

Presentation Best Practices

Brainshark gives you the ability to quickly and easily create web communications that are effective and have an impact on your audience. This document provides the best practices for developing Brainshark web content that will successfully communicate your message, including suggestions on the format of the most effective slide images and the highest quality audio to help ensure success using Brainshark in your communications.

General Best Practices

1. Presentation Length

The appropriate length of a presentation is dependent upon its purpose and the audience that will view it. However, there are some basic lengths to keep in mind when developing your presentation. It is important to note that the average viewing time and presentation length has trended downward over the past several years.

Content	Audience	Maximum Length (recommended)
Training	Internal (employees) and External (partners)	12-15 minutes, 30 slides
Marketing	Suspects (lead generation presentation)	2-3 minutes, 6 slides
Marketing	Prospects (follow up communication)	4-6 minutes, 12 slides
Product Update	Customers, Channel, Sales	8-10 minutes, 20 slides

If your presentation exceeds 15 minutes, try to break it into multiple presentations or modules. It will give the viewer (audience) smaller pieces of content to choose from and complete in between their regular activities at work. Brainshark strongly recommends this, and our clients have had better success doing so.

2. Presentation Slides

The purpose of the slide in your Brainshark presentation is to provide the outline or context for the message you are delivering. The image (or text) should enhance, illustrate and demonstrate but not be designed to deliver the main point of the slide. That is the role of the audio. **You do not want your audience to be so busy with or confused by the slide image that they are unable to focus on the audio.**

Recommendations:

- Keep it Short and Simple (KISS)
- Focus on one idea or message per slide
- Don't confuse the viewer with too much information on one slide
- One idea per slide will help you keep your slide timings within reason
- Add more slides to the presentation if necessary

When creating slides:

- Set the PPT slide to 70%, this will be approximately the image size in the standard Brainshark slide (720 x 540 pixels)
- Use a white or light background for your slides when creating content that is distributed over the web.
- Limit the amount of text on the screen
- Bullets (use; 4-5 bullets per slide AND 4-5 words per bullet)
- Use 20pt font or greater
- Use web friendly fonts (sans serif such as Arial, Tahoma, Verdana)
- Avoid italics if possible

Screen Captures/Images:

- The standard Brainshark console viewing window is 720 x 540 pixels.
- This important for 2 reasons. 1) Pictures/images that are larger than that will have to be resized and will likely have reduced clarity as a result. 2) This is a 4x3 aspect ratio and images that you design to occupy the entire screen will be optimized if they are also in a 4x3 ratio such as 800 x 600 pixels.
- Whenever possible, avoid creating images of entire screens. Capturing a 1024 x 768 screen and then resizing it on to the PPT slide will cause a reduction in clarity. It is more effective to capture and create an image of only that part of the screen that is relevant for the point being made on that slide. Thinking about creating images this way will help you keep your slides clear and concise as well as helping you keep the audio times at optimal levels.
- When incorporating images/pictures on your slides, try to create and embed the smallest file size possible for each image. In PPT you can right click on the image and choose *Format Picture* and then choose *Compress* to reduce the image size for use on the web to 96dpi.
- If you create text boxes on top of screen shots, limit text boxes to ≤ 5 words.
- It is wise to use shapes (circles, boxes) or arrows to highlight the section of the image that you want the viewer to observe. It is also wise to limit this to no more than 3 selections per slide. This will help keep control of the number of animated objects, the clarity of the slide and the length of the audio. If you would like to move the viewer from one section to another visually, then you can add an exit animation to your entrance animation so that at any one time there is just one animation and just one highlighted section.

Charts/graphs:

- A chart or graph can produce a powerful visual illustration of an important point in your presentation. However, it is of no value if the audience can't read it or decipher it.
- If the chart is unreadable at 720 x 540 pixels then it adds no value to the presentation on a slide. Instead, add it as an attachment to the presentation, and then the viewer can print it out and appreciate it.
- Don't forget that the recommended font size is 20pt or greater. If your chart, table or graph has text that appears in a font size that is smaller, then it is likely that the viewer will have a difficult time reading and understanding the content.

3. Presentation Audio

The power in your presentation comes from the effective development and delivery of your audio. The impact of your message is made through the audio that is delivered on each slide. (Think of the impact that can be made in a well-delivered radio commercial. Also, think about how much audio input you need before you decide to change stations!) The quality of your audio retains your audience.

****Important note** – On average 40% of your viewers who do not watch the majority of your presentation in Brainshark will leave at the first slide – the most common reason for this is because the audio was not engaging.

The point of the audio on slide one is to get them to slide 2. Be sure that your opening slide does the following 2 things:

- 1) Provides a reason (value) for viewing (What will they learn or gain)
- 2) Does not exceed 25 seconds (Get the presentation started)

Recommendations:

- Write (develop) a slide-by-slide script for the presentation. This is a presentation to an audience and since the audience is not under your control, you have to deliver audio that is polished and engaging.
 - Practice the script aloud
 - Check phrasing and emphasis (intonation)
 - Intonation – vary your tone of voice to impact your audience’s understanding of the material. ****This cannot be overemphasized** – good presentation audio is engaging because the speaker communicates energy – enthusiasm – and knowledge of the content. Again think - good radio
- Record once in Brainshark and play it back, then rerecord any slides that can be improved
 - **have a colleague or supervise view the presentation and then revise.**
 - Don’t read the text on the slide (bad idea live and really bad in Brainshark)

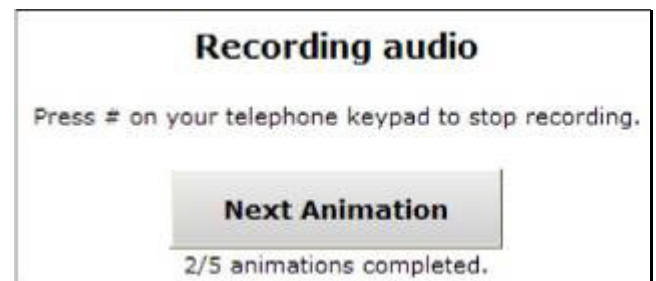
****Brainshark Tip** – When in PPT, if you set the slide size to 70% and raise the PPT notes section to the bottom of the slide image then you have 6-8 lines to create your script. If you have to scroll beyond this to create your script then your slide audio is going to be too long (in duration)

- Recommended duration per slide
 - <30 seconds per slide - **** If you have a slide or two in your presentation that exceeds 30 seconds then this should be adequate as long as the overall presentation averages <30 seconds per slide. We strongly encourage you to never having a single slide that exceeds 1 minute in duration. It is more effective to create two slides for this material and your audience will retain more information.**

- Audio Recording (via telephone)
 - Tempo
 - Recording should be conversational (presentational)
 - Do
 - Speak naturally
 - Speak with enthusiasm and energy
 - Become familiar with the script
 - Listen to your recording
 - Do Not
 - Speak too fast
 - Speak too slow
 - Over-enunciate
 - Sound like you are reading
- Audio Quality
 - Use a hand-held, land line telephone for best audio quality (hand set)
 - Reduce background noise as much as possible
 - Practice recording at different voice volume levels and vary the distance between the phone and your mouth to discover optimal audio quality.
 - Reference this audio guide to be familiar with telephone operation and recording process.(below)

Telephone Keypad Commands

1	2	3
Record one slide	Record all slides	Play current
4	5	6
Previous slide	Go to specific	Next slide
7	8	9
Erase audio		Hang up
*	0	#
	Help	Stop recording



Recording without Animations

1. Dial IVR phone number
2. Press "1" to record
3. Press "#" to stop recording
4. When completed recording all slides press "99" to end session.

Recording with Animations

1. Dial IVR phone number
2. Press "1" to record
3. Click *Next Animation* button to activate animation(s)
4. Press "#" to stop recording
5. When completed recording all slides press "99" to end session.

Summary

Your Brainshark presentation is an extremely effective way to communicate your message. Using rich media increases the viewer's retention of the content which leads to better trained employees, a more prepared sales force, better informed partners and more successful customers. But if no one watches the presentation then you will not realize these benefits. Web-based communications like this must be designed and delivered with the viewer's goals and perceived value in mind. If you build a presentation that keeps the viewer in mind then you will likely build a successful presentation.

Before distributing your presentation, ask yourself these questions:

- **Is it Clear?**
- **Is it Concise?**
- **Is it Compelling?**

If the answer to each of these questions is **yes**, then send it out. If the answer is **no** then work on the presentation until the answer is **yes**.

Final Recommendation

Enjoy yourself and have fun with the content, smile when you speak and think about the content from the viewer's perspective. This will guide you to create interactive, lively presentations that your audience will look forward to viewing. Applying these guidelines will give you the best possible chance at communicating your message effectively, time and time again.