How to design a poster

An effective poster is simple:

1. Design for 3 audiences.
   - Attract more than your competitors.
     Your competitors need no efforts attract viewers in your area need context and accessibility. Viewers outside your area need the problem explained.

2. Organize for easy viewing.
   - Lay out in column format.
     If you lay out in rows instead, those who read the top row may be unable to fight their way back to the beginning to read the next row. They will move on to the next poster.

3. Indicate the sequence.
   - Supply clues.
     Use numbers, letters, a logical sequence. Order the panels visually in units and columns. Avoid asymmetries, which distract the eye.

4. Use a visual hierarchy.
   - Visually reflect the relative importance.
     If something is important, make it BIG. Title is biggest, headings next, then explanations. Use figures and graphs to make evidence obvious.

5. Vital information = big type
   - If your message is visually emphasized, viewers will get your message at a glance.

6. Make graphics dominate.
   - Emphasize material visually.
     Use graphics, figures, cartoons, avoid unornamented tables. Use color to emphasize and to link words with images. Use formats without keys; write explanations on the figures.

7. Organize visually.
   - Maximize order and emphasize with color.
     Keep panels similar in shape, confirmation and orientation. Group elements together to form conceptual units. Use color for emphasis, and use it consistently.

8. Use readable text.
   - Think of text as just another visual aid.
     Keep text brief, compact and single-spaced. Title is biggest; headings next; then explanations. Order the panels visually, in units and columns. Avoid asymmetries, which distract the eye.

   - Edit ruthlessly.
     Omit all you can; simplify verbiage; dump details. Details detract. If you must have details, use a handout. Simple messages are the most memorable.

10. Make strong conclusions.
    - Step beyond merely stating results.
      Differentiate among data, summaries and conclusions. Commit yourself: state interpretations and conclusions. Make the strongest statement your data will support.

11. Use graphics in your talk.
    - Focus on the evidence: the graphics.
      Start with context: the problem, its importance, your solution. Don’t read the poster; use it as a visual aid, pointing to figures. Practice 5 and 2 minute talks, then face your viewers!

Advice below tells how you can reach these objectives.

An effective poster is simple:

- Focused
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- Use color for emphasis, and use it consistently.
- If the evidence is organized and emphasized, your message will be obvious.

Think of text as just another visual aid.
- Keep text brief, compact and single-spaced.
- Title/major headings readable at 6 feet, the rest at 3 feet.
- Avoid using all capitals or right-adjusted text.

A readable poster obeys the commandment:
- Thou shalt not irritate thy viewer.

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- 11. Use graphics in your talk.

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