

Add Video Pizzazz to Your Next Training Program in Three Easy Steps

Bypass the VCR and Insert Video Directly
Into Your PowerPoint Presentation

By Steve Mack

If you're a training professional searching for opportunities to make your programs more engaging and effective, using video may be one of your easiest solutions. With a little planning and some creativity, using video and other media can energize your training program.

The best part is there's no need to struggle with a DVD player and a CD player in addition to your laptop and PowerPoint slides. You can seamlessly play all your media in PowerPoint with the click of a button. Here's how you can easily add media pizzazz to your PowerPoint training presentations in three simple steps.

Step 1 - Get the Video Clip

This first step – finding and properly formatting your video content – is the most challenging part of the process. You need some media files that will add value to your training program, such as clips from longer training videos, company media clips, music, or video you shoot yourself. Once you've found a piece of video that fits well with your training program you will need to ensure that it is in one of PowerPoint's usable formats, either AVI, MPEG1, or Windows Media-WMV.

You need to edit the video clips or put what you have in the correct formats, and you've got a couple of options to do this: either get some assistance or edit it yourself.

Option 1 - Get Some Assistance

If you have an internal resource familiar with the basics of video editing you can turn to this person to format the video files. Otherwise, there are plenty of good freelancers out there who should be able to help for a nominal fee. It will only take an hour or two for digitization and a couple of basic edits. The rate will vary depending on the freelancer's experience level, from \$35-\$100 per hour. A larger production house will charge up to \$200 per hour for these services. A free posting on Craigslist.org in the TV/film/video section should net you a bunch of good leads.

Option 2 - Edit It Yourself

If you are computer savvy you may want to try editing some video yourself. There are some good editing software packages out there, such as Adobe Premiere Elements and Avid Pinnacle Studio, which cost around \$150 each and give a few more edit tools than free programs. The free ones (Apple iMovie, and Windows Movie Maker) work well, too.

If you have video on VHS or DVD format that you want to use in PowerPoint, try exporting the video onto your camera first, or directly into your computer from your VHS/DVD player. Some newer computer and DVD player models have RCA and/or firewire cable connections, which make this step easier.

NOTE: Many VHS and DVD titles are copy-protected and don't allow you to export the video to your camera or computer. In this case you will need to work with a video professional to digitize the clip for a nominal fee (see "Option 1 – Get Some Assistance" for suggestions).

File Sizes and Lengths

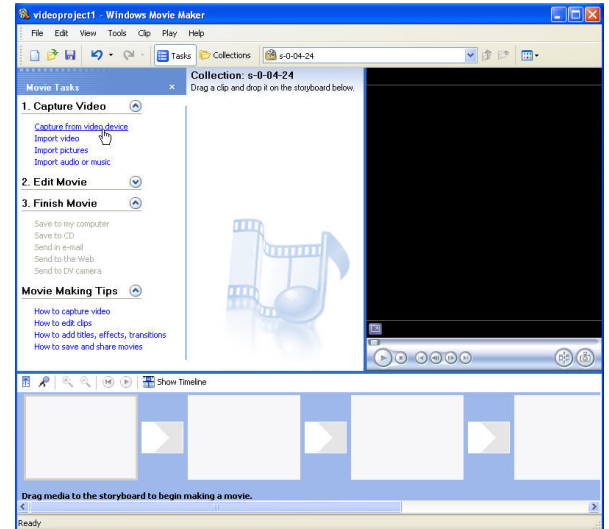
I suggest using the MPEG1 file type, which has a size of just under 50MB for a three minute video clip. AVI files are usually too large in size and WM files don't have as good of quality as MPEG1. An important note is that QuickTime files **do not** play in PowerPoint. You'll need to convert these to AVI or MPEG1 using one of the software packages I noted above. You can also use QuickTime Pro (\$29.99 at apple.com) to convert QuickTime files to AVI and MPEG1.

As for the length of your video clip, you are the best judge of what works best for your training needs. I've used video clips ranging from 30 seconds to 9 minutes in length and have found that as a general rule, one to three minutes typically works best to keep a class interested and engaged.

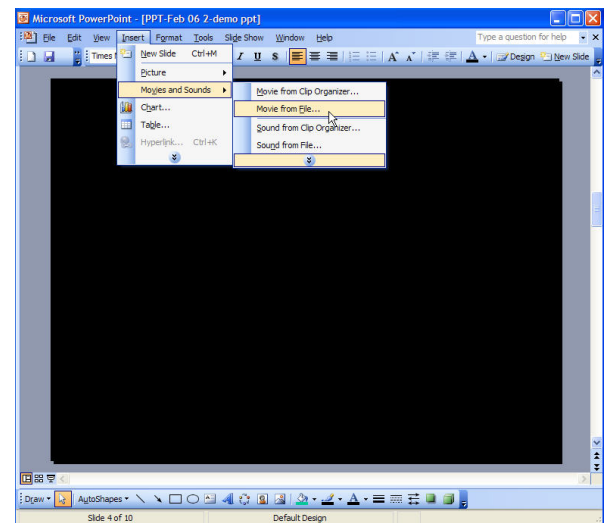
Step 2 - Insert the Video File into PowerPoint

Unlike images, which are embedded into a PowerPoint file, video files are only *referenced* by the PPT program. So, to ensure that the video will play properly, you'll need to keep the video file in a consistent location. I suggest placing the video file in the same directory with the PowerPoint file.

To reference the video: from the PowerPoint main menu (listed at the top of your screen), click **Insert / Movies and Sounds / Movie from File** (see image) and choose the video file to play on that PowerPoint slide. You can then adjust the play settings by right clicking on the video item and selecting Edit Movie Object to adjust such options



Windows Movie Maker editing software (free on many computers) allows you to capture video directly from your video camera or VCR.



Drop down menu allows you to quickly add video to PowerPoint.

as enlarging to full screen, volume control, “play on click,” and others.

Step 3 - Pre-Class Setup and Testing

The main thing to keep in mind now is when you connect your laptop to the overhead projector make sure the audio is hooked up via your laptop headphone jack. This is also a good time to run through the video in the PowerPoint program to make sure the video is running fine and the sound levels are ok. Note: while the slides show up on both the computer and overhead screen, the video clip cannot display on both at the same time (it’s a technical thing).

Now you are ready to *WOW* your class!

That’s a Wrap!

As trainers we’re all familiar with the highs we can get and the flow we often feel when the attendees are engaged, the jokes are getting laughs, and activities are approached with enthusiasm and sincere effort. They’re really learning! Effective use of video can be a great way to sustain that, and to even take it a higher level. When I look at class evaluations, I’m always particularly pleased to see comments regarding the value that my audio/video selections added to an attendee’s experience. When you begin to receive that kind of feedback, you’ll find that acquiring these new skills has been well worth the effort.

About the author:

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