

# Riding the Wave to Powerful Poster Presentations

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Posters are an effective method for communicating with colleagues at professional meetings. With the right tools and an understanding of basic design, creating an attractive, informative, well-balanced, interesting, easy-to-read, and portable poster is simple.

## Five things that today's poster designer should consider:

### Audience

#### Determine who will be viewing poster

- Professionals/academics
- General public



#### Define and distill poster's message to match audience needs and interests

#### Engage audience with content and design

#### Attendees have limited time; it is estimated

- 3 seconds to decide whether to stop, look and read
- 30 seconds to gain understanding of content
- 3 minutes to read entire poster

### Design Principles

**Balance:** distribute white space, text, graphics, and color to create visual stability

**Contrast:** use to create visual interest, impact or emphasis

Create **CONTRAST** by varying size  
Create **contrast** by varying color  
Create **contrast** by varying value

**Proximity:** group related elements together

**Alignment:** align elements to create visual unity

**Repetition and variation:** repeat elements to create connections; add variation to create visual interest



**Unity/consistency:** integrate all elements so that they look like they belong together

### Images and Text

#### Images

- Attract attention
- Provide impact
- Illustrate text
- Logos provide identity

#### Text

- Should flow from left to right and top to bottom
- Readable from a distance
  - Title font  $\geq 72$  pts
  - Headings  $\geq 48$  pts
  - Body text  $\geq 18$  pts
- Avoid all CAPS
- Avoid excessive use of font styles and colors

**sans-serif vs. serif**  
*script* or **DECORATIVE**

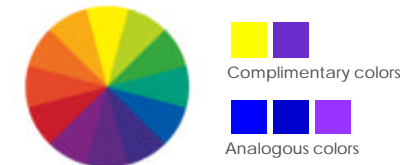
- Black text on light background is most readable

### Color

**Color:** use for emphasis and to attract attention without overwhelming content

**Complimentary colors:** add visual energy and contrast

**Analogous colors:** create visual harmony



Color wheel shows color relationships

**Warm colors:** use for foreground



**Cool colors:** use for background



**Light colors** are best for background

**Group or isolate** elements of poster using color

### Tools: Software

**Microsoft PowerPoint**  
Slide presentation

**Adobe PageMaker**  
**Adobe InDesign**  
**QuarkXPress**  
Page layout

**Adobe Illustrator**  
**Macromedia Freehand**  
Illustration, drawing

**Adobe Photoshop**  
Image editing / paint program

