



Dear Reader,

Spring is a popular season for conferences. To help you prepare, this issue of **EC Buzz** addresses effective visual presentations (PowerPoint®, anyone?).

I recently attended my first conference of the year, held by the Legal Marketing Association in Chicago. Keynote speaker Carly Fiorina touched on the importance of clarity in marketing messages. She gave kind permission to be quoted in **EC Buzz**.

My trip to Chicago also coincided with the St. Patrick's Day celebrations, which famously include dyeing the Chicago River green. Have you ever celebrated St. Patrick's Day away from home – say, in New York, Boston, or even Dublin? I'd love to hear your stories.



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Three Simple Ways to Spruce Up your Presentations

1. **Keep it snappy.** To avoid losing your audience, stick to the following principles:
 - Present only one main idea per slide.
 - Use bullet points instead of full sentences.
 - Include no more than 6 bullet points with no more than 6 words in each (the oft-quoted 6-by-6 rule).
 - Don't cheat by shrinking the text size to cram more words onto a slide. Ideally text size should be between 24 and 32 points.
 - Don't overdo the number of slides – the average person's attention span is no longer than 45 minutes.
2. **Take advantage of special features.** Presentation software products have many features to enliven presentations, or at least make them easier to follow. Here are a few useful ones:
 - Have bullet points on the same slide appear one at a time to prevent people skipping ahead.
 - Provide handouts that include screenshots and writing space to allow the audience to take notes.
 - According to the old saying, a picture is worth 964 more words than the 6-by-6 rule would allow. Try including some well-chosen graphics.
3. **Proofread.** The critical proofreading step is often skipped when preparing presentations, perhaps because they aren't traditional "publications". Yet grammar and spelling blunders look even worse when they're projected behind you on an enormous screen. Run the spell-checker, but also pay close attention to these error-prone areas:
 - Product names
 - Company and department names
 - People's names
 - Deviations from house style

Buzz Off : *Each and every*

"Each and every" not only smacks of marketing hype, but also of redundancy. Well, almost... In fact these words have different shades of meaning, so it's better simply to pick the right one every time (or was that each time?):

- *Each* denotes an item in a given set considered as a separate entity, with special emphasis on its individuality. ("Each Cabbage Patch Kid comes complete with a first and middle name and a signed birth certificate.")
- *Every* also refers to the entities in a given set, but with less importance placed on individuality. ("Every Ford vehicle is submitted to a thorough safety inspection before leaving the factory.")
- *All* is a third option that refers to the entirety of a given set. It emphasizes universality rather than individuality. ("All Schneider's meat products are made with the highest-quality ingredients and offered at reasonable prices.")

Thanks to subscriber Peter Lynn for nominating this month's buzzword.

Is there a buzzword you would like to banish? Send your suggestion to writer@ecwriting.com, then look for your buzzword and name in an upcoming issue.

Parting Words

"Marketing is speaking in language people understand. Clarity requires simplicity."

– Carly Fiorina, former CEO of Hewlett-Packard