

## A guide to good design

For printed promotional material -  
Posters, flyers, leaflets and advertisements

**Good design should be eye-catching, attractive, and communicate information effectively and economically.**

All groups, no matter what size or stage in their development, will need to create promotional material at some stage in order to tell people who they are, what they do and to promote their activities. In order to be taken seriously they will also want this material to look professional, competent and eye-catching.

### Characteristics of Good Design

The basic characteristic of all good design for posters, advertisements and leaflets are:

- **BALANCE:** make sure that there is enough white space, and that the layout is even, symmetrical, and well proportioned.
- A good design will also achieve **MOVEMENT** – encouraging the reader to move from one point to another.
- Good use of colour, size of text and font type will help to make the most important elements stand out.

There are six main elements to consider in the layout of your document:

#### 1. Heading/ Headline

- Place the title at the top, usually in large, bold type.
- Use as few words as possible to so that it can be read quickly to grab the viewer's interest

#### 2. Sub-heading

- Below the heading, create a short, detailed caption that summarizes the key information.
- set this in smaller or lighter type.
- include the important points and the name of your organization as this is far more likely to be read than the rest of the text

#### 3. Copy

- This is the text and wording containing the main information (who, what, where, when, how much)
- Choose a font type that is easy to read. Serif fonts (with little 'feet' or 'serifs') such as Times New Roman are generally easier to read in the body of the text. Sans serif fonts (without 'serifs') like Arial or Tahoma are best used in headings and captions for emphasis.
- Use upper and lower case type throughout - ALL UPPER CASE TYPE IS MORE DIFFICULT TO READ.

#### 4. Illustration

- This is the main image – a photograph/ drawing/ digital image.
- Choose something clear, bold and appealing – an image is likely to be the first thing that catches your eye
- Think from your reader's perspective – what would get you interested?

#### 5. Image captions & credits

- Set this in smaller type generally set alongside a particular illustration or to one edge.

#### 6. Logo

- This is the symbol for the organisation or event.

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### Types of Promotional Material

#### **The Poster**

A poster is different to other promotional material because it has to grab the attention of an audience who are 'on the move'. It needs to be eye-catching enough to get noticed from a distance – and convey the important information quickly to someone passing by.

- Make sure that the important information is large and clear enough to be read from a moving car or from the other side of the street.
- Don't cram it with so much information that the typeface has to be so small that people can't read it at a glance. All text should be legible at a distance of 3 to 4 feet. Use at least a 24-point type size for the main text. The title type should be at least 1.5 inches high.
- There are certain basics that will have to be on the poster – the organisation, the event, the location, the date and time. Think about what space is left for anything else.
- Try to include just one **key selling point**. Sometimes a good selling point is something topical - for example:
  - Last 3 shows
  - Opens tomorrow
  - Tonight 8pm
  - Good seats Monday

You may need to consider a variety of poster styles for use in different locations.

If a poster is on display in a place where people will only give it a passing glance, such as a shop window, then the information needs to be big and bold and eye-catching.

If a poster is in a location where people have time to sit and read it, such as a doctor's waiting room, then it can carry far more information.

#### **Additional Material**

You may also want to supplement the limited information on a poster with a flyer or leaflet. Make sure that the two can be easily linked in people's minds. **The logo, the style and the colours should connect so that someone seeing the poster realises that the leaflet provides further information on the same subject or about the same organisation.**

#### **The flyer**

A flyer is arguably the most efficient, effective way to distribute a lot of information for a small amount of money. Flyers are highly flexible marketing tools that act as inexpensive adverts that can appear in all sorts of places. For example, you could:

- post them with your correspondence, invoices or press packs
- stack them in your entrance hall
- hand them out at meetings
- distribute them to members and friends
- deliver them door to door
- pack them inside orders
- have them inserted in your local newspaper
- trade them with other organizations that have a similar audience

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A flyer is usually a simple, one-page sheet, often just black and white (or black print on coloured paper). Like a mini poster, it should grab people's attention with an enticing image and an interesting headline. However, unlike a poster, it provides all the space necessary to present lots of information. Use this space as a way to answer the questions your customer might ask in a typical phone call.

It should finish with a clear call to action, ie the next step your reader should take – to call, visit, log on to your web site and so on.

Production is easy – if you don't have the budget to take it to a commercial printing company, you could produce copies directly from your printer or get photocopies made.

### ***The Advertisement***

This is also like a mini version of a poster – but space is at a premium.

- It has to capture its reader's attention by standing out from the immediate competition that will surround it on a typical page of advertisements.
- Be aware that on a limited budget you may have to include all the information in a small space without the use of colour to make it stand out – so your image or wording will have to be strong.
- It is important to achieve a high contrast between type and background.
- Ask the publisher for 'artwork specification', which will include costs for various sizes and colour versus black and white.

### ***The Leaflet***

You are more likely to produce leaflets that can be used for more than one event – for example, for a three-month programme of events, or a general leaflet about your organisation

- Leaflets are often confused with flyers, but generally include more than one page and are more expensive to produce.
- A leaflet is not under the same pressure as a poster for having to gain people's attention in a matter of seconds - but it should still look appealing enough to make people want to pick it up and read it. Your cover should be attractive and colourful, with an eye-catching image or design.
- Leaflets should have a call to action, ie drive people to your website or to call.
- Your leaflet can contain more information than any of the other printed promotional materials – but make sure that as well as being informative it is easy on the eye so that it's readable. You can do this by using a balanced mixture of images and text, and by highlighting key points to make the most important information stand out.
- Text sizes for the main body of information should be a minimum of 10 or 12 point.
- Use the back cover to include information about your organisation – contact details, opening hours etc.

Leaflets offer you the chance to experiment with all sorts of different formats, depending on how you fold your paper – talk to a printer or designer for ideas.

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### Further Information

- [www.theprintguide.com](http://www.theprintguide.com)
- <http://desktoppub.about.com>

### Other Related Information Sheets

Creating Clear Print (DDA)

Developed with thanks to  
Voluntary Arts Network [www.voluntaryarts.org](http://www.voluntaryarts.org)



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