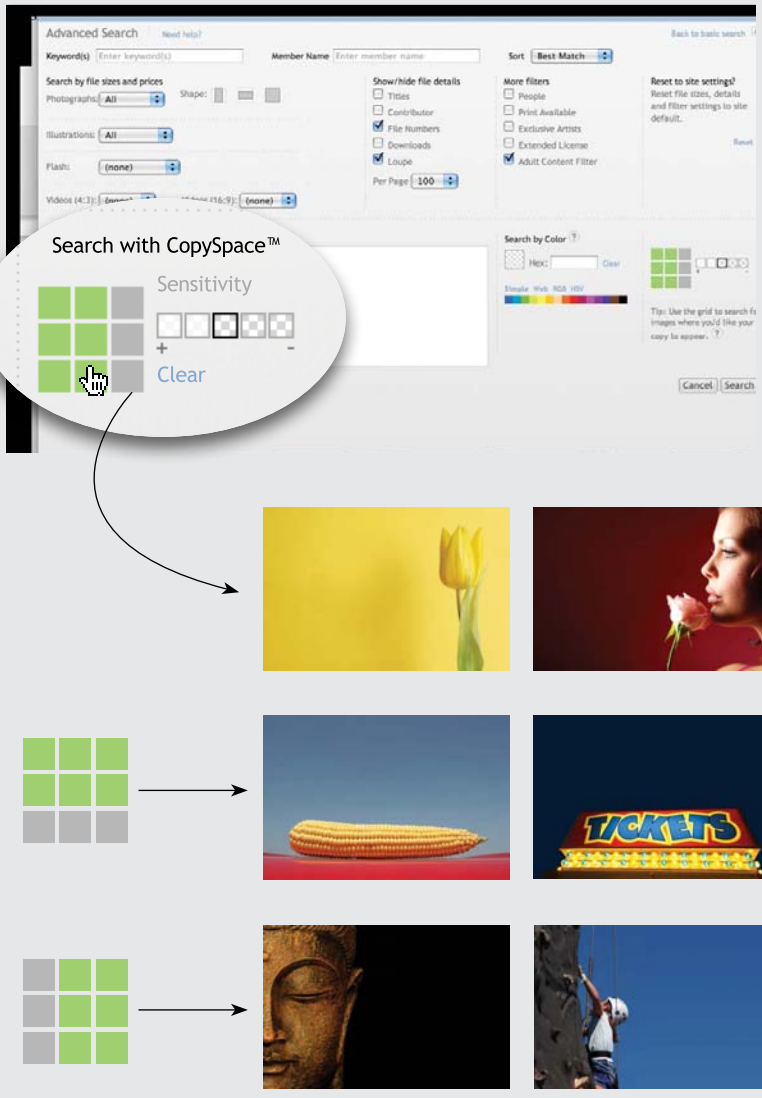
AFTER





Search using iStockphoto's CopySpace™

How does one find good photos? The artistic part is up to you, but iStockphoto's Search with CopySpace function can help with composition. Enter a keyword, specify what part of the photo you want to leave space for words, and click.



Advanced Search
Need help?

First, create a free account to use iStockphoto, then:

1. Click Advanced Search.
2. In Search with CopySpace, click grid squares to specify areas of the photo to remain blank (clicked squares turn green).
3. Enter a keyword such as "face" and watch what happens.

It's cool.

Common Image Mistakes

With the ubiquity of digital cameras and smartphones, and the plethora of photo Web sites, more people than ever are using images in presentations. That's good, but unfortunately, people often make the same mistakes with their images when using them in a slide presentation. We'll look at a few here.

Top things to avoid when using images

Let's imagine you are preparing a presentation for a large audience on current issues in Japanese education. One issue facing schools and universities in Japan today is the decreasing number of potential students. The source of the problem is low fertility rates, resulting in fewer children being born. So our sample slide touches on the low fertility rate in Japan in this context. For an effective slide, you could use either a full-bleed image like the one below of the two elementary students walking, or a smaller photograph of a school yard in Japan. We'll use the photo of the two kids walking to school as a starting point and then discuss the ten common mistakes to avoid.

Either of these two slides could work. Notice how the use of the images in these slides sharply contrasts with their use in the examples that follow. (Images in slides from iStockphoto.com.)

1. Image dimensions are too small

You do not have to do a full bleed with an image, but this particular image does not work at such a small size. (The slide is 800 x 600 while this image is 373 x 176.)

2. Image is placed randomly on the slide

The image is large enough to be seen easily, but it's placed willy-nilly on the slide. Usually, this causes the text to be lost in the background (although in this case the text is still legible) and the image placement appears accidental.

3. Image is almost full screen—but not quite

Nothing should look accidental. This looks like the presenter was going for a full bleed but just missed. Now, the slide's background template can be seen just enough to become a bit of noise. Make sure that your full-bleed images are indeed full bleed (that is, they fill 100 percent of the screen).

4. Image is pixelated due to low resolution

This happens when you take a low-resolution image (such as a JPEG from a Web site) and stretch it out. Oh, the humanity! Make sure you use an image that is large enough for your purposes.

5. Using several small images in one slide

It's better for your audience if you use *one* (or perhaps two) large images rather than several small images. In most cases you get more impact and clarity from one clear, large image. (On your computer screen the images may look big enough, but that's because your nose is about 18 inches from the screen.) Using several images may introduce noise as well.

6. Image is pixelated and has a watermark

Even worse than using a pixelated image is taking a free preview from a photo Web site and stretching it out. This introduces distracting visual noise and communicates that you are cheap, lazy, or both. If you cannot afford images or do not have a camera or other image source, then it's better to use no images at all.

7. Image is distorted

Horizontal or vertical image stretching is all too common. This distortion occurs when people stretch an image to make it fit the dimensions of a slide without making sure the proportions stays constant. The image becomes a distraction and looks odd. (Are young Japanese students really 8 feet tall, or so wide?)

8. Use of the tile feature

Just because the software lets you tile an image, does not mean you should. Now the background image has too much going on (even if it did not have watermarks).

9. Use of clip art

Avoid off-the-shelf clip art. Your own sketches and drawings can be a refreshing change if used consistently throughout the visuals, but generic clip art is so last century.

10. Image is a cliché or unrelated to the content

What do two businessmen shaking hands have to do with the fertility rate in Japan? Nothing. Yet even if the presentation is about a business partnership, the image is still a cliché.

11. The background image has too much going on and the text is hard to see

Sometimes, the image is actually pretty good, but it needs a little work to get the text to pop out more. The slide below on the left is not horrible, but the balance is off and the text is a little difficult to read. For the slide on the right, the image is cropped for better balance, giving more space for the text to breathe. In addition, the text is now in a transparent box so it pops out a bit more.

You don’t take a photograph, you make it.

— Ansel Adams

Making Your Own Images

You can purchase images or obtain them legally from various sources, but it's likely that you have your own camera as well. If you're working on a professional-level presentation, you may want to purchase good shots or hire a photographer. In many cases, however, you will be able to use your own photographs.

You may not be the world's greatest photographer, but that's OK. You can learn to get better. One of the keys to good shots—like design itself—is to keep things simple. Scott Kelby is a leading authority on digital photography and he says that clutter and distraction are the things that most often kill properly exposed shots.

> *Look for simplicity in your backgrounds, in your people shots, in your architectural elements, in every aspect—the simpler the surroundings, the more powerful the impact.... Look for the absence of distraction. Look for the absence of clutter and noise, watch for distracting elements that sneak into the top and sides of your frame, and create some photos that have great impact—not because of what they have, but because of what they don't have—lots of junk.*
>
> *— Scott Kelby*

On the next four pages, photographer Scott Kelby offers valuable tips for taking better photos.

Scott Kelby

Photographer and editor-in-chief of both *Photoshop User* and *Layers* magazines, and president of the National Association of Photoshop Professionals (NAPP)

www.scottkelby.com

Scott Kelby is the world's No. 1 best-selling author of computer and technology books, and is the author of the all-time best-selling book on digital photography: The Digital Photography Book, Volume 1 *(Peachpit Press, 2006). Here Scott gives simple tips for taking better photos.*

10 tricks for getting better-looking photos

A lot of people have been going through a very frustrating experience with their digital cameras. They started with a small 3 or 4 megapixel point-and-shoot compact camera, and they were disappointed with the images they were getting. So they went out and bought a newer point-and-shoot, or a more expensive Digital SLR camera (with interchangeable lenses) that's 10 or 12 megapixels and now they're disappointed with their larger-size images. The problem is, it's not about the camera. They both take pictures of whatever you aim them at.

However, the fact that it's "not about the camera" is good news for all of us, because that means that no matter which camera you own, you can learn to take better-looking photos now, today—and here. I've included some of my favorite tips for doing just that.

1. Getting better portraits outside

Direct sunlight creates really harsh shadows—it's about the most unflattering light you can shoot someone in (only photograph people you don't like in direct sunlight). So, how do you get around this? Have your subject step into the shade. Under a tree, under an overhang, or any place where they're in complete shade (with no dapples of light coming through the branches of the tree). The difference is pretty staggering. In the example you see below, on the left our subject is standing in direct sunlight. On the right, I had her move under a tree about 30 feet away. That's the only thing that I did differently, and look at the results.

2. Where to put your subject in the photo

When we first started taking photos of people, at some point somebody told us to make sure that our subject is in the center of the photo. That's how your average person takes a "people photo," which is one reason why these photos look so average. If you look at photos taken by professional photographers, you'll notice they usually place the person on the left or right side of the photo, rather than in the center. This adds interest and energy to the photo, and focuses your attention right on the subject

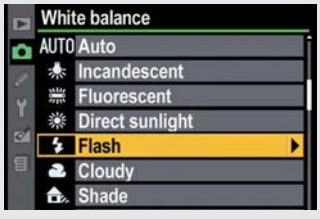
(try this next time you're shooting a portrait—you'll be amazed at what a difference this one little thing makes).

3. The secret to shooting in low light

If you're shooting in a church, or at night, or even at dawn or dusk, you're going to get blurry photos. That's because the shutter needs to stay open longer to let more light in, and even the tiniest little movement on your part guarantees a blurry photo. The way around this is to put your camera on a tripod, which simply holds your camera steady. You don't have to buy an expensive one; my most famous photo was taken with a $14 tripod I bought at Walmart when I forget my regular tripod while on vacation.

4. The trick to getting great color

If you look at your photos, and they all look too blue, or too green, or too yellow, you're not alone. It's a common problem with digital cameras, but it's so easy to fix. All you have to do is change your camera's White Balance setting for the light you're shooting in. For example, if you're shooting in the shade, everything's going to have a blue tint to it. But if you change the White Balance setting to Shade it changes the color so it looks great. If you're shooting indoors, change it to the Indoor setting (usually an icon of a light bulb). Shooting in an office? To keep everybody from looking green, change the White Balance to Fluorescent. If you're outside, you can just leave it set to Auto. Make setting the White Balance a part of your shooting routine, and your color will finally look great, no matter where you're shooting.



5. Better shots with your pop-up flash

That flash on top of your camera is really harsh. In fact, it may be the only light more harsh than direct sunlight, but there is something you can do to make it much more flattering. A company called LumiQuest (www.lumiquest.com) makes a small diffuser called a Soft Screen that fits over your camera's pop-up flash to soften and diffuse the light. The results you get are dramatically better—and your pictures are much more flattering to the subjects.

6. Don't make this mistake when shooting portraits

One of the biggest mistakes people make when taking portraits is that they leave too much room above the subject's head. Ideally, your subject's eyes would be in the top third of the photo, and your subject would pretty much fill the frame. Also, it's OK to crop off the top of your subject's head a bit (just look at the ads in any magazine), but never chop off his or her chin. Also, the most important thing to have in focus is your subject's eyes, so make sure your focus point is on the eyes (this goes for shooting wildlife, too).

7. Golden rule of landscape photography

If you want much better landscape photos, the trick is to shoot your landscape in beautiful light, and that light happens twice a day: around sunrise and sunset. These are the only two times professional landscape photographers will even take landscape photos—that's how big a difference it makes (and that's why the pros call these two times of day "The Golden Hours"). Also, these are two times of day when

the light will be lower, so you'll also need to shoot these shots on a tripod to keep from having blurry photos. Do these two things, and you'll be amazed at the difference in your photos (and so will your friends).

8. Use your camera's presets

If you want average-looking photos, leave your camera set to what your average camera owner does: Auto mode. But, if you want to take the quality of your images up a big notch, just turn the dial on the top of your camera to match

what you're shooting. When you do this, it changes your camera to the optimum settings for what you're shooting. If you're shooting people, switch that dial on top to the little icon of a person. Simple. If you're shooting a landscape, switch it to landscape (the icon usually looks like mountains). For shooting something really close up (like a flower), switch it to the flower icon. You'll be surprised at what a difference this makes, yet most people never spend the two seconds it takes to make this simple change.

9. Where to put the horizon line

When shooting a landscape, your average person puts the horizon line right in the center of the photo, right? Right. But if you don't want an average-looking photo, put your horizon line either at the top third of your photo or the bottom third. How do you know which one to use? If the sky is interesting with lots of clouds, put the horizon line at the bottom, so you see more sky. If you've got a boring, cloudless sky, put the horizon line at the top third, so you see more foreground instead. It's as simple as that. Just remember; there's a reason they call it "dead" center.

10. Change your vantage point

One thing that makes photos look average is that we all pretty much take our photos from the same view—standing. If we walk up on a flower, we shoot down at it from a standing position. If we're shooting a photo of our children, we stand there and shoot down on them. That's how we regularly see them, so the photos look regular. A great trick to make your photos more interesting is to simply change your angle to one that isn't so average. Get down on one knee to shoot your children at their eye view. Shoot flowers down low—at their level, so you show a view most folks don't see. Shoot down from a stairway on a street scene. This simple change of perspective gives a fresh, more professional look to your images.

To create a more interesting composition, put your horizon line either at the top third of your photo or the bottom third.

BEFORE

Here is another example of taking one busy slide with small, hard-to-see images and breaking it up into several slides. The examples below serve as a dynamic backdrop for the presenter as he discusses the great shift of people in and out of Tokyo. In this case, the presenter uses four slides, which he advances smoothly with his narrative, to create a more dynamic and even cinematic effect.

AFTER

(Images in slides from iStockphoto.com.)

In Sum

- Avoid using imagery only as ornamentation. When we hear a story amplified by compelling photography, the issue becomes less of an abstraction and more concrete. It is emotional and it is memorable. Try to illuminate the general by focusing on the particular in your choice of imagery.
- Use full-bleed (full-screen) images for greater impact and try cropping images to create more compelling photographs.
- Don't be afraid to take your own photographs and use them in your presentations. Keep in mind that one of the keys to taking great shots is to "keep it simple," a lesson you can apply to many aspects of design.
- Try taking one busy slide and breaking the information up over several slides to match your narrative flow.

Index

Numbers

3D effects, charts/graphs, 151, 162
5 x 4 (five-column/four-row) grids, 227
10-minute rule, 133

A

Achromatic (+1) color themes, 75
Aesthetic principles, 231–233
Analog scrapbooks, 268
Analogous color relationships, 74
Animated graphics, 173–174
Apostrophes, use of, 56–57
Art classes, 269
Aspect ratio, 105, 140–143
Asymmetry, 189–190, 209
Awareness, personal kaizen, 259

B

Background
  avoiding tile fixture, 116
  consistent themes in, 223
  creating perspective with, 205
  low salience in, 212
  simplicity of, 117, 222
  use of color in, 81–83
  video as, 139
Bar graphs, types of, 162–164
Baskerville typeface, 39–41
Beginner, designing as, 14
Bento, 229
Bilingual slides, 51
Billboards
  good slide design and, 210, 260
  presentation display and, 31
  sans serif typeface for, 40
Black, emotional associations, 80
Bleeding images, 100–104
Blue, emotional associations, 79
Bodoni typeface, 39–41
Bold, emphasizing text, 60
Books, reading design, 270
Brochures, designs of, 263–265
Brown, emotional associations, 80
Built-in textures, charts/graphs, 151
Busy slides, 124

C

Cameras, 119–124
Case, upper vs. lower, 32–33
Caslon typeface, 39–41
Change
  adding motion for, 216–218
  art of storytelling, 204–205
  inspiring, 10
Charts. see data presentation
Chroma. see saturation
Clarity, of type, 30
Cliché, avoiding image, 117
Clip-art, avoiding off-the-shelf, 116–117
Clips, short video, 144
Clutter
  art of focal point vs., 208–209
  avoiding in type design, 34
  simplicity of wabi sabi vs., 149
  simplifying to unify, 222
  taking better photos, 119
CMYK, printed images in, 109
Color
  achromatic themes, 75
  analogous relationships, 74
  blindness, 78
  communicating with, 63
  complementary, 74
  emotional connection via, 79–83
  for emphasis, 60, 153
  expressing essence with less, 65
  functional, 76–78
  GIFs reducing image, 109
  harmony with, 66–71
  hues, 66–67
  lessons from sumi-e, 64
  monochromatic schemes, 73
  saturation, 70–71
  simplicity of type and, 34
  simplifying to unify, 222
  themes, 86–90
  using images to pick, 84–85
  values, 68–69
  warmth or coolness of, 81
  when taking photos, 121
  of wind, 72
Color vision deficiency (CVD), 78
Color wheel, 66–67
ColorSchemer Web site, 86
COLOURlovers Web site, 86
Column charts, 163
Complementary colors, 74
Compression, 108
Constraints, embracing, 12
Context, setting, 52–53
Continuous improvement
  inspiration on street, 266–267
  it is up to you, 270
  learning from billboards, 260
  lessons around you, 259
  long-term, 258, 268–270
  morning commute and, 260
  overview of, 256–257
  package design, 261–262
  printed materials, 263–265
Contrast
  art of focal point, 208–209
  color, 76–77
  establishing dominance, 211
  in nature, 205
  in storytelling, 204–205
  for variety and depth, 206
Cool colors, 81
CopySpace™, iStockphoto, 113
Cropping images, 106–107
Curly quotation marks, 58
CVD (color vision deficiency), 78

D

Dark
- gradients from light to, 205
- lessons from sumi-e, 64–65
- vs. light background, 82–83
- seeing value, 68–69

Data presentation
- charts/graphs, 162–165
- documents vs. slides, 154–155
- future of, 172–174
- Graph Design IQ Test, 169–171
- principles of, 152–153
- signal-to-noise ratio, 150–151
- simplifying, 146–148
- slidedocs, 149, 156–161

Datsuzoku, principle of, 232
Delivery, presentation, 54
Demonstrations, video, 134
Depth, creating, 207
Design
- adopting beginner's mind, 14
- becoming master storyteller, 15
- breaking rules of, 17
- clarifying intention, 16
- communication, 15
- definition of, 11
- embracing constraints, 12
- empathy, 14
- empty space, 17
- focusing on experience, 14
- multimedia literacy and, 9
- obsessing about ideas, 16
- overview of, 12
- practicing restraint, 13
- presentations and, 10
- principles of washoku and, 5–7
- simplicity, 17
- this book and, 8, 18–21, 22
- vision and curiosity, 16
- visual communication and, 9
- when to stop, 13

Design priority
- adding motion, 216–218
- dominance and structure, 211
- guiding eyes, 214–215
- low background salience, 212
- overview of, 210
- preference for people, 213

Dichromats, 78
Differences, 204–209
Digital scrapbooks, 268
Distortion, image, 116
Divided bar graphs, 164
Documents, 154–155
Dominance, 211
Dumb apostrophes, 56–57
Dumb quotation marks, 58

E

Em dash, 59
Emotion
- created by typeface, 38, 44
- creating with color, 79–83
- as design component, 14
- power of photos, 98–99, 110
- power of video, 129–132
- text placement for, 45

Empathy, 14
Emphasis
- with color, 60
- in data presentation, 153
- with motion, 216–218

Empty space, 17, 208–209. see also white space
En dash, 59
EPS (Encapsulated PostScript) files, 109
Essence, expressing, 65
Examples
- of slides. see slide samples
- video showing real-life, 134

Experience, focus of design on, 14

F

Families, font, 42
File formats, image, 108–110
Filesformat, 108
Five-column/four-row (5x4) grids, 227
Flickr, 105
Focal point, 208–209, 216–218
Fonts. see type
Foreground, 81, 207, 212
Form and freedom, 19
Formula, freedom from, 232
Franklin Gothic typeface, 39–41
Freedom, 19, 232
Frutiger typeface, 39–41
Fukinsei, 231. see also asymmetry
Full-bleed images, 100–104
Functional color, 76–78
Futura typeface, 39–41
Future, of data presentation, 172–174

G

Gapminder software, 173
Garamond typeface, 39–41
Gestalt theory, 193–197, 225
GIF (Graphics Interchange Format) files, 109
Gill Sans typeface, 39–41
Graph Design IQ Test, 169–171
Graphs. see data presentation
Gray, emotional associations, 80
Green, emotional associations, 79
Grids, slidedoc design, 161, 226–229
Gulf of Mexico slide samples, 244–245

H

Habit, freedom from, 232
Handouts, presentation, 54, 155
"Hanging the punctuation," 58–59
Hard drives, inserting video, 135–136
Harmony
- checklist, 234
- with color, 65–71
- color themes, 86–90
- connecting elements, 225
- noticing similarities, 223

overview of, 220–221
principles of, 231–233
simplifying to unify, 222
typefaces for, 42–44
using grid, 226–229
with visual cues, 224
Helvetica, 39–41, 46–47
Hiroshige, 207
Horizon line, landscape photography, 122–123
Horizontal bar charts, 163
How Bacteria Talk, slide samples, 252–253
Hue
achromatic color schemes, 75
contrast in, 76–77, 206
identifying, 66–67
with Kuler, 90
monochromatic schemes, 73
Hyphens, 59

I

Ideas, designing for, 16, 112, 161
Identity, color as, 76
Images
color themes from, 86–90
common mistakes, 98, 114–117
complementing with text, 48–50
cropping, 106–107
evolution of going visual, 95–96
file types, 108–109
full-bleed, 100–104
one thought at a time, 112
people, 213
picking color using, 84–85
picturing presentation, 110
power of photographic, 98–99
resolution for projection, 105
taking better photos, 119–124
telling stories, 93–94
we are visual beings, 97
you are the show, 111
Intention, clarifying, 16
Interviews, video, 134
iStockphoto, CopySpace™, 113
Italics, emphasizing text, 60

J

Japanese
aesthetic principles, 231–233
meal presentation, 5–7, 229
umbrella design, 18–21
JPEG (Joint Photographic Experts Group) files, 108

K

Kaizen, 258. see also continuous improvement
Kanso, 231. see also simplicity
Kelby, Scott, 119–124
Kerning, for readability, 35–36
Keyboard shortcuts, 56
Keynote, 135–138
Kuler themes, 87–90

L

Labels, color as, 76–77
Landscape photography, 121–123
Lateral thinking, 231
Legends, avoiding pie chart, 162
Less is more (yohaku-no-bi), 233
Letters, spacing type, 35–36
Light
adding contrast, 76–77, 205
dark background vs., 82–83
seeing value, 68–69
sumi-e and, 64–65
taking better photos, 121–122
Lighting, presentation room, 82
Line art, formats for, 109
Line charts, 151
Line graphs, 165
Lines, spacing type, 36–37
Literacy, multimedia, 9
Lossless compression, 108
Lossy compression, 108
Lowercase, typesetting in, 32–33
Luminance. see value
LumiQuest, 121

M

Ma, principle of, 233
Monochromatic color schemes, 73
Mood
changing in Kuler, 86
creating with typeface, 38, 44
text placement and, 45
Morning commute, 260
Motion, 216–218
Multimedia literacy, 9
Music, 268

N

Naturalness, principle of, 232
Nature, 205, 269
Noise, visual, 150–152
Notan, 64

O

Opening of presentation, 52
Orange, emotional associations, 79
Orientation, contrast in, 206

P

Package design, 261–262, 269
People, images of, 213
Perspective, 122, 205
Photographs
making own images, 119
picturing your presentation, 110
power of, 98–99
tips for taking better, 120–124
Picture graphs, 166–167
Pie charts, 162, 164
Pink, emotional associations, 79
Pitching presentation, 52
Pixelated images, 115–116
Placement, image, 115, 120–121
PNG (Portable Network Graphics) files, 30–31

Pop-up flash, 121
Portraits, shooting, 120–121
Position, contrast in, 206
PowerPoint
  banning use of, 10
  document waste in, 154
  inserting video, 135–138
  sketching/planning analog, 248–251
Presentation flow, 52
Presentation Zen, 8, 18–21, 23
Presets, camera, 122
Previewing/prompting, presentations, 54
Prezi, inserting video in, 135–138
Printed materials, 109, 263–265
Projection, resolution for image, 105
Purple, emotional associations, 80
Purpose and focus
  adding motion, 216–218
  art of focal point, 208–209
  art of storytelling, 204–205
  context/meaning, 204–207
  creating, 203
  strong design priority, 210–215
  variety and depth, 206–207

Q

Quotation marks, 58–59

R

Red, emotional associations, 79
Reduction, data presentation, 153
Resolution
  avoiding pixelated images, 115
  cropping images and, 106–107
  ideal image projection, 105
  JPEGs and, 108
  resizing video onscreen, 140–143
Restraint, 13, 152
Right brain stimulation, 268
Rockwell typeface, 39–41
Rotated type, 45
Rules
  10-minute rule, 133
  freedom of design, 19
  for hyphens/dashes, 59
  knowing/breaking design, 17
  rule of thirds, 228–229

S

Salience, low background, 212
Sans serif typefaces, 40–41
Saturation, 70–71, 73–74, 76–77, 90
Scaling, vector images, 109
Scatter plots, 164
Searchable images, 105, 113
Seijaku (tranquility), 232
Self-restraint, 13
Sequence, slide/topic, 53
Serif typefaces, 40–41
Shade
  adding black to adjust, 68
  for better portraits outside, 120
  complementary colors and, 74
  for great color, 121
  in monochromatic schemes, 73
  on white background, 69
Shape, contrast in, 206
Shibui/shibumi, 232. see also simplicity
Shizen (naturalness), 232
Signal-to-noise ratio (SNR), 150–151
Similarities, in harmony, 223
Simplicity
  avoiding clutter in type, 34
  clarity in, 149
  color for harmony, 66–71
  for communication, 15
  data presentation, 152–153
  form and freedom, 19
  overview of, 17
  in storytelling, 204–205
  of sumi-e, 65
  taking better photos, 119
  unity through, 222
  of wagasa, 18–21
Size
  avoiding small images, 114
  contrast in, 206
  creating perspective with, 205
  emphasizing text, 60
  quotation mark, 58–59
  video onscreen, 140–143
Sketching/planning analog, 248–251
Skits, video, 134
Slide samples
  Gulf of Mexico, 244–245
  How Bacteria Talk, 252–253
  overview of, 241
  sketching/planning analog, 248–251
  Smoke:, 246–247
  Takehime Pudding, 242–243
  Thirst, 254
Slidedocs, 157–161
Slideuments, 154–155
Smart quotes, 58–60
Smoke: The Convenient Truth, slide samples, 246–247
SNR (signal-to-noise ratio), 150–151
Soft Screen, pop-up flash, 121
Space. see white space
Stacked bar graphs, 163
Still images, power of, 98–99
Stone, Maureen C., 76–78
Storytelling
  contrast/simplicity in, 204–205
  designing as master, 15
  going visual for, 95–96
  images for. see images
Straight quotation marks, 58
Structure, 211, 226–229
Sumi-e (Japanese brush painting), 64–66

T

Takehime Pudding slide samples, 242–243
Teach others what you know, 270
TED videos, 135–138, 270
Testimonials, video, 134
Text. see also type
  complementing images, 48–49
  placing on images, 50
  placing to express mood, 45
  tips for, 53
  video as background to, 139
The Power of Simplicity (MIT Press, 2006), 153
Themes
  achromatic (+1) color, 75
  with Kuler, 87–90
  with online resources, 86
  similarity of background for, 223
Thirst slide samples, 254
TIFF (Tagged Image File Format), image files, 109
Tile feature, avoiding use of, 116
Tints
  adding more white to, 68
  for complementary colors, 74
  in monochromatic schemes, 73
  popping on dark backgrounds, 69
Tokonoma, 208–209
Tranquility (seijaku), principle of, 232
Transformation, with video, 134
Transitions, for change, 217–218
Transparency effect, PNGs, 108
Tripod, low light photography, 121
Type
  apostrophes, 56–59
  bilingual slides, 51
  capitalization, 32–33
  choice of, 39–42
  clutter, 34
  em dash, 59–60
  families, 42
  as fonts, 29
  harmony and, 43–45
  Helvetica, 46–47
  for high stakes, 52–55
  for images, 48–50
  italics or bold, 60–61
  making it big, 31–32
  overview of, 29
  point size, 30–31
  quotation marks, 56–59
  reliable, 39–41
  simplifying, 222
  spacing letters/lines, 35–36

U

Unity. see harmony
Univers typeface, 39–41
Uppercase, typesetting in, 32–33

V

Validators, presentation, 53
Value, 68–69, 90, 205–206
Vantage point, photo, 122
Vector graphics, EPS fornat, 109
Vertical bar (column) charts, 163
Video
  as background for text, 139
  as change of pace, 133
  connecting at visceral level, 128
  emotional impact of, 129–132
  increasing size on screen, 140–143
  inserting, 135–138
  keeping short, 144
  other uses of, 134
  power of, 126–127
Visceral level, video at, 128
Vischeck program, 78
Visual cues, 224
Visual noise, charts/graphs, 150–151

W

Wa, 233. see also harmony
Wabi sabi, 149
Wagasa, 18–21
Warm colors, 81
Washoku, 5–7, 229
Watermarked images, 116
Weight, typeface, 42
White, emotional associations, 80
White balance, 121
White space
  achieving balance in, 187–192
  beauty and function of, 182
  Gestalt theories and, 193–197
  ikebana and, 184–185
  between letters, 35–36
  between lines, 36–37
  overview of, 181–182
  restraint/preserving, 198–200
  slidedocs and, 161
  sumi-e and, 64
  tokonoma and, 208–209
Wind, color of, 72

Y

Yellow, emotional associations, 80
Yohaku-no-bi, principle of, 233
Yugen, principle of, 232