TVN Poster Development

practical considerations

Posters will be mounted on poster boards that will be provided by the 2nd Annual TVN Conference on Improving Care for the Frail Elderly. The poster board measures 6 feet (182.88 cm) wide x 3 feet (91.44 cm) vertical. It does not have to be this exact size but must fit in this allocated space. TVN will supply velcro to mount your board. TVN will supervise the poster displays during display hours, however security cannot be guaranteed. You should ensure your poster is not the only record of your work and that you set up and take down your poster as scheduled.

preparation advice

Below are some tips to help you plan and prepare your poster, ensuring that it is accessible to delegates. The tips are presented for guidance only. While each poster has its own display area and you have a designated time in the programme to be at your poster, it will be in competition with others.

content

- In terms of presenting your poster, consider using the headings given in the guidance for abstracts for research and special interest papers. However, many presenters simplify this to introduction, methods / materials, results, discussion / conclusions and recommendations. Many times, conclusions are very brief, as the poster covers only a portion of the research.
- References should be included, if used, but try to keep them to a minimum.
- Give credit where it is due. Have an acknowledgments section, in smaller size font (14-18 point font size), where you acknowledge contributors and funding organizations.
- Ethics approval if appropriate should be mentioned and the appropriate committee / body acknowledged.
- Provide information about where / how you can be contacted on the poster.
- Be prepared to edit – there is always too much text on posters. Look critically at the content when it is laid out. If there is a balance of approximately 1/3rd text, 1/3rd graphics and 1/3rd empty space, you are doing great!
- Title / Heading: The title of the poster should the same as on your abstract. The heading should include the authors' names and affiliations.
- Text: Your poster should be understandable without you being there to explain it to delegates.
- Words should be spelled out, avoiding abbreviations / acronyms / jargon.

- Illustrations Graphs/ Tables / Figures / Photos / Drawings:
  - Tables are preferable to graphics for small data sets.
  - Tables also work well when data presentation requires many localised comparisons.
  - Little messages help explain data. Labels should be placed on the graphics itself, no legend is required.
  - Lines in data graphics should be thin.
  - Graphics should tend toward the horizontal, greater in length than height, ideally 50
  - percent wider than tall.
  - Explanations should be used to enhance access to the richness of data and make graphics more attractive to the viewer.
  - Elaborately coded shadings, crosshatching and colours should be avoided.
  - Photographs also help, if relevant, and are a good way of providing colour. They should be of sufficient size to be visible from a distance – 7.6cm x 7.6cm (3in x 3in) photos are probably the smallest to use, and 10.2cm x 15.2cm (4in x 6in) photos are a good size.
  - Remove all nonessential information from graphs and tables.
  - Use colours to distinguish different data groups in graphs and avoid using patterns or open bars in histograms.

layout

Don't simply use a wall of text – it is not attractive or readable. Use small blocks for the text that can stand alone. Give your poster sections and allow space around your work light and empty space attracts the eye (and the reader). It sometimes helps to lay your poster out in columns.

- The text, tables and graphics should look integrated. Words and illustrations should go together tables and graphics should be integrated within the text whenever possible, avoiding clumsy diverting segregation.
- Consider using a flow chart, arrows, numbering or some other method of providing the reader with a guide around your display.
- The same typeface should be used for all and ruled lines separating different types of information should be avoided.
- Lines of text should contain about 10 to 12 words and should run from left to right. It is best to have your text left justified, with the right side ragged, as this is easier to read.
- Start by doing a sketch of your poster layout and then move onto setting it out in actual size – a white board is a convenient place to work. At this stage it is still an illustration of the finished product to give you ideas for presentation. This is a good time to seek advice from colleagues.

background

- Many people simply use a white background with black text. This is easy to read, but some colour will make your poster attractive to the reader.
- Try to use primary colours rather than shocking bright colours.
- Consider what colour you want to use for text / illustrations and make sure it complements the background e.g. blue background with yellow / orange text.

font

- Your poster title should be readable from at least 1.8m (6ft) away. Use something like 72 point font (2cm / 3/4in tall) for the title.
- Use large fonts for the headings and for key points that focus on some of the centralideas presented. Use at least 48 point font (1.3cm / 1/2in tall).
- Ensure the main body of the text can be read from at least 1.2m (4ft) away. Use something like 24 point font (0.6cm / 1/4in tall) for the text.
- Use only one type of font, such as a sans serif face (e.g. Arial) that is clear and precise.
- Use upper and lower case and avoid using too many style changes e.g. shadow, bold, italics, etc.

final layout

However you are producing the final poster, whether you are doing it yourself or using a graphic designer, here are some questions to help you check the layout before final production.

- Is the message clear?
- Do the key points stand out?
- Is there a good balance between text and illustrations?
- Is the sequence of your poster clear?
- Is the level of space around your poster appropriate?
- Do the colours you've chosen work together?

Handouts

Additional information about the topic presented in the poster may be provided in the form of a pamphlet, flyer or some other handout for delegates to take away.

For a useful guide to producing posters with PowerPoint see:
http://www.cmer.wsu.edu/~yonge/ce465/poster.pdf
Poster Design and Layout: from font sizes to color contrast see:
http://www.makesigns.com/tutorials/poster-design-layout.aspx