

How NOT to design a poster

<http://tinyurl.com/42ek8> and <http://tinyurl.com/9weol>

This poster show examples to avoid!

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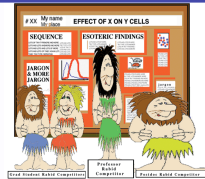
An effective poster is simple:



- Focused** It focuses on a single message.
- Simple** It avoids saturating the viewer with text.
- Graphic** It doesn't tell, it shows: graphics dominate.
- Ordered** It uses a visual hierarchy for emphasis.

Negative examples below illustrate consequences of ignoring these principles.

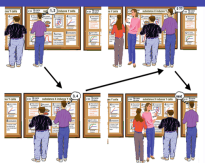
1. Design for competitors.



If you identify complexities, not context...
 If you avoid context, interpretations and conclusion...
 If you use dense jargon and uncommon abbreviations...
 If you don't explain your work and findings...

...then no one will know or care about your work except your competitors.

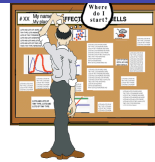
2. Discourage viewers.



If you lay out in rows, not columns...
 Viewers who read the top row will be unable to fight their way back to the beginning to read the next row.

...then viewers will quickly move on to the next poster.

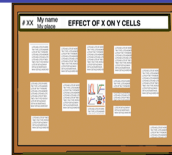
3. Obscure the sequence.



If you avoid clues that guide viewers...
 If you omit numbers, letters, logical sequence...
 If you use Roman numerals, obscure placement...
 If you spread panels randomly...

...then your poster will be a puzzle that few will care to solve.

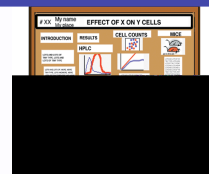
4. Emphasize the text.



If you use a publication-style format...
 If you supply every detail...
 If your figures are tiny with complex legends...
 If you simply staple up your manuscript...

...then details will smother your message.

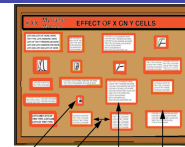
5. Emphasize the trivial.



If you are wordy without substance...
 If you focus entirely on the methods...
 If you avoid interpretations...
 If you refer to "the response" but fail to identify it...

...then you will trivialize your work.

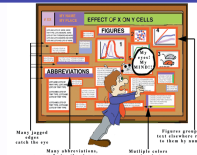
6. Avoid emphasis.



If you de-emphasize substance visually...
 If you separate each unit by the same amount of space...
 If you use small type for important and trivial points alike...
 If you use tiny figures and colorless graphics...

...then you de-emphasize your work's significance.

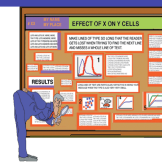
7. Distract visually.



If you chose variety over order...
 If your panels differ in size, shapes, color and placement...
 If you refer viewers elsewhere for figure legends...
 If you use complex keys...

...then your message gets lost in the chaos.

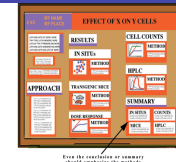
8. Use impenetrable text.



If you minimize text size and readability...
 If you describe all important issues in tiny type...
 If the lines of type are so long viewers lose their place...
 If only text without intellectual content is easily visible...

...then you exclude viewers who need glasses and befuddle those with perfect vision.

9. Focus on the methods.



If you emphasize only the methods...
 If all headings identify methods rather than the actual results...
 If even your conclusion section emphasizes methods...
 If you identify every detail in every method...

...then viewers know you value methods over concepts, and offer you a job... as a tech.

10. Avoid conclusions.



If you fail to specify the major points...
 If your conclusions merely summarize the data...
 If your title is non-committal, "The effect of X on Y"...
 If you conclude only that your issue needs more study...

...then viewers assume that your research is pointless.

11. Give a detailed tour.



If you are compulsively complete...
 If you read all the text and trace every graph line...
 If you focus on yourself, rather than on the research...
 If you whisper with your back to the audience...

...then grab your viewers' arms to prevent your audience from escaping!