HOW TO AVOID DEATH BY POWERPOINT

- o **Set-up:** Ensure the projector and laptop are working well ahead of the presentation.
- o **Screens:** Adjust room light; too much light gives slides a washed out look.
- o **Remotes:** If a remote control is to be used, ensure you're familiar with the buttons.
- o **Common look and feel:** Set up basic rules in the software's slide master and apply them to all slides to ensure a professional presentation.
- o **Colour schemes:** Be subtle. A garish combination can be distracting.
- o **Less is more:** Keep the number of words on each slide to an absolute minimum.
- o **Special effects:** Don't go overboard with flying text or revolving logos.
- o **Images:** Check that photos are of sufficiently high resolution.
- o **Talk to the audience:** Always face your audience. Let them read the slides.
- o **Watch for signs:** Keep an eye on the audience to ensure you're not boring them.
- o **Consider training:** A short training course can bring your speaking skills up to speed.
- o **Energy:** Stand to deliver your presentation, even to a small group.
- o **Handouts:** Have handout copies of your slides available after the meeting.
- o **Back-up:** Keep a hard copy of your notes so you can still deliver your presentation if the technology lets you down.

QUT Senior Communications Lecturer, Patsy McCarthy, says it is best to limit text on slides to a few brief words. "You should be using the slides to illustrate or emphasise your point, not to give all the information."

"It's quite simple, a PowerPoint presentation should have 10 slides, last no more than 20 minutes, and contain no font smaller than 30 point," Guy Kawasaki, Managing Director of Garage Technology Ventures says. "If presenters use slides to cover more than 10 concepts, they will probably lose their audience."

Source:
Grayson, I 2006. "Shining in the dark", The Australian, February 7, ExecTech p.4, 5.

"It is only when they go wrong that machines remind you how powerful they are."
Clive James