Writing a Power Point Report

The required format of the first Capstone progress report is a "Power Point Report". Below, a few points that you should consider when putting your thoughts together and presenting them to your Facilitator with PP slides.

PP report vs traditional report

As in any writing, the most important thing to do is to **consider your audience** (here, your Faculty Facilitator) and take into account his/her prior knowledge of the issue, to ensure that your message will be understood in the way you intended. In this case, you and the team have already investigated the case together with the case company and will know (probably quite a lot) more than your Facilitator, which means that your PP slides have to be extremely clear and self-explanatory.

In a traditional, written report you have considerably more **space** to explain the background, prove your point and present arguments whereas the PP format requires you to carefully consider **what and how you choose to present** and what wordings work best to deliver your message. Therefore, selecting the **words, emphases and titles** is even more **crucial** here than in traditional writing, where longer sentences can be used to elaborate on the subject matter.

Content

A report – traditional or PP – includes three basic elements: **opening, core content, closing.**

The actual core content of the progress report consists of

- problem statement
- identification of the actual targets of the project
- project plan

Note that in addition to the core content, you present (1) an opening/preview slide where you introduce the case and the report, and (2) a closing slide, where you conclude the report.

Visualization

A Power Point report can be a very effective document as it allows the reader to get the idea quickly. However, here's a danger too: PP reports may be easily misunderstood! Therefore, it

is important to pay attention to **the way you visualize and word your message**, either with pictures and graphics or with simply text.

For the most effective visual design, pay attention to the following:

- use **titles** in your slides (for more about message titles or topic titles, see Munter 2013).

- **avoid wordiness**, write to the point.

- in your bullet lists or titles, make sure that you **follow the principles of parallelism**, i.e. what you present is both grammatically and conceptually parallel (see the example below); parallelism problems are noticeable in visuals and may hamper understanding.

- **avoid any overload** on the slides (overload of text, pictures, charts, varying fonts and colors etc.); leave some "white space" on the slide as it enables quick reading and often improves understanding.

APPENDIX: Examples of parallelism (Munter 2013)

Grammatical parallelism (= the first word in a series is consistent with the other first words in the series)

> NOT parallel
> > Steps to organize internally
> > 1. Establishing formal sales organization
> > 2. Production department responsibilities defined
> > 3. Improve cost-accounting system
>
> Parallel
> > Steps to organize internally
> > 1. Establish formal sales organization.
> > 2. Define responsibilities for the production department.
> > 3. Improve cost-accounting system.

Conceptual parallelism (= ideas of equal importance shown at equal hierarchical levels)

> NOT parallel
> > - Change product mix.
> > - Eliminate product X.
> > - Concentrate on product Y.
>
> Parallel
> > - Eliminate product X.
> > - Concentrate on product Y.

Reference: Munter, M. (2013), *Guide to Managerial Communication*, Upper Saddle River, NJ: Prentice Hall