Power Up Your PowToon Studio Project

The ultimate PowToon project guide – get hints, tips, and ideas to turbocharge your PowToon Studio project

Foreword by Ilya Spitalnik, Chief Renegade Scientist – PowToon

Bruce Graham
In this package, you will find:

- The author biography
- A preview chapter from the book, Chapter 1 ‘Structure of a PowToon Studio Project’
- A synopsis of the book’s content
- More information on Power Up Your PowToon Studio Project

About the Author

Bruce Graham has been creating online content for over 15 years. He was responsible for EMEA staff and partner online learning at Oracle Corporation for 5 years before becoming the Global Sales Training Manager at Amdocs for 4 years. For the last 7 years, he has been a UK-based freelance instructional designer who constantly uses PowToon as a component within modules of corporate e-learning when a change of pace is required or a specific point needs to be highlighted.

He also uses PowToon to create marketing and tutorial videos for a variety of companies around the world in a large number of sectors, such as real estate, healthcare, IT, commercial cleaning, sanitation and hygiene, and retail organizations.

To know more, visit http://www.animatedcourses.guru/.
Power Up Your PowToon Studio Project

In today's world, both in our personal and business lives, we are surrounded by online imagery and messaging. It's generally accepted that you have about 5-10 seconds to grab people's attention with an online or web-based message; it needs the "wow" factor, it needs to be clear, and it needs to be memorable. PowToon Studio provides you with the tools you need to do this.

A number of months ago, I was approached by Packt Publishing and asked whether I would consider writing a book about PowToon Studio. My initial thought was "A book? There's no way you need a book; it's all so simple!"

Over the next couple of days, I gave more thought to the proposition. I originally used PowToon Studio in a slightly unusual way, mainly inserting projects into larger, corporate e-learning projects, although I also now have a thriving business creating "standalone" PowToon adverts and web content. There is an entire industry built around e-learning, and it occurred to me that in addition to the "what" of PowToon Studio (what it is and the features), there are many tips and techniques about the "how" (how to get the most out of the product).

There are lots of tips out there, for example, "If you have to use text, use it like a graphic". However, there are fewer PowToon-related examples out there that say how to use text, what fonts are best, the positioning of text, and so on.

What this book aims to do is bring together not only a walkthrough of the product, but try and help you extend your thinking when you build a project—how to use color, how to animate, how to storyboard, and so on.

All the sections could probably form a book in their own right! The aim is not to make you an expert in any of the areas but to help you consider your options and consider how to be creative yourself so that you come up with your own ways to do things—ways that make your work different and make it stand out. It's all about "powering up your PowToon Studio project".

It's important to realize that creating any project is not a "process". Yes, there are some specific steps (like planning before starting…); however, there will always be a creative element where you will go back and change things, alter the plan, and change the focus.

This book has 10 chapters, which approximate to a step-by-step process to create a PowToon Studio project, but do not think in any way that you have to follow them in order. Dip in and out, get some ideas, and have a play.

PowToon Studio is, above anything, fun to use. Great fun! Just because something is serious doesn't mean it can't be fun. It can still be fun!
I have been creating online learning, in many forms, for around 15 years, and I get a huge amount of pleasure when I use PowToon Studio in a project. It does not seem fair really—getting paid to have fun!

PowToon Studio can be used to create many types of content; however, I somewhat arbitrarily group them into commercial, social, and personal projects. I have used these terms in the book at certain points to highlight how the same message can be achieved in different ways depending on your audience. Once again, these are just devices to try and help you think outside the box in a creative and different way. Your projects will be all the better if you do.

Whatever you do, have fun, be creative, and be awesome!

PowToon is a web-based product and is constantly being developed. The features and functionality contained in this book are based on v0.9.23.214 of the product, so you may see extra features and functionality as the product is enhanced.

What This Book Covers

**Chapter 1, Structure of a PowToon Studio Project**, looks at why animations work, when to use them, the art of storytelling, the elements that make up a PowToon Studio project, and some ways to combine the elements.

**Chapter 2, Getting the Best from Color in PowToon**, looks at a few basic principles of color, how to choose colors for your project, ways to combine color, and why it matters.

**Chapter 3, The Dashboard**, covers navigation and file management (naming, deleting, renaming, exporting, and so on).

**Chapter 4, Getting Started**, helps you with building your own PowToon Studio project and selecting a template, and describes the main parts of the "stage" and how they interact.

**Chapter 5, Storyboarding and Scripting**, covers planning—an essential step to power up your PowToon Studio project. Planning helps reduce rework, which is time consuming. It also covers a few suggestions on how to write a script and demonstrates how the same idea can be said in multiple ways depending on the audience.

**Chapter 6, Backgrounds, Characters, and Props**, introduces the main objects that you will work with while creating a project. It covers creating and possibly customizing a background using perspective and magnification, characters to accentuate your message, and manipulating props and characters, and very briefly introduces some methods that you can use to think about layout and composition.
Chapter 7, *Animation, Animating, and Transitions*, is all about adding movement into your project using objects that move by design, by adding movement to objects when they move on and off the stage, and by adding animations between slides (known as transitions). It not only covers the features and functionality and how to use them, but also looks at some of the ways to think about animation that can enhance your content.

Chapter 8, *Text*, looks at some typography basics and the mechanics of inserting text and manipulating it within a project. Text may seem self-explanatory, but to get the most out of text in PowToon Studio (which is primarily an image-based tool), you need to think about words as images. This chapter also covers some ways to make your text more original and creative, accentuating the concept of using text as a visual element, not as "words".

Chapter 9, *Voiceover and Music*, discusses the elements of voiceover and music and looks at how they can add to your project, although opinion does vary on this. It covers the mechanics of inserting audio (including voiceover, sound effects, and music) and looks at some of the considerations that you should take into account before adding a voiceover. The chapter concludes with some basic tips to improve the sound quality of your voiceover recordings.

Chapter 10, *Sharing and Enhancing Your Project*, covers what you should do when you are finished publishing and sharing your project with the world! It also briefly introduces the concept of enhancing the project.

Appendix, *The Latest Features*, covers the latest feature added to PowToon Studio, which is action buttons. New features seem to be added all the time, but this one is exciting and displays just how "dynamic" the product is!
PowToon Studio is an innovative and simple online tool that allows practically anyone to create engaging animations at a fraction of the cost of using an animation studio. These animations can be used for personal and commercial uses, and once created, they are available to use online or download as .mp4 files and be used however you want.

Why do we need a book about PowToon Studio as the software is so incredibly easy to use? Well, a car is easy to use. You start it, put it into gear, press the accelerator, and steer it around roads using some rules, changing gears and braking occasionally. That's all there is to it.
It's the same with PowToon Studio. It is simple to use; however, there is so much that's possible that we are going to bring it all into one place. We are going to go through not only the technical elements of using PowToon Studio, but also some of the design elements that will help you get the most out of the product.

There are many PowToon tutorials and some excellent examples on the Internet. This book aims to expand upon the excellent The Power of Cartoon Marketing e-book produced by PowToon, which is available from http://www.powtoon.com/cartoonmarketing/.

While it is true that you can create a PowToon with zero know-how, there are many things that you can learn about how to get the best out of the software. Having a little more "technical" knowledge about design and how PowToon Studio features can be combined and used can raise the bar with your output.

The first section of the book will deal with a few things that you should think about before you start a project. We will then build up the project, element by element, looking at the options and possibilities until we get to publishing, deployment, and what you can then do to really make a PowToon fly!

**Why do animations work?**

Animated cartoons are one of the earliest forms of visual entertainment that most people remember. As children, we are often allowed to watch cartoons and just enjoy them. They are fun.
When did you last say that about a business presentation or a spreadsheet?

Cartoons are full of stories and messages, many of which are completely implausible; however, we seldom finish watching a cartoon and complain that it was not realistic. The stories they tell are often incredibly compelling.

We remember the stories, and we remember the messages not only because of the visuals, the sounds, and animated movement, but also because of the way cartoons amplify and exaggerate certain things, such as visual features or reactions.

When a message is transmitted using a good animation, it puts the viewer into a state called the Suspension of Disbelief. This term was first used by the poet Samuel Taylor Coleridge in the early 19th century.

In essence, it means that if you tell a good story, people will accept the message or story you communicate and will not challenge it with "grownup" thinking.

PowToon Studio allows you to create this kind of story no matter who your audience is.

It is this "fun" that often scares people when they start looking at PowToon for corporate work; however, one incredibly important thing to realize is that serious messages can be communicated in animations. Just because it is an animation, it does not mean that the message is not serious.

You can learn a lot more about the Suspension of Disbelief at http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Suspension_of_disbelief.
This is the essence of a great PowToon.

When we see a cartoon or a simple image, we stop asking "grownup" questions, and we start to concentrate on the message more.

If you can get people to concentrate on the message, you can get them to do things such as Click Here, Visit www.xxxx.xxxx to donate, Buy Now!, Join our Club, Subscribe NOW!, or whatever your communication is focused on.

Cartoons create high-impact messages because they take the details and condense them into simplified messages that people in many cultures are almost primed to accept. Of course, there are many factors surrounding this, such as the culture, the personal experience, and so on, but cartoons offer us a route into people's minds.

The whole purpose of PowToon is to make this simple. PowToon allows this process to happen at a fraction of the cost of using professional animators. Like any rapidly created product, there are limitations; you cannot do everything. However, it covers many of the bases and offers a huge amount of flexibility while keeping you within the PowToon structure.

That being said… a great PowToon can take a lot of time to produce well. It is possible to create something quickly; however, producing a commercial-quality PowToon (if that is your objective) can take a day or more for a 60-90-second product.

**When could I use a PowToon?**

PowToon can be used anywhere you want a message to be communicated.
Chapter 1

Typical uses of PowToon are in schools, for advertisements, as part of an e-learning course, for explainer videos, product launches, resumes, product showcases, sales videos, and investor videos.

When you log in to your PowToon account and press the \textbf{Create} button, there are currently 24 different templates provided for you (which we'll look at in \textit{Chapter 4, Getting Started}). The PowToon team is constantly adding to these. There are no limits to what you can do.

When you create a PowToon, you will end up creating an .mp4 file. There are two types of PowToon output: an animated presentation that you can stop and start or a video. Just as with any other .mp4 file, these can be used standalone, within other media (such as a website, for example), or even augmented using other video production software (such as After Effects).

It's important to note that the source file for your PowToon is not generally something you receive. This will always stay on the PowToon servers; you receive the output, not the source file. You edit the source file(s) by logging in to your PowToon account.

The e-learning expert Cathy Moore has a great article (http://blog.cathy-moore.com/2013/07/how-humor-helps-powtoon-review/) on how humor can motivate people, and in her article, she used PowToon to illustrate this. It was actually this article that drew my attention to PowToon; so thanks, Cathy!

\section*{The renaissance of storytelling}

Stories are powerful, and every PowToon you create will tell a very short story, but a "story" does not always have to be the "Once upon a time..." type.

Stories have been used for thousands of years to teach, to warn, and to entertain. Some cultures never write anything down, relying on "oral history" (stories) to pass on events and timelines. Stories are a powerful, compelling, and almost universally used way of communicating information between people.

So, why, in many cases, has this skill been forgotten?

Many of us have grown up in a world where stories are seen as childish and \textbf{only} for children. Pictures on the page and in our minds are something that we should swap when we grow up; swap for bullet points, graphs, word-heavy reports, and the other paraphernalia of the corporate and "grownup" world.
In many cases, that type of "grownup" content is just dull. Many people no longer respond to them. It is time for a visual renaissance.

During the 21st century, many people in commerce/businesses have realized something that children have always known; stories are fun and stories can be very interesting. If they are fun and interesting, perhaps they can be used in commerce/business as a communication tool?

The late 20th century was characterized as a time when a lot of information transfer was done using Microsoft PowerPoint. Although some very compelling presentations have been created using PowerPoint, many people are unaware of how powerful it can be and stick with the defaults. Most people have become used to seeing and presenting using bullet points.

Bullet points are a specific grammatical tool, and they do have a place; however, many people just use bullet points to represent a list of phrases of sentences. This is not only incorrect from a grammatical perspective, but also very dull!

As the 21st century has progressed, it's been realized in many countries and many commercial and noncommercial organizations that not only are good stories and narratives interesting, but they can also serve as a powerful communication tool.

Previously seen as frivolous in many places, storytelling is becoming more and more mainstream (again).
The world of e-learning spotted this, started calling stories "scenarios", and used them to help learners make choices and see the consequences using various techniques, such as branching, and a variety of technologies that allow quizzes to be created, such as the Articulate products: Quizmaker and Storyline.

Software companies have realized that the market is there, and that is where PowToon (along with others) comes in.

Software that allows powerful stories to be told using the visual medium of cartoons, which is understood by a high percentage of people due to their childhood experiences, is now available to everyone.

**Structure of a PowToon**

There are five main components to any cartoon/PowToon. They are explained as follows; you have to decide on the mix and balance that work well for you and your audience:

- **Words:**
  - Words (on the screen and perhaps in a voiceover) do have a part to play. They tap into the logical side of the human brain.
  - They can be used to express important information, such as on a website or someone's thoughts.
  - A single word can be used to sum up a group of images or summarize a sentence that has been spoken.
  - Words onscreen should **not** be used to repeat what is being said if you have a voiceover.
You need to decide whether a voiceover is appropriate. We'll talk about this more in Chapter 9, Voiceover and Music.

- **Numbers:**
  - Numbers can be used to represent a number to call, or they can be used to represent size (very important in *infographics*).
  - Another important function of numbers in a PowToon is that they are a way of *comparing* different items, and that is where the PowToon Infographic style is extremely powerful.

- **Images:**
  - Images are the "core" of the cartoon, and PowToon gives us a set of images for each style (we'll look at these in detail later). Images can be characters, props, markers, or shapes.

  In PowToon, these are referred to as props. This is because, like in a film or on a stage, they are meant to act in supporting roles to your characters and story.
One important type of image that can affect your PowToon is the background that you choose.

It's important to realize that you can get a powerful effect by changing the background that you use throughout a PowToon, which we'll look at in Chapter 6, Backgrounds, Characters, and Props.
People process images faster than words. One figure you can find on the Internet is that we process visuals 60,000 times faster than words (see http://rhdeepexploration.wordpress.com/2011/12/05/visuals-60000-times-faster/). The exact figure is debated; however, the concept seems to be sound. Why is this so important? It’s important because images seem to affect humans both cognitively (understanding the message, remembering similar experiences we have had, and retaining the message) and also emotionally (for example, affecting imagination). This is why choosing appropriate PowToon images (covered in Chapter 6, Backgrounds, Characters, and Props) is so important. Not only is PowToon a childlike medium, which many people love, but also the images heighten the message. Wow! What a great combination!

You are not limited to the built-in PowToon props. You can import your own images, images you have purchased, images from the Web, and/or .swf images. PowToon Studio also has a built-in feature that lets you search for images on Flickr; however, you must give credit to the authors. This means that this option might not be appropriate for some projects where attribution information detracts from the presentation or is not within corporate presentation guidelines.

We’ll cover images in a lot more detail in Chapter 7, Animations, Animating, and Transitions.

• Music:

Music can add another dimension to your PowToon; however, you should not necessarily use music just because it is there.

Music can add a great background to a text-only PowToon or provide a subtle background to voiceovers.

It can also ruin the effect of a PowToon. We will cover music in more depth, including copyright issues, later.

There is music built into PowToon, found within Sound Manager, with different tunes for each subscription level.

You can also import music that you have purchased or have rights to use.
All music can be played once or looped, and you can decide the relative volume between music and voiceover if you use both options in one project. Here's a glimpse of **Sound Manager**:

- **Sound effects**:  
  - Sound effects can add a huge dimension to cartoons, and they are fun to include.  
  - We all love the **BOINGS** and **THWACKS**! of our childhood cartoons, and when used appropriately, they can add another dimension.
Structure of a PowToon Studio Project

- Sound effects are not currently a built-in feature of PowToon; you need to source them separately, and you need to insert them using a third-party audio application to get the best out of them. The following screenshot shows a soundtrack with sound effects created in Audacity v2.0.2:

![Soundtrack screenshot]

There are a number of places to source these sounds.

While you now understand the parts of a PowToon, you may have problems when you use them, especially in a corporate project. If you are creating a course based on someone else's knowledge or data, please understand that they might have spent a long time getting to the point where they have all this data. It has a personal value to them. You may need to be prepared for resistance to change if you suggest using PowToon Studio rather than MS PowerPoint, so be prepared to start slowly and proceed cautiously.

Some people will just not get the fact that you want to turn their "serious" data into something that they see as "comedic" or "silly". Be aware of this, and be prepared to counter it if necessary with all the reasons why PowToon can work for (almost) any subject matter.

It is critical to remember that when you create a piece of media, such as a PowToon, it has to work for your audience and not just for you. There's no point staying in your comfort zone and producing content if it is not the type of content your audience expects or will respond to positively.
My background is corporate e-learning. When we craft most e-learning material, it is with the express purpose of doing three things and three things only:

- To increase profit
- To reduce loss
- To reduce personal or business risk

There are no other real reasons to train people so long as you look at training from a "corporate" perspective.

This is the same with your PowToon Studio projects. There has to be a reason why you created it. Now, it may be that you just want to send a birthday message to someone, and that's fine; send the message. However, many PowToons aim to get a reaction. This reaction may be to get people to invest, go to your website, support you, or anything really, and to change their behavior requires that you make the message as strong as possible. Every word, every sound, every animation, and every prop has to earn their place at the table.

Decide on the purpose of your communication and craft the PowToon to match that purpose. If that means you need to do something that is different to your usual style, go with it; be brave. If you don't, you may just end up wasting your time.

**Features and the balance of simplicity**

PowToon offers a large range of features, which we will explore throughout the book. It therefore offers you a huge range of possibilities. No product has everything that everyone wants, and PowToon is the same. While it is regularly updated, and new features/options are added, there will always be something that someone wants added.

PowToon needs to remain simple to use, or it loses that "secret sauce".

PowToon's Facebook page and suggestions/feedback page are full of great ideas for new product features. Many people have requested more and more complex features for PowToon Studio to bring it on par with Camtasia for example; however, PowToon has to remain simple to use, and that means that some features might never become available. The development team, just as with any product, has to decide how to keep the spirit of the product along with the features.
The answer to this is to always use what you have. There is plenty there, and the more you use it, the more you will find you can do.

If you are careful, you can mix and match between styles, and there are plenty of those! Seek ways to do things differently, and if necessary, change your plan. That is the value of planning and storyboarding, which we'll look at in Chapter 4, Getting Started.

There is also a host of tutorials and examples available from the PowToon website and the Internet to help you plan. If you spend some time looking at these, you will begin to see similarities where people have just used the defaults.

Ask yourself the question, "How would I combine those differently?"

The magic formula for mixing the elements

So, given that there are a number of parts to PowToon Studio, what’s the magic formula to putting them together?

Well, the bad news is that there is no magic formula! The magic is the fact that anyone can now create an animation that used to cost several thousand <enter your local currency here!>.
The good news is that wonderful psychologists have provided us with a few rules and suggestions based on research to make powerful PowToons, and the PowToon development team has enabled many of these theories in the software, so if you learn how to use it, you can create some extraordinarily powerful communications.

Cognitive overload

PowToon is loaded with features, and it is tempting to use as many as you can in every PowToon you create!

It is very easy to "overdesign" a PowToon simply because it is so easy to do so much!

If you have too much going on, you can cause what is known as cognitive overload (which is a bad thing).

Basically, the theory goes like this:

- Every human only has a certain amount of "space" available in their working memory
- They need to process every item in that memory before they can move on and continue learning/processing
- You therefore need to limit the information you throw at people and let them complete one thing before starting the next

In PowToon terms then, this leads to several conclusions, which cross over into the following principles we'll cover:

- Spaces and silence are a good thing. This can sometimes be hard to accept when you only have your 60–90-second PowToon, but try and leave at least some processing time when it is appropriate and when you have messages that must be heard, understood, and acted upon by your audience.
- Try to use short phrases, statements, and visual imagery that get your message over with as little additional explanation as possible for you. Wherever possible, in your onscreen text (and your voiceover if you have one), use short phrases, single words, or emphasize single words using comic-book conventions (which we'll look at in Chapter 8, Text).
- Try not to have too much going on onscreen at any time.
- As people cannot read and listen effectively at the same time, create your PowToon, for example, with the spoken word explaining something they have just seen on the screen (or vice versa).
One difference that you will see from professionals is the application of "less is more". It's very easy to add and add. You can add impact to a PowToon by cutting out the "fat" and reducing every second to what is core content.

Luckily, cartoons have a vocabulary and style all of their own, which can be used to your advantage, given that you only have limited time to get across most of the message.

In cartoons, you do not have to use full sentences; in fact, you do not have to use "normal" sentence construction at all! The following are a few conventions:

- It is perfectly acceptable to use single words in text boxes/speech/thought bubbles provided they make sense in the context of what is being said.
- You do not have to use full stops at the end of sentences. This is because you are not always using full sentences:
  - If, for example, you are using a thought bubble (thought bubbles usually have round, cloud-like constructions), then you can use dots or a series of dots after the word, signifying thinking.
- You can be very concise in the words you use, for example, **call now!** (and so on):
  - This allows you to be very specific about the message that you want to communicate. In many other forms of communication, this would be bordering on rude, but in cartoons, it is perfectly **ok** to do this.
We will look more at some helpful comic-book text and thought conventions later on, in Chapter 8, Text. If you apply some of these conventions in your PowToon, you can add an extra layer of professionalism to your content.

PowToon offers us many visuals and props. Use them appropriately; use them to support your story, not to make it "pretty". Do not create a "FrankenToon" just because you can!

One of my favorite books on the subject of presentations (and with PowToon, you are creating a presentation) is Brilliant presentation: what the best presenters know, say and do, Richard Hall, Financial Times Management (Pearson Prentice Hall Business, 2007). Chapters 5 to 7 cover How to Write a Great Story, How to Give Your Story Colour, and How to Illustrate Your Presentation. I will refer to it throughout this book.

As well as mixing the elements, you need to keep the pace of the PowToon going; a PowToon that trudges along will not be as powerful as one that has pace to it (but do not try and put too much in your 60-90 seconds).

Early versions of PowToon had one-second intervals on the timeline in order to help keep the pace fast; however, the timeline now has 0.5 second intervals. This is probably about right for a product like this. PowToon is not trying to emulate the millisecond precision in products such as Camtasia.

Adding the power of surprises and laughter to the mix

Anything that is surprising can have a powerful effect on an audience; for example, if you make people laugh in a serious PowToon, they often remember the point you were making when you made them laugh.

It is possible to create a wonderful presentation in MS PowerPoint. That's a fact.

For a masterclass in design and how to use presentation software and presentation techniques, I would recommend slideology – The Art and Science of Creating Great Presentations, Nancy Duarte, O'Reilly Media Inc. 2008.
Unfortunately, most of the time, MS PowerPoint has been used in a very dull and lackluster way by people who are not prepared to learn how to use it well, and who are unprepared to incorporate some design basics.

For example, just because they are easy to create, many people think bullet points are the same as sentences, listed. They are not. Bullet points have a specific structure and purpose (I'll let you Google that one…).

I love that PowToon does not have a bullet point feature; it focuses us on presenting words in a different way (perhaps in a speech or thought bubble).

A wonderful article by the American Psychology Association (http://www.apa.org/monitor/jun06/learning.aspx) explains how laughing leads to learning. Laughing can be because something is funny or because tension is relieved by a "joke". That's why PowToon can include something that is surprising and make you laugh and remember the message.

The article explains that laughter reduces stress hormones. What a wonderful way to make a "sales" message more acceptable (and many PowToons, whether corporate or personal, are "selling" a message of some sort).

So, when you are planning a PowToon, in addition to thinking about the words, numbers, images, music, and sound effects, think about how you can combine them to introduce an unexpected element or surprise.

That is why (for example) using a Panda to represent your CEO or a vampire to represent your sales VP can work (make sure that you get their permission first). You must be careful to understand your corporate culture as this type of approach may not suit some companies where hierarchy and egos play an important part!
Chapter 1

PowToon licenses

Just as an aside, it is important to understand the variety of subscriptions available for PowToon because different subscriptions have different options.

There are several types of subscription plans for PowToon, and this will ultimately affect what options you have available. There are free, pro, and business licenses, and there are also specific enterprise, student, and teacher plans available. For more detail on the differences between each license option, see http://www.powtoon.com/pricing/.

At the time of writing this book, premium subscriptions are further broken down into free, pro, and business (the top level). All these have certain features and capabilities; the higher your subscription, the more features you get. There are also pay-per-publish options.

The free versions have a PowToon watermark, and the "Created using PowToon" audio ident is added to the end of your PowToon Studio project. They have fewer themes and options available than the pay versions.

Business subscription gives you unlimited access to the PowToon free music and styles and allows you to monetize your output.

This book is written from the business plan perspective so that you can see the largest range of examples possible. While you may see examples that are not available to you, all the principles used in the book are applicable to all levels of license.

![💡] Even the free version is an incredibly powerful tool that allows you to create animation miracles!

What is the perfect length for a PowToon?

Ah, the magic question!

A 60–90-second PowToon is about the right length, long enough to tell a story and not long enough for people to get bored and forget your message. If they begin to lose focus, all your hard work starts to be wasted!
I once created an entire "microcourse" on a coaching technique that lasted 4 minutes, but that is probably about the limit in terms of time.

So, typically, a PowToon will be between 60 and 90 seconds long with around 230 words in the voiceover. This can be pro-rata (so, a 30-second PowToon would have around 80 words or so).

Here are 230 words; it is not a lot to get your message across and get people to act, so you have to use every word (and image) thoughtfully:

These are just guidelines!
If you are able to produce a compelling PowToon that is 4 minutes long, then well done! With a great story, engaging visuals, and pace, there is no reason why you cannot do this, but it will take you a lot of practice to get to that point.

**Remember**, it's all based around whether your **audience** will watch that long and retain the messages, not about whether it is possible to do so.

Around a maximum of 90 seconds is a good guideline to work towards. We all love the sound of our own voices, in reality and metaphorically, but remember that your audience might not.

The challenging news is that you have somewhere in the region of 5–10 seconds of those 60–90 seconds to "hook" your audience. If you cannot do this, it is unlikely they will be receptive to your message. Although there are some ways around this, depending on exactly what your PowToon video is used for, it's a great thing to keep at the back of your mind as it focuses your writing. We'll look at this again in *Chapter 5, Storyboarding and Scripting*, when we look at scripting.

**Scripting**

Ah yes, writing a script!

To get the best from PowToon Studio, you are going to need to write a script and/or storyboard. You **may** or **may not** use the script for a voiceover.

Do not worry, "writing" can just be some brief notes, but it's best to plan before just diving in and "creating", if you can. After all, if you do not have a map of where you are going, how do you know when you have got there?

We'll go over some suggestions on how to do this in *Chapter 5, Storyboarding and Scripting*, but until then, just remember that you need to practice the skill of distilling words. In other words, you need to think about being a sharp communicator — a skill that will come in handy in **many** other areas of life.
Summary
In this chapter, we looked at the structure of a PowToon (what "bits" there are in one). We discussed the features and how you should get into the mindset for this awesome software. If you find there's something that you would really like to do, either find a way or have a plan B.

This chapter introduced the concept and risks of cognitive overload and looked at some simple cartooning conventions. You should always think about how to combine the parts and start to think about humor and surprise in your content.

The chapter explained how the license that you have affects the assets you are able to access, and therefore the content you can ultimately produce. We also looked (and visually represented) the length of a PowToon just to get you thinking about the concept of "less is more".

In Chapter 2, Getting the Best from Color in PowToon, we'll look at an important consideration for a PowToon: color.

PowToon provides some really colorful background, image, and text options; however, it will help you to know a little bit about color theories with regard to what works and what does not work. There’s no need to follow the chapters in order from here on; you can dip in and out; however, I’ve tried to structure it in a logical order if that is how you would like to read it.

So, how can you use colors in your PowToon? You are surrounded by colors; however, most of the time, people do not understand how important color is in creating a mood or supporting another message, perhaps some words. Let's now look at the next chapter.
**Where to buy this book**

You can buy Power Up Your PowToon Studio Project from the Packt Publishing website. Alternatively, you can buy the book from Amazon, BN.com, Computer Manuals and most internet book retailers. Click here for ordering and shipping details.