

PowerAid

BY FRANK H. ANDORKA JR., ASSOCIATE EDITOR



Here's how to harness
high-tech presentations
to get what you need

When flooding devastated his course, Wayne Van Arendonk discovered the effectiveness of Microsoft's PowerPoint presentation program to persuade an audience to take action — as in providing reconstruction funds after one-third of the course was submerged, including eight greens.

Van Arendonk, superintendent of Rolling Hills CC in Wichita, Kan., compiled a PowerPoint presentation with 40 to 50 slides showing the damage to the course, as well as detailing costs of the cleanup. The response from his members stunned him.

"It's the only presentation I've made where I've gotten a standing ovation," Van Arendonk says of the program, which he constructed with the help of his assistant at the time, Jeremy Jake-way. "It greased the skids for the \$200,000 we needed to do a complete cleanup."

In today's increasingly business-oriented profession, presentation can make the difference between achieving your goals and falling just short. Superintendents who master the high-tech presentation tools of today can enhance their persuasiveness, whether they're selling owners on a major project or hosting a seminar at a local association meeting. It's just a matter of finding the time to exploit the potential of the tools.

GET STARTED

Not sure where to begin on your road to PowerPoint proficiency? Here are some tips about how to start:

- Look for classes at local community colleges.
- Dive right in yourself and fiddle around with the program to test its abilities.
- Ask for help from people in your office or your membership who might already know how to use the program.
- Practice as much as you can because the skills you acquire will start deteriorating if you don't keep them fresh.
- Search the Web for online tutorials.

SOURCE: TOMMY WITT, CGCS, STILLWATERS RESORT.; JERRY COLDIRON, CGCS, BOONE LINKS/LASSING POINTE GC.; TONY GIRARDI, CGCS, ROCKRIMMON CC.

PERFECT PRESENTATION

Here are some ideas to ensure that your PowerPoint presentation goes nearly flawlessly:

- Make sure the facility where you are presenting actually has PowerPoint equipment because not every facility does.
- Try out the equipment before you present. This will help you work out any bugs ahead of time.
- Have a graphic artist look over your slide presentation to maximize the capabilities of the program.
- Proofread your materials as many times as you need to make sure your text is flawless. Get outside help if necessary.
- Use the style checker function to ensure the consistency of your slides.
- Practice your presentation to ensure a smooth delivery.
- Control your own speed by putting the program in its manual rather than its automatic mode. Otherwise, the pace at which slides flip will be controlled by the machine.
- Learn the full capabilities of PowerPoint.

SOURCE: CAROL HAYES, SENIOR MANAGER OF EXECUTIVE COMMUNICATIONS, GCSAA; TOMMY WITT, CGCS, STILLWATERS RESORT; TONY GIRARDI, CGCS ROCKRIMMON CC; JERRY COLDIRON, CGCS, BOONE LINKS/LASSING POINTE GC.

The idea of trading traditional slide programs for high-tech presentations can intimidate some people, but Tommy Witt, CGCS at StillWaters Resort near Birmingham, Ala., says it's easy once you begin. Though PowerPoint isn't the only program out there, it's certainly the leader and Witt swears by it. Witt, who teaches seminars for the GCSAA and the PGA, has collected 8,000 slides over his 20 years in the business, and it's hard for him to carry them around to each of his talks. PowerPoint provides him with a high-tech alternative.

"If you learn to use it right, a program like PowerPoint can really enhance your credibility with the listeners," Witt says. "Most superintendents aren't professional presenters, and they should do anything they can do to help themselves."

Though he hasn't mastered PowerPoint yet, Witt plans on taking classes at a local community college to hone his knowledge of the program. Then he plans to put most of his slides into PowerPoint and use it almost exclusively.

"I'm doing a lot more public speaking than I ever thought I would as a golf course manager," Witt says. "Even if you're not going to go full bore into PowerPoint, it's worth it to get fairly familiar with — just in case."

Don't limit yourself

But high-tech presentations aren't just limited to programs like PowerPoint. Don't forget that the Web, digital cameras and scanners also provide superintendents with endless opportunities to spice up their talks. Jerry Coldiron, CGCS at Boone Links/Lassing Pointe GC in Florence, Ky., says he blends PowerPoint with Web images and scanned images into his presentations to make them pop off the screen.

If he wants to show his owners the importance of a new irrigation system or the need for a new mower, Coldiron says the images he collects from other sources persuade more easily than a simple verbal description.

"With the Web, my own digital camera and the PowerPoint tools, I let the owners *see* what needs to be done," Coldiron says. "After all, seeing is believing, especially with skeptical owners or members. The new high-tech tools

allow superintendents to be as persuasive now as they've ever been."

Tony Girardi, CGCS of Rockrimmon CC in Stamford, Conn., agrees. High-tech presentation tools provide superintendents with a chance to stand out from the crowd, particularly if they are only one of a host of speakers.

Girardi used PowerPoint recently at the GCSAA Show in New Orleans and received the best feedback he's ever received on his speech. It's not that he necessarily became a more credible source because of the presentation technique, but it did lend more credibility to the subject matter. "Within five to eight years, PowerPoint will be the standard in the industry," Girardi predicts.

Time also factors into the equation when considering the use of PowerPoint, says Walter Montross, superintendent at Westwood CC in Vienna, Va. With traditional presentation methods, thumbing through slides, send-

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POWERPOINT ADVANTAGES

- Animation
- Promotes the use of digital images
- Helps organize thoughts
- Monitors style for consistency
- Easy-to-use
- Shorter preparation time
- Allows last-minute changes and customization

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IT'S ALL IN THE PREPARATION

Here are a few questions that Atlanta-based Speechworks, a public speaking training company, says you should answer as you're putting together a presentation, no matter what tools you use:

- What is your goal?
- What is the benefit of your information to your listener?
- What two or three points do you need to cover?
- What specific proof can you give that what you say is?
- What action do you want as a result of your message?

SOURCE: SPEECHWORKS, 404-266-0888

ALL THE WORLD'S A STAGE

Atlanta-based Speechworks, a public speaking training company, offers these tips on how to carry yourself during a presentation:

- Stand as if you were wearing boots & spurs. Hold your arms by your side. Think Arnold Schwarzenegger.
- Make eye contact. Give a whole thought to one listener (4 to 6 seconds), then move to the next.
- When you gesture, reach forward and hold your gesture to look open and confident.
- Use voice variety. Change the pace; loud, soft, fast, slow. Sound like you mean it.
- Pause to let your ideas sink in. Pause to replace "ehs" and "ers."
- Don't read off the screen behind you. Cheat by looking at the screen of a laptop in front of you if necessary.

SOURCE: SPEECHWORKS, 404-266-0888.

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ing them out to have specialists add text and waiting for them to return can take an inordinate amount of time, he says.

Montross says superintendents can cut that time to a few hours if they use everything at their disposal.

"It's going to completely change the way I produce any presentations I might make," Montross says. "You can use pop-up balloons and other graphics that you can't do with a slide. It drives the point home far better than a static presentation."

Computers rule the world

Fifteen years ago, Montross says he wouldn't even have considered using a computer. Now, he's enthusiastic about the future of high-tech presentations.

"Now that I've started learning how to use all of these other tools, I'm excited about their potential," Montross says. "It seems unlimited to me."

If superintendents use the high-tech tools available to them, they can raise their profile and improve their image, Montross says. But as exciting as the possibilities of the latest technologies are, the presenter should still remain the focus.

Carol Hayes, senior manager of executive communications for the GCSAA, says while PowerPoint and digital cameras can enhance a presentation, superintendents shouldn't rely solely on the programs to make their cases for them. If they do, they're bound to have problems if the technology falters or, as it has in some cases, fails completely, Hayes says.

"You can't overlook the basics of good presenting," Hayes says. "You should always make sure you organize your thoughts and be well prepared. All of the latest technology can't cover up for poor preparation."

Also, Hayes warns that overuse of animation can actually detract from a presentation instead of making it better. It's all a matter of moderation, she says.

Van Arendonk urges his fellow superintendents to acquire PowerPoint skills. Maybe he'll see you in class: He's planning to take classes this winter to master the program.

"Don't be scared of the future," Van Arendonk says. "There are a lot of great tools out there that will help you sell almost anything you need." ■