




PRYSM®

# WHY YOUR PRESENTATIONS MIGHT SUCK

*...AND HOW TO FIX THEM*





You've been there:  
your eyes glazed over,  
your head nodding, your  
mind wandering to your  
plans for the upcoming  
weekend. Maybe you even  
started fantasizing about what  
might happen if you screamed  
"Fire!" at the top of your lungs and  
then sprinted towards the exit.

You already know you're not alone.

The bottom line is that there's no other form of corporate torture quite as exquisite as being imprisoned in a room and forced to watch a terrible PowerPoint presentation.

According to Dave Paradi's 2017 Annoying PowerPoint Survey, the majority of the 439 respondents felt that presenters just don't care enough to spend the time it takes to create and deliver presentations that won't push their audience into a comatose state.

The following were some of the most odious presentation grievances mentioned in the survey:

- The speaker reading slides to the audience
- Slides containing full sentences
- Text that's too small to read
- Overly complex visuals

Presentations are an unavoidable part of corporate life. The good news is that with a few simple changes, you can deliver presentations that get your point across while still holding your audience's attention. This ebook is dedicated to eradicating terrible presentations once and for all.

# The Unofficial Numbers

According to a completely unscientific study conducted at Prysm headquarters, here are the top 10 things that employees would rather be doing than sitting through another boring presentation:

1. Having blood drawn
2. Cleaning out their refrigerators
3. Eating pink, undercooked chicken thighs
4. Sitting in bumper-to-bumper beach traffic
5. Getting a root canal
6. Removing a mummified rat from under the dryer
7. Pulling an acre of particularly thorny weeds
8. Visiting disapproving in-laws
9. Pushing a car with a flat tire in 112-degree heat
10. Doing taxes

# TIP #1

## USE YOUR SLIDES AS BACKUP VISUALS.

The best presenters understand that visuals help keep audiences engaged and significantly boost their retention of the presented material. One recent study indicated that when people only hear information, they forget 90% of what was said. But when paired with an image, they retain 6.5 times more of the message.

Try to avoid reading slides verbatim to your audience. Instead, point to the slide and rephrase what's there. If you do a good job with the visuals, your audience will subconsciously use them as mnemonics that help them remember what you were saying when you were on that particular slide.

### Examples of great visuals include:

- Infographics
- Diagrams
- Amusing graphics that illustrate your point
- Quotes, especially simple ones in a large font



think about your  
favorite BuzzFeed  
memes

(you can use similar visuals that  
aren't quite as silly, if you work  
in a very corporate environment)



# TIP #2

## AVOID INCLUDING TOO MUCH TEXT.

While visuals help communicate your points and help your audience retain the information, the converse is also true: the more text on your slide, the less engaged your audience will be. A great rule of thumb is to use no more than 10 words on any slide.

(fewer is even better)

examples of great  
slides that feature  
the perfect amount  
of text



Source: Josh Beatty



Source: We Are Social



Dan Roam dan@danroam.com www.thebackofthenapkin.com

Source: Dan Roam

# TIP #3

## DON'T OVERDO THE ANIMATIONS AND TRANSITIONS.

The logic is sound: motion/animations can be a good way to add visual interest to your presentations. However, as the saying goes, moderation in all things. Too many PowerPoint animations can be distracting and eye-roll provoking. It can even lower information retention.

The same goes for slide transitions. Nothing screams “amateur” like a random display of “vortex,” then “windowpane,” then “glitter,” and then “cube.” Just, no. If you really want a transition, choose your favorite (please, not “glitter”) and use it for all of your slides in the presentation.

The other thing to consider is whether your presentation will be viewed in static form later, such as in PDF or printed on paper. In these situations, you will lose control over the formatting and may lose the meaning of the animated slides.

Of course, judicious use of professional-looking animations can add to your presentation. The best guideline is to ask yourself whether the purpose of the animation is just to impress people with your knowledge of PowerPoint (bad), or whether it can enhance the understanding of the information itself (good).

### Examples of scenarios where animation makes sense:

- Exploding out an engineering diagram to make it easier to understand each component.
- A top-10 list where the content constructs a big picture and you want to be sure that the audience's attention doesn't go prematurely to the items you are not yet covering.
- A timeline, wherein, like the top-10 list scenario, you want to focus on one item at a time.
- Illustrating a process, such as a storyboard or workflow.

# TIP #4

## USE THE RIGHT FONT SIZE FOR THE ROOM.

According to Dave Paradi of [thinkoutsidetheslide.com](http://thinkoutsidetheslide.com), who gives courses on creating and delivering excellent presentations, you should select your font size based on the aspect ratio of the screen size on which you are presenting. For example, for a 36" inch screen with a 4:3 aspect ratio, the minimum size you should use is 18 points. For a 120" screen, the minimum font size would be 120 points.

"PowerTools for PowerPoint Users" lists an "8H" rule: wherein the maximum viewing distance shouldn't be more than 8 times the height (H) of the screen. As an absolute minimum, the resource says, if you use a font that is at least 1/50th of the height of the screen, it should be legible at the maximum viewing distance. The recommended size would be 1/25th of the height of the screen.



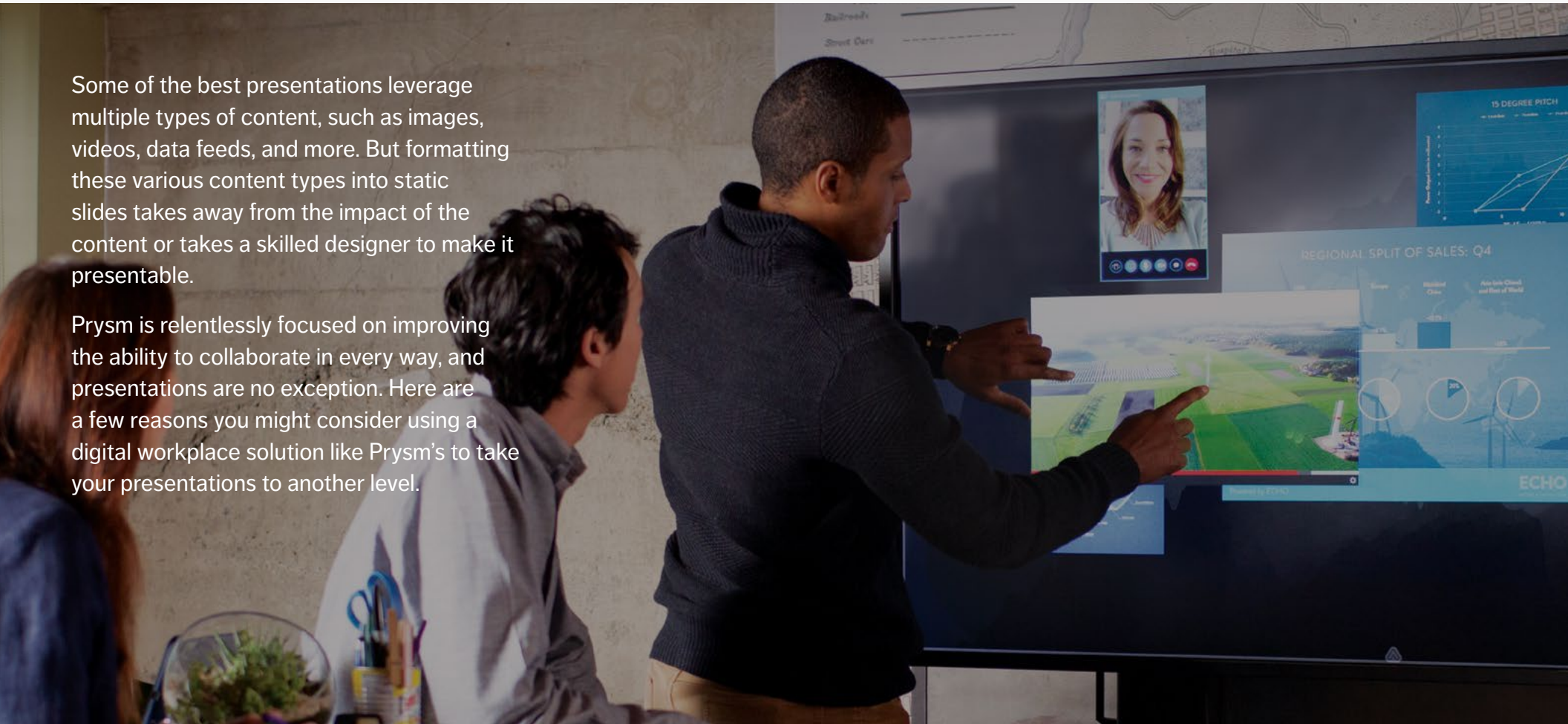
(Assuming that the person in the back row has good eyes and that the projected image is perfectly crisp)

# TIP #5

TRY SOMETHING COMPLETELY NEW.

Some of the best presentations leverage multiple types of content, such as images, videos, data feeds, and more. But formatting these various content types into static slides takes away from the impact of the content or takes a skilled designer to make it presentable.

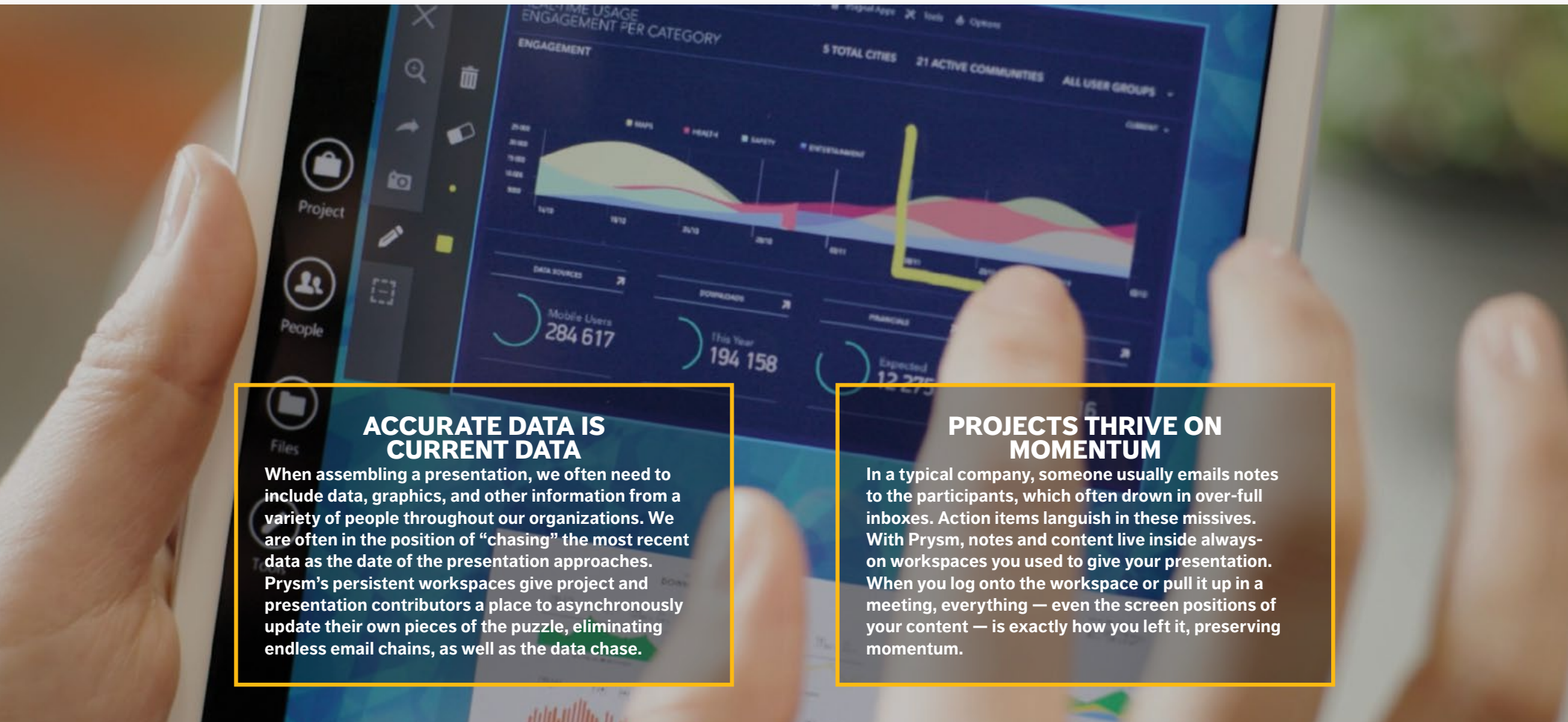
Prysm is relentlessly focused on improving the ability to collaborate in every way, and presentations are no exception. Here are a few reasons you might consider using a digital workplace solution like Prysm's to take your presentations to another level.





# TIP #5 continued

TRY SOMETHING COMPLETELY NEW.



## ACCURATE DATA IS CURRENT DATA

When assembling a presentation, we often need to include data, graphics, and other information from a variety of people throughout our organizations. We are often in the position of “chasing” the most recent data as the date of the presentation approaches. Prysm’s persistent workspaces give project and presentation contributors a place to asynchronously update their own pieces of the puzzle, eliminating endless email chains, as well as the data chase.

## PROJECTS THRIVE ON MOMENTUM

In a typical company, someone usually emails notes to the participants, which often drown in over-full inboxes. Action items languish in these missives. With Prysm, notes and content live inside always-on workspaces you used to give your presentation. When you log onto the workspace or pull it up in a meeting, everything — even the screen positions of your content — is exactly how you left it, preserving momentum.

# TIP #5 continued

TRY SOMETHING COMPLETELY NEW.

## HUMAN THOUGHT IS NOT LINEAR

PowerPoints are a succession of slides that progress in a sequential order. The problem with this is that humans don't think or learn that way. You can't look forward or backward to get reference points, and you're stuck going at the presenter's pace. In contrast, Prysm allows you to lay out information concurrently. It allows participants to explore any content in any order they like, for maximum understanding and retention.

## TODAY'S PRESENTATIONS REQUIRE LIVE DATA

PowerPoints only allow you to show static content. They cannot include live data, such as database queries, video feeds, web pages, or applications. On the flip side, Prysm gives presenters access to an interactive digital canvas where they can bring up a prepared presentation, along with live data, so participants can take closer looks at supporting content, without interrupting the presentation.



At the end of the day, Prysm is a proven accompaniment to PowerPoint and an innovative platform for presentations, allowing teams to create joint presentations, maintaining continuity between meetings, and enabling the inclusion of live data. What's more, the ability to display multiple pieces of content onscreen at once helps add visual interest to your presentations and heightens engagement. In a sales environment, this will help your prospects retain more information about your products and can positively impact your close rates.

As long as you're presenting content that is relevant to your audience, the tips in this ebook should help you deliver more engaging, impactful presentations. As a bonus, they may also make you more popular at work (and maybe even help your boss realize that it's high time you had a raise).

#### About Prysm:

Prysm is a leading provider of large-format Laser Phosphor Displays (LPD), known as the LPD 6K Series, and Prysm Application Suite, a cloud-based, visual collaboration solution. Prysm solutions enable individuals and teams to see and interact with all their data, content, and applications on displays of all sizes. By providing these always-on digital canvases, Prysm engages audiences, ignites innovative thinking, drives decisions, and transforms content into experiences. Customers using the LPD 6K Series benefit from interactive large-format single panel displays that offer a panoramic image uninterrupted by seams or bezels. Customers using the Prysm Application Suite software benefit from an open, enterprise-grade collaboration solution that integrates with existing tools and scales to hundreds or thousands of users.

Prysm was founded in 2005 in the Silicon Valley and has offices worldwide. Learn more at [prysm.com](https://prysm.com).

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## Get Started

If you are ready to consider how you can uplevel your presentations with more advanced solutions, contact us to learn more about Prysm's digital workplace platform. (Companies like GE, Under Armour, Sprint, and many others already have 😊)

**LEARN MORE  
AT PRYSM.COM**

**CONTACT US TO  
SCHEDULE A DEMO**