

# Creating Large Format Posters Using PowerPoint

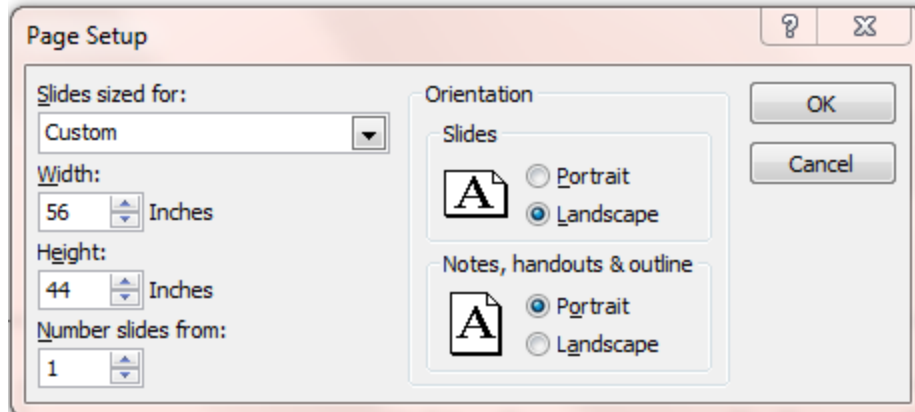
## TIP SHEET

### INTRODUCTION

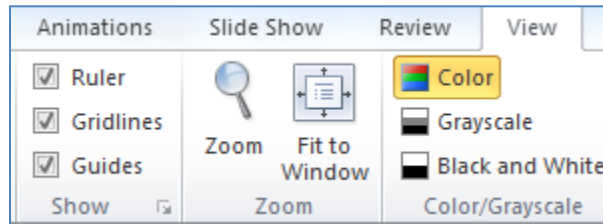
- The ideal poster is designed to:
  - Tell a story
  - Provide a brief overview of your work
  - Initiate discussion
  - Stand alone when you're not there to provide an explanation.
- Before you begin working in PowerPoint, sketch out your poster on paper. Keep it simple! Someone should be able to "get it" in **30 seconds**, and *fully read your poster in about 5 minutes*. You can provide more in-depth information in a handout.
- Decide what **3-4 points** you want the poster to express. Know your audience so you can tailor your poster to their academic level.
- Decide on size, background, and layout of your poster (you can change this if it doesn't work).
- Text should be large enough to read from **5 feet** away.
- Also remember the typical circumstances in which a poster is viewed: a hot, congested, noisy room filled with people who are primarily there to socialize, not look at posters.

### CREATING THE POSTER

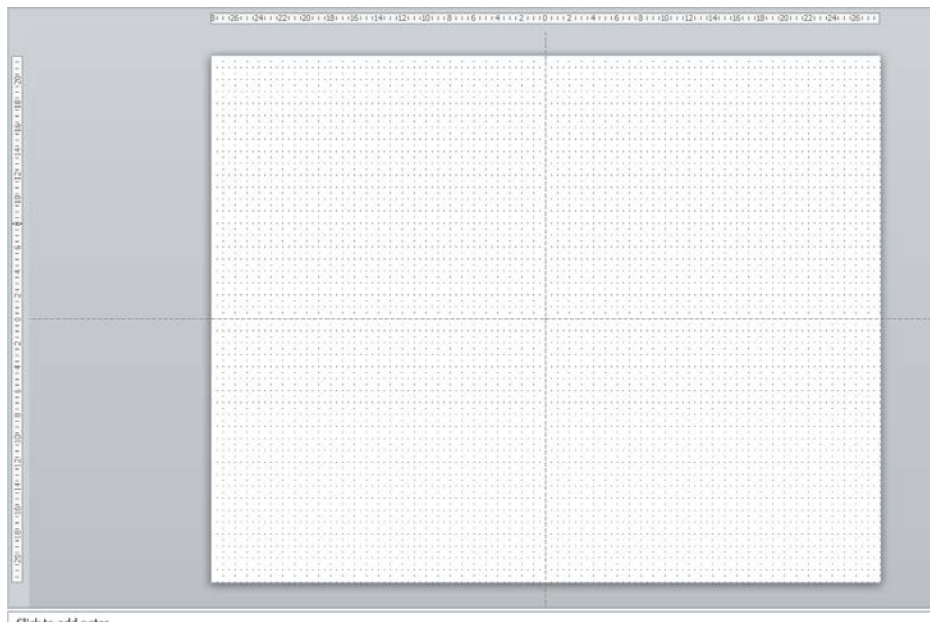
- Start PowerPoint 2010 to open a new slide presentation. You will be making just ONE slide in PowerPoint. Choose a blank layout.
- Set the poster size by clicking the Design tab and "Page Setup. Under "Slides sized for:" select "Custom." Set the width and height. At the USC School of Medicine, the Large Format Printer in the IRF is suitable for printing color posters *up to 44 inches* high (in landscape format). A common poster size is 44x56 inches, so we will set our poster to that size. (Another commonly used poster size is 24x36 inches.)



- Use the ruler, gridlines, and drawing guides to help you line up your poster elements. Under the View tab, select “Ruler,” “Gridlines,” and “Guides.”



- Your slide should now look like this:



- In the View tab, click “Fit to Window” to see the whole slide (if you can’t already). You can also zoom in to work on details. (*Tip: Use Cntrl + mouse wheel to zoom in or out*)
- Select a background using one of the designs in the Design tab or find a template online. This is not required; you can choose to have no background design and simply add graphics yourself. Play around until you get the color scheme that works well with the subject of your poster. Remember:
  - ✓ Maintain a good contrast between the background color and text color
  - ✓ Black text on a white background = excellent readability and high impact
  - ✓ Do not use a gradient color fill in the background (does not print well)
  - ✓ Do not use black in the background
  - ✓ Check a Print Preview to get an idea of what the poster will look like
- To add elements to your poster, use the Insert tab, then add Text Boxes. Arrange the text boxes on your slide. You should have 3-4 vertical columns. Here are some suggested font sizes:
  - **Title:** 72-120 points (should be nearly the entire width of the poster). For the title, consider using a large, bold Sans-Serif type font, such as Arial Black, Franklin Gothic Heavy, Tahoma, or Verdana.
  - **Authors and Affiliations:** 48 – 80 points
  - **Headings:** 36 – 72 points. Headings and text should have the same font. For readability, consider Times New Roman or Arial.
  - **Text:** 24 – 48 points

***Whatever point size you use, be consistent among elements in the poster!***

- Examples of possible combinations of Headings/Sections:

<b>Combination 1</b>	<b>Combination 2</b>	<b>Combination 3</b>	<b>Combination 4</b>
Author/Title/Affiliation Objectives Data Sources/Settings Study Design Data Collection Principle Findings Conclusions Funding Sources	Author/Title/Affiliation Objectives Methods Results Conclusions Funding Sources	Author/Title/Affiliation Methods Descriptive Issues Statistical Analysis Conclusions Relevance Funding Sources	Author/Title/Affiliation Background Information Research Question Methods Conclusions Further Research Questions Funding Sources

- Use the “Arrange” menu to align items or group them together.
  - To line up boxes in a column, hold down Shift + click (on text boxes) to select more than one, then click Arrange – Align – Align Left
  - To group boxes or elements, Shift + click to select more than one, then click Arrange - Group
- You can insert images, but be sure the image resolution is high enough to prevent a grainy image once the poster is printed. Use PhotoShop or similar software to resize images *before* putting them in your slide.
- Here is an example of a completed “poster slide”:

**RECHARGING During Hard Times: Team-Building Fun for Library Staff**  
 Laura T. Kane, MLIS, AHIP and Felicia Yeh, MLIS, AHIP  
 University of South Carolina School of Medicine Library • Columbia, SC

**OFFICE TIMETABLE**

8:00 STARTING TIME  
 9:00 ARRIVE AT WORK  
 9:45 COFFEE BREAK  
 11:00 CHECK E-MAIL  
 11:00 PREPARE FOR LUNCH  
 11:15 LUNCH  
 12:00 BROWSE THE INTERNET  
 2:45 TEA BREAK  
 3:00 PREPARE TO GO HOME  
 4:00 GO HOME  
 4:30 FINISHING TIME  
 5:00

**The Beatings Will Continue  
Until Morale Improves**

**The Question**

The “Hard Times Summary Report” (Winter 2009) released by the Association of Academic Health Sciences Libraries (AAHSL) demonstrates bleak budget situations. Like all libraries nationwide, health sciences libraries have had to face significant budget reductions in collections, services and personnel. What can be done to boost staff morale and encourage team-building in such a dismal budget climate? Have any health sciences libraries found success with morale-boosting programs or activities?

**Survey Says...**

An electronic survey was sent to the AAHSL, listing to collect data about morale-boosting activities held periodically for staff. There were 47 responses out of a possible 123 (a 38% response rate). The survey indicated:

- 73.9% host some kind of event(s) designed to boost staff morale or encourage team-building.
- Most of these events are held YEARLY (50%) or QUARTERLY (39.5%).
- 62.4% of respondents perceive an increase in staff morale after an event.
- 91.3% of all survey respondents agree that morale-boosting events are necessary.

The pie chart below shows the breakdown of morale-boosting events held periodically. Lunches are the most popular, followed closely by Staff Appreciation Days and Awards or Prizes.

Event Type	Percentage
Lunches	42.7%
Staff appreciation days	22.9%
Staff retreats (office)	17.1%
Awards/prize	11.1%
Games	10.6%
Workshops	5.3%

**Other events/activities in health sciences libraries:**

- Staff development workshops & monthly staff meetings
- Birthday cards and cakes
- Anniversary certificates/ anniversary day off with pay
- Plaques and certificates
- Picnics, pizza parties, and ice cream socials
- Holiday parties
- Recipe-sharing

**Fun and Games**

The Web is a treasure trove of ideas for fun and interesting activities designed to boost morale or encourage a team mentality. Here are a few of the better ideas:

- Group Survival Simulations: Desert, Subarctic, Cascade, Reef, Bushfire, Snakebite, Tsunami! (<http://www.humanitymagicians.com/>)
- FISH! Philosophy activities (<http://www.chairhouse.com/>)
- Top 7 Team-Building Games to Play at Work: Scavenger Hunt, Big Foot, Spider Web, etc. (<http://top7business.com/441200>)
- Team-Building Activities, Games, and Exercises (<http://collabteam.com/games/in/141463.html>)
- Morale Boosters for Work (<http://www.buzzle.com/articles/morale-boosters-for-work.html>)

**Conclusion**

Stress in the workplace cannot be avoided, especially given these difficult economic times. Hosting morale-boosting activities on a regular basis can help alleviate some of that stress and bring staff together in a lighthearted way. Since most libraries are unable to give monetary rewards to employees, holding social events is the route many directors are taking to show their appreciation for the hard work of their staff. It may not seem like much, but these efforts go a long way to recharge the workplace spirit!

- Proof your poster before printing in large format. Print on 8 ½ x 11 paper *in color*. Select “scale to fit paper” in the print dialog box. (It’s a good idea to bring a stack of 8 ½ x 11 printouts of your poster to distribute at your poster session.)
- Print your poster on a large format printer or take it to a print service provider who can accommodate large paper sizes.

## **ADDITIONAL TIPS**

- ✓ Top priority should be placed on readability.
- ✓ Use colors that stand out.
- ✓ Use a mix of upper and lower case letters.
- ✓ Avoid putting too much information on your poster (posters with 800 words or less are ideal).
- ✓ Don't try to fill up all the white space. Keep 30-40% of your poster empty.
- ✓ Add thin borders to each photo or chart to give them definition.

*Laura T. Kane, MLIS, AHIP, School of Medicine Library*

[laura.kane@uscmed.sc.edu](mailto:laura.kane@uscmed.sc.edu)

8/23/16