Poster Preparation Guidelines

The following guidelines and suggestions are offered to assist you in developing your poster and to help improve the effectiveness of poster presentation.

- Posters should be readable by viewers standing five feet away.
- The message should be clear and understandable and not require an oral explanation.
- Tables, figures and photos are permitted.
- The poster board display's surface area is 3'8" high and 5'6" wide.
- Prepare a 6" high headline strip that runs the full width of the poster.
- Include the title, authors and affiliations on the strip in letters at least 1" high (72 points).
- Post a large typed copy of your abstract in the upper left-hand corner.
- Please limit your oral explanation to the judges to no more than 7 minutes.

Suggestions....

Initial Sketch: Plan your poster early. Focus your attention on a few key points. Try various styles of data presentation to achieve clarity and simplicity. Does the use of color help? What needs to be expressed in words? Suggest headlines and text topics.

Rough Layout: Enlarge your best initial sketch, keeping the dimensions in proportion to the final poster (see example on right). Ideally, the rough layout should be full size. A blackboard is a convenient place to work. Print the title and headlines. Indicate text by horizontal lines. Draw rough graphs and tables. This will give you a good idea of proportions and balance. If you are working with an artist, show him or her the poster layout. Ask associates for comments. This is still an experimental stage.

Final Layout: The artwork is complete. The text and tables are typed but not necessarily enlarged to full size. Now ask, is the message clear? Do the important points stand out? Is there a balance between words and illustrations? Is there spatial balance? Is the pathway through the poster clear?

Balance: The figures and tables should cover slightly more than 50% of the poster area. If you have only a few illustrations, make them large. Do not omit the text, but keep it brief. The poster should be understandable without oral explanation.

Typography: Avoid abbreviations, acronyms and jargon. Use a consistent, large type style throughout.

Eye Movement: The movement (pathway) of the eye over the poster should be natural - down the columns or along the rows. Size attracts attention. Arrows, pointing hands, numbers and letters can help clarify the sequence.

Simplicity: The temptation to overload the poster should be resisted. More material may mean less communication.