How to create an attractive poster

1. Message
2. Structure
3. Form
1. Message
Communication

Ideally

emitter  receptor
Communication

Ideally

emitter → receptor

Reality

emitter → Noise → receptor

emitter

receptor

Noise
Communication

- Ideally
  - emitter
  - receptor

- Reality
  - emitter
  - Noise
  - receptor

- Test (game)
Communication

- Ideally

- Reality

- Test (game)
Basic points

- To give coordinates: from the whole → to the details
- To be precise: nothing is obvious
- To be short: simplify your speech
- To try to think how your interlocutor
- To evoke images
  (warning: only with a common background)
- To give space (for questions) and time (let him think)
Poster: why?

Questions to start

- What is your objective?
- What is your message?
- What is your audience?
Poster: why?

Questions to start
- What is your objective?
- What is your message?
- What is your audience?

Attractive Poster = to capture the attention (not an article!)
- not to present but to diffuse your research
- to arise interest within the experts’ community
- to reach new target audiences (not of your topic)
- ulimate goal: the poster has to encourage a discussion!
  (not to be self-explaining)

One main message
- organize your ideas into a coherent and logical whole
- what is the story that you want to tell?

Audience
- complexity / appealing depending on target
- experts / specialists; non-experts; broad audience
Golden Rule:

Short = Powerful

Result:

Attractive + Communicative
2. Structure
Global Structure

- Hierarchy: few information levels
  - blocks construction
    (title, heading, section)
  - direction to read it
  - well-defined and recognizable
  - no abstract (not an article!)

- Selection of information
  - to contain the volume
  - which formulas / figures do I really need to communicate the main message?
  - to remove redundant information (minimizzation)

- Model on a paper A4
  - to check the coherence
  - to simplify the scheme
  - good equilibrium (text vs figures vs formulas)
Sections

General points
- 1 main idea / block (possibility for 1/2 secondary ideas)
- style simple and efficient (verbs to present form)
- to avoid many acronyms or jargon
- sentences: max 15/20 words, 1 sentence = 1 information

Title (max. 15/20 words)
- understanding of your results

Introduction (max. 200 words, figures)
- importance and relation with your work

Objective (1 sentence)

Methods (max. 100 words, figures)

Results (max. 200 words)
- figures: to avoid plots 3D
- to avoid tables
Sections

- Conclusions (max. 200 words)
  - to summarize results, to give perspectives
    (memorable conclusions)

- References: max. 5-6 (including your paper)

- Logos space: minimum as possible
3. Form
Style

General points
- alignment of the blocks (virtual grid)
- not to use boxes and to avoid to underline
- highlight only important ideas (2 or 3)
- equilibrium:
  30% white surface, 30% text, 30% figures and formulas

Colors
- colored presentation (but a limited number of colors in the text)
- to avoid large areas of dark colored background
- to apply a uniform color code

Figures (good quality)
- horizzontal titles, directly on the plots
- only the relevant lines for the discussion:
  simplify them to the maximum,
  include only absolutely necessary data
  (to avoid “cut and paste” from the article)
- colored solid lines better than dashed or dotted lines
Example
**Example**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Title</th>
<th>your name, collaborators, etc.</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Introduction</td>
<td>Objective</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Methods / Materials</td>
<td>Results</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Discussions / Conclusions</td>
<td>Other: Perspectives? etc</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>References</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Title</th>
<th>your name, collaborators, etc.</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Introduction</td>
<td>Objective</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Methods / Materials</td>
<td>Results</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Discussions / Conclusions</td>
<td>Other: Perspectives? etc</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>References</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

\[
\alpha = \Gamma(\beta)
\]
Style

Text
- typeface’s size: readability from 2 meter
- fonts: only 2 (better sans serif)
- to prefer lists to sentences (or to avoid long texts)
- to use arrows
- right spacing between the lines
- Complex equations and formulas: only if necessary
Examples

1) A text with small letters is more readable than a text with capital letters

2) Try to change the fonts of our text every five words and see what is the result!

3) One can ask what is really important in this short sentence
Artistic effects?

Very artistic but probably not too much efficient. Poster has not to be beatiful...it has to work.
Smart hints and tips

- To develop several versions and delete each time the non essential information
- To check possible instructions from the organizer of the conference (dimensions, logos, etc.)
- To prepare a short speech of 2/3 minutes to explain your poster
- To have copies of your paper
- To have some additional/supplementary material for the discussion (figures, results, etc.)
- To analyse the other posters in a conference