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TRANSLATING COMPANY COLLATERAL TO POWERPOINT

As a PowerPoint user, it is sometimes necessary to accurately translate a company's marketing collateral to slide format. Often, this information arrives in the format of a company brochure, or copied blurbs from the website, or a long Word document bogged down with New Age sales jargon and irrelevant "stuffer" copy.

It is your job to find the needles of information in the haystacks of hype, to reduce lengthy paragraphs to mere phrases, to provide your audience with only the information they need to know. Brevity is your goal, bullet points your craft.

When tackling these projects, which can be nothing short of arduous for lengthy documents spread across multi-page presentations, there are some best practices and tactics to make your life easier and the final product better.

1. Read the content several times. Sometimes it takes a few takes to understand exactly what is being said, especially if the copy is technical in nature. This step is especially critical for freelancers, who might not be as familiar with the corporate messaging as an in-house designer or marketing support person.

2. Print the document out and read it from paper. This can help comprehension, and makes it easy to highlight passages or make notes.

3. Highlight key passages. Look for "power words." These are the words or phrases that pop off the page, are descriptive, and reinforce the message with color and purpose. Use these words in your PowerPoint slides. For instance:

"In the past year, the company sales team has achieved a ten percent increase in numbers, well beyond initial projections. Leveraging our recently implemented database, profit margins continue to rise despite several personnel additions and our office expansion initiative."

Could be:

* 10% in sales over last year

* Better than projections

* Profits rise despite expansion

4. Bullets are always better than full sentences. They are punctual and easy to digest. Never use full paragraphs unless you specifically want your audience to not read what you have to say.

5. Trim copy to get to the core message. Eliminate frivolous and clichéd marketing speak like "leverage existing technology" and "innovative solutions." These weak strings of buzzwords barely meant anything when they were first published, and the only response they elicit now is the glazing over of your audience's eyes.

6. Find the numbers and take advantage of them! People like to see numbers -- they are easy facts to understand, and give meaning to ambiguous phrases. It is always better to say "Our sales this month are 25% more than a year ago at this time" than "Our sales have increased over the last year." Also, use actual numbers like "25%" rather than "twenty-five percent." It saves space and gives the text more punch.