Crabby's tip of the iceberg graphics tips

Applies to: Microsoft PowerPoint 2010, Publisher 2010, PowerPoint 2007, Publisher 2007

Print

Crabby Office Lady

When the moon hits your eye like a big pizza pie...that's a graphic. And what a story it can tell. What kind of story do you want to tell in Publisher and PowerPoint?

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We are visual creatures, taking cues from the outside world one picture at a time. Using art when communicating, in the form of images, graphs, and charts, is the perfect way to get your message across.

Today I'm offering two tips each for the two Office programs that are made for showing, as opposed to simply telling: Publisher and PowerPoint.

Resize, optimize & realize: Compressing images in Publisher

It's pretty obvious why you need small images on Web sites: the site may take a very long time to publish and load, and you also may have to pay your Web hosting service extra money for more space. You really only need to have Web pictures at 96 ppi (pixels per inch).

Same goes for publications such as flyers, brochures, and cards:

- If you're e-mailing a flyer with a large image, it could take a really long time to download (making your recipients crabby) or even be rejected by your recipients' Internet service provider (so they never receive it).
- If you're taking a commercial publication to a professional print shop, the resolution should be between 200 and 300 ppi — you can go larger, but definitely not smaller. If you have several high resolution images in the publication, printing will take quite a bit longer (and may cost you more dough).

TIP Before you start compressing your images willy-nilly, consult with your printer at the shop; he or she will tell you what the resolution needs to be.

To compress images in Publisher 2007:

1. On the **Picture** menu, click **Compress Pictures**.
2. Do one of the following:

   - To compress your pictures for insertion into a document, under **Compress for**, click **Documents**.
   - To compress your pictures for publication on a Web page, under **Compress for**, click **Web pages**.
   - To compress your pictures for sending in an e-mail message, under **Compress for**, click **E-mail messages**.

3. Click **OK**.
   To undo compression, click **Undo** on the **Edit** menu. Compression changes will not be saved until you save them.

Oh Publisher! I can see right through you: Make a picture's background transparent or opaque

I love this tip because in the past, if you wanted to make a background transparent or opaque, you had to do it in an image editing program. Now you can do it directly in Publisher. Below you can see me, Crabby, with a peach-colored background (which doesn't really suit me) and then, after using the transparent feature in Publisher, without the peachy background:

Add a transparent area to a picture

1. Select the picture that you want to create transparent areas in.
2. On the **Picture** toolbar, click **Set Transparent Color** .
3. In the picture, click the color you want to make transparent.

    (The **Set Transparent Color** option is available for bitmap pictures that don't already have transparency information. It's also available for some, but not all, clip art)

To change from transparent to opaque: Select the picture. Press CTRL+T.

Love it!

Make your PowerPoint diagram a bit smarter

I'm guessing you're familiar with SmartArt, but if not, here's a little refresher: A SmartArt graphic (available in the 2007 versions of PowerPoint, Excel, Word, and Outlook) is a visual representation of your information and ideas. You choose a layout that you think expresses your ideas and communicate your message, and before you know it, you have a designer-quality illustration without the designer-quality cost. Below is an example of a SmartArt graphic that uses a layout from the List type:
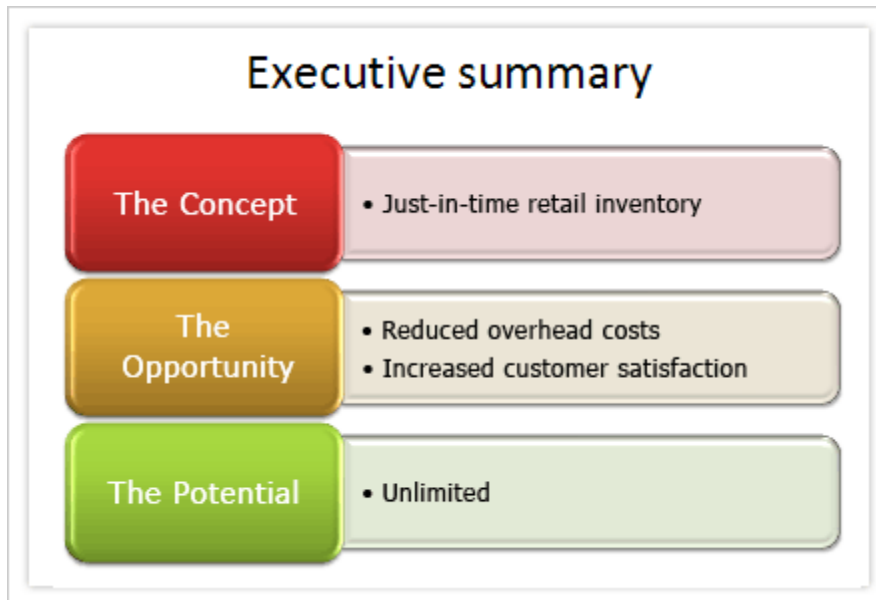
List layouts are typically for items that you want to group but which don't follow a step-by-step process.

Learn more about SmartArt graphics

To convert a diagram that was created in an earlier version of PowerPoint (prior to 2007) to a SmartArt graphic or to a group of shapes:

1. Open the document contains the existing diagram that you want to convert, and then double-click a shape within the diagram.
2. Do one of the following:

    - To convert your diagram to a SmartArt graphic, click **Convert to SmartArt graphic**, and then click **Convert**.
    - To convert your diagram to individual shapes, click **Convert to Shapes**, and then click **Convert**.

    For more detailed information about the dialog box options, click in the **Diagram Conversion** dialog box. Also helpful is this article: When should I use a SmartArt graphic and when should I use a chart?

    NOTE If you change your mind and want to reverse the conversion to a SmartArt graphic or to shapes, click Undo on the Quick Access Toolbar. Nobody saw anything...

When you gotta dance: SmartArt animation

And speaking of SmartArt...how about adding a little animation to perk it up?

You can animate your entire SmartArt graphic or one particular shape within it. Three steps: figure out which animation works best for your graphic; decide if you're going to animate each shape individually or as one; then get the timing down. The basics are this:

1. Click the SmartArt graphic that you want to animate.
2. On the **Animations** tab, in the **Animations** group, select the animation that you want from the **Animate** list.

When you animate your SmartArt, depending on the layout you chose, you have various options. The animation can happen:

- as one object
- all at once
- one-by-one
- by branch one-by-one
- by level all at once
- by level one-by-one

The **Animation Pane** is there to guide you. Also, if you kind of like a certain animation but want to tweak it a little (or a lot), the **Custom Animation Pane** is a good destination for that.

Now, if you decide a layout doesn't work, you can switch to a new one easily, and each animation you have is transferred to the new layout (no one gets left behind).

Now try it out for yourself. And if you want more in-depth instructions and information, read all about how to animate your SmartArt graphic.

"You know, I can see two tiny pictures of myself, and there's one in each of your eyes. And they're doin' everything I do." — Laurie Anderson

About the author

Annik Stahl, the Crabby Office Lady columnist, takes all of your complaints, compliments, and knee-jerk reactions to heart. Therefore, she graciously asks that you let her know whether this column was useful to you — or not — by entering your feedback using the **Did this article help you?** feedback tool below. And remember: If you don't vote, you can't complain.

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