

Developing a Poster for Presentation

Why do you want to do a poster presentation?

Well-designed posters have:

- Symmetry
- Key words
- Important content emphasized
- Graphics, tables or figures to present findings

Poorly-designed posters have:

- Disorganization
- Too much information
- Too little information
- No graphics, tables or figures

Excellent references:

Melnyk, B., & Fineout-Overholt, E. (2005). *Evidence-based practice in nursing and healthcare: A guide to best practice*. NY: Lippincott, Williams & Wilkins, pages 368-370.

Wipke-Tevis, D., & Williams, D. (2002). Preparing and presenting a research poster. *Journal of Vascular Nursing*, 20, 138-143.

Sources: Morra, M. (1984). How to plan and carry out your poster session. *Oncology Nursing Forum*, 11, 52-57.

Van Hoozer, H. (1982). Visual communication guidelines. *University of Iowa, College of Nursing*.

Basics:

- Start about 2 months before the presentation
- Title,
- Author listing,
- Affiliation (email or phone numbers?)
- Content (*see separate section below*)
- References? (if so, can be very small print at the end), and
- Acknowledgement: consider if you need to acknowledge the assistance of any group, person, or department (this can also be small print)
- Include your agency's logo and any image that your department may be recognized for, such as the Magnet image for nursing department
- As you prepare the content, you may wish to consult with your agency's media department for guidance with artistic layout and materials.

Identify the amount of space you can have for your poster:

- Determine from the conference organizers if the poster needs to be stand alone (it sits on a table or easel) or if there will be bulletin boards to hang it on (information will be supplied for display of posters with the acceptance letter)
 - o Determine how wide the table or bulletin board: 4 feet can hold 2 panels; 8 feet-3 panels
 - o Stand alone: 2-3 panels are used to make poster; panels can be 24-30 inches wide and are usually 36 inches high

Clarify your message:

- What is it exactly that you want to communicate? What message do you want people to remember? This is the goal for your poster; for example: here is a practice change nurses can implement, here is a strategy to prevent falls, here is a new tool to assess for pain, etc.
- Identify the audience
- Is this poster going to be used for multiple audiences? If so, review needs for each audience.

Compose the content for your poster:

- Write in phrases, short sentences
- You can use Word or PowerPoint to create your document
- Using PowerPoint forces you to think in bullets and phrases (6 words per line and only 6 lines per slide)
- Amount of content:
 - o For a 3-panel poster, create a maximum of content using 500 words or so (that would fill about 12-13 PowerPoint slides)
 - o For a 2-panel poster, use about 300 words or less (or 6-10 PowerPoint slides)
 - o See samples on last page
- Use graphs, tables, pictures, and examples whenever possible for interest, clarity and readability
- Logical sequence possibilities:
 - o Chronological
 - o Cause >>> effect
 - o Problem >>> solution
 - o Aim, Current Knowledge, PDSA

Write an outline using the headings you will use in the poster:

- Research poster would use research headings:
 - Background and Significance
 - Purpose of the study/project
 - Hypothesis or Research Question
 - Sample Description/Population
 - Method/Approach
 - Results/Outcomes
 - Conclusions/Implications
- A performance improvement project or other type of project may use similar research headings or PDSA headings, such as:
 - Aim (purpose or goal)
 - Current knowledge (background and significance)
 - Plan, Do, Study, Act
 - Next steps

Poster visuals

- Figures, diagrams, tables, graphs, artwork (with permission), photographs, metaphoric artifacts

Review and revise:

- Have someone who doesn't know your presentation read through it to see if it is clear
- Make sure all authors are able to review the content
- Does the poster answer: who, what, when, where, why, how?
- Minimize number of words; no sentences
- Do a word count
- A reader should be able to understand the content in about 5-10 minutes
- **What will make the viewer stop and look at your poster?** All posters compete for attention.

Transporting the poster

- Short distances: can be full-size and protect in wrapping paper or plastic
- Long distances: use banner style for poster, or design in sections and assemble at conference
- Some posters use a permanent framework and the content on sheets is attached using Velcro®
- Last, paper or leather art folders may be used for transport

Notes

- Bring tape with you to the conference for emergency repairs
- Bring your business cards to distribute
- If there is a conference book (95% of the time there is one), use the book to write notes or refer participants to that page for contact info

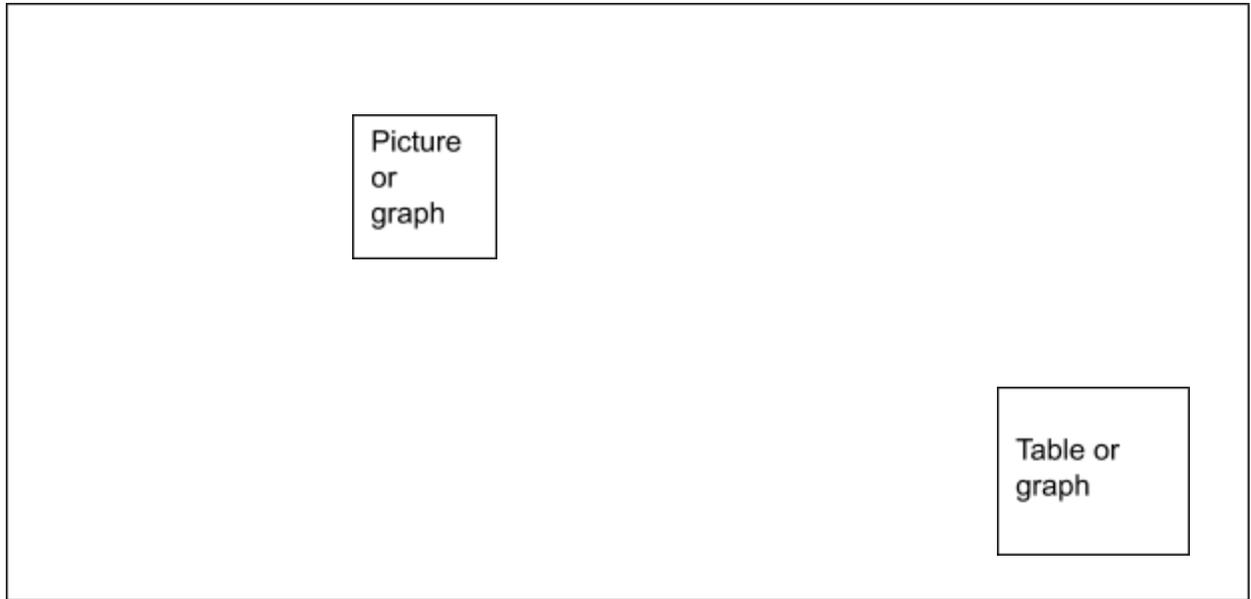
Advertising Principles for Poster Presentations (Morra, 1984)

- ✓ Less is better. Don't try to say too much.
- ✓ Bigger is better. Don't crowd your poster.
- ✓ Put the most important elements at eye level.
- ✓ Write to one person; use active verbs.
- ✓ Use short sentences, short paragraphs and short words.
- ✓ Write headings with brief colorful nouns and vigorous active verbs
- ✓ Many people just read headlines; keep them less than 10 words.
- ✓ Instead of paragraphs, use bullets, arrows or other symbols
- ✓ Use subheads
- ✓ Use bold for key information
- ✓ Write a title or caption for every table and photo

Suggested components/layouts (for presenters): Use your abstract for the key points!

In most cases, you don't use your abstract on the poster

Consider about 300 words for a 2-panel poster (or 6-10 Power Point slides)



Consider about 500 words for a 3-panel poster (or 12-13 Power Point slides)

