How to Use Transitions and Animation Effects

Now that we’ve covered the most important principles of slide design, you may have noticed that design is much more about aesthetics—it’s about effectively communicating a message.

Just like you can’t overload a slide deck with vibrant colors and pretty-looking pictures and expect it to get your point across, you also can’t apply every animation effect available to you without a specific purpose.

Scientific research has shown that our eyes are naturally attracted by motion. Besides static objects that suddenly go into motion, the appearance of "new objects among a background of old objects" also captures viewers’ attention.

You can take this finding into consideration when creating slide builds, which allow you to convey complex information by bringing in bits of information, piece by piece.

Design is, literally, purposeful planning. Graphic design, then, is the form those plans will take.

Chip Kidd
Instead of presenting a complex diagram all at once, forcing your audience to digest loads of information in one gulp, break it down into bite-sized pieces that can be presented in accordance with the pace of your verbal presentation.

Start by creating your final build image, diagram, illustration, chart or graph. Once you have all the elements in place, simply duplicate the slide as many times as is needed to create each step of the build and work backwards to eliminate the objects you don’t want to appear for each step. This way, when your slides are viewed in the correct order, you can “build” your image right in front of your live audience.
CREATE SCENES INSTEAD OF ISOLATED SLIDES.

Instead of thinking in terms of individual slides, why not create scenes instead? In her book Slide:ology, Nancy Duarte covers a technique which allows users to create scenes instead of slides, even with standard presentation tools.

Take, for example, this sequence of 10 slides. When viewed as a slideshow, it looks more like a scene from a video presentation than a standard slide deck. To create the effect of a continuous scene, start by laying out the contents of your sequence, as in this example.

Source: Slide:ology
Then, eliminate all standard page elements at the top, bottom and sides of your slides, such as page numbers, decorative elements and headers and footers. This way, your sequence will look like a series of scenes seamlessly tied together.

Finally, apply transitions such as “Push Left,” “Push Down” and “Push Up” to create the effect that you are panning through your content placed across one large space, versus presenting separate slides.

Source: Slideology

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Since eyes are attracted by movement, you can also use builds and animation in your charts and graphs to tell a specific story.

Take, for example, this line graph comparing the profits of two companies over a span of six years. By bringing in each new point with subtle animation, such as a fade-in effect, you can build suspense and expectation for the conclusion of your story: Company A revamped their marketing strategy and, consequently, their profits soared, while Company B floundered.