**How to Make Posters and Pamphlets**

**What do you use posters and pamphlets for?**

Posters and pamphlets are an important way of getting information to the community. You can use them:

* to mobilize people to support your cause
* to advertise a meeting or specific event
* to popularize your slogans and messages.

Posters and pamphlets are very useful especially in areas where there is no easy access to newspapers and radio. It is a direct way of communicating with your constituency, but it can also be very expensive. Organizations can easily produce posters and pamphlets but it is essential that you are clear about the aim of the media, who you are targeting, and what you want to achieve by doing it before spending lots of money.

**Important things to know about posters and pamphlets**

**Posters**

Posters are seen by the target audience for only a few seconds – usually as they drive or walk by. They should be put up on poles next to busy roads or on walls and windows of shops where passersby can see them. It is important that they are as large and as bold as possible so that they attract attention and can be read easily. Here are some useful tips for producing good posters:

* Make the posters as large as possible
* Keep the writing as big as possible so that people can read it easily from about 15 feet away
* Use as few words as possible - avoid using full sentences.
* Use color if you can afford it – it make your poster stand out and attract more attention
* Do not put too many words and images on your poster – it may be beautiful, but if the design is too busy the most important information may not get through to the audience
* Make sure that the poster is easily recognized as belonging to your organization by using your logo, colors or the abbreviation of your organization’s name
* Posters are generally expensive to print but you can make them by hand by using koki pens or paint. If you have access to a silkscreen printer, you can also print posters yourself. A few well made beautiful posters can be much more effective than 100s of small ones that nobody notices. If the paper is thin you usually also have to use cardboard to stick the poster onto. Posters are best used for advertising events or for popularizing a short slogan that will get support for your cause or organization.

#### Pamphlets

Pamphlets should be used when you want to give people more information than you can put on a poster, for example to:

* explain an issue to the community
* win support for a campaign you are running
* win support for your organization’s point of view

Pamphlets are cheaper to produce than posters and you can usually produce small pamphlets for few cents each. You can produce pamphlets by photocopying them yourselves or printing them on a duplicator or by taking them to a professional printer. It is important to produce pamphlets that attract attention and make people want to read them. You can also waste a lot of money if you print pamphlets and then do not distribute them properly.

### How to make a poster

**D**ecide on the purpose of your poster, how much money you can spend and how many posters you need. This will help you know how many to produce, what quality you can afford and what method of printing to use.

**D**ecide exactly what you want to write on it in terms of content.

**D**evelop a basic design and get someone who can use a computer to lay it out and print out a copy on normal A4 paper – the printer can enlarge it to fit the paper size you choose..

**R**emember to include the name of your organization and/or logo.

**M**ake sure that there are no unnecessary words. For example if you want to advertise an event don’t write " Meeting, Venue: Meeting Hall, Time: 7.00pm, Date: 3 June" and so on. Putting Venue, Time and Date is unnecessary. This will enable you to write bigger letters and people will be able to read your poster more easily. Use the biggest size letters that you can on your poster.

**M**ake your first rough draft and get someone to check the spelling and to proof read it carefully. Spelling mistakes and other errors look very unprofessional.

**M**ake your final copy and take it to the printers or organize a work session of your organization’s media committee to hand-make your posters.

**How to put up posters**

In many areas you have to get permission from your local municipality before you can put up posters. Get a copy of the rules in your area and then go to the municipality with your posters to get the permits and pay the deposits so that the posters are not removed.

For posters that you want to hang on poles you will need cheap, rough string and a backing board. This can be made out of cardboard, plastic. Backing boards can be very expensive. The cheapest option is to use cardboard especially if you use old cardboard boxes. You can also buy backing boards from cardboard or packaging companies. It is a good idea to take your old posters down and to keep their backing boards for your next posters. . Buy 3-ply rather than 2-ply cardboard as it will not shrivel up in bad weather.

Cut your string into pieces of 70 - 90cms. Make a pair of holes about 10 cm apart with a nail or a drill through the top of the poster and another pair near the bottom of the poster. Put a piece of string through each set of holes. Take your stringed posters to the poles and tie them very tightly around the pole or tree you select. When you have tied both the top and bottom strings around the pole, tie the ends of the top and bottom pieces of string together. This helps to keep the poster firm and in place regardless of the weather.

Make maps of where the best roads are where people are most likely to see your posters. Good positions are where traffic slows down, like at stop signs and robots, main roads, busy shops, bus and taxi ranks and railway stations. Organize a team of people in your organization who will always put up posters as they will get to know the area well and will know the best sites.

Put up a few posters in a row rather than just one. This gives people in passing cars and buses a better chance to read the whole poster. It also attracts more attention. In some areas it is better to put your posters very high on the poles as this prevents people taking them down easily. You may need to use a ladder for this. If your posters get damaged, take them down or repair them right away so that you don’t create a bad impression and your message still gets across. After your event, take your posters down. Old posters left on poles also create a bad impression that your organization is lazy so it is important to take them down. Keep the backing boards which are in a good condition for next time.

**How to make a good pamphlet**

**Before** you start make sure that you discuss the purpose, the message, the target audience and the content.

**Work** out how many you need to print and what quality you can afford.

**If** you are printing on both sides of a pamphlet each side should have an interesting headline to get people’s attention. Each side should also carry your organization’s logo or name. You don’t know which side of the pamphlet people will see first and you want them to read it even if they see the back first.

**Keep** your language simple by avoiding long words and jargon. The best pamphlets are short and simple. Make sure that all your facts are right and if you are dealing with policy issues check the contents with your organization’s leadership.

**Do** not make the layout too dense with lots of small typing. Leave some space in between the writing either as empty white space or as space for logos or pictures. This makes it easier for people to read. Most computers have different fonts. Check which are easiest to read and use them. You can also vary the typing by using bold and italics as well as different size letters for headings, captions and so on. Play around with this until your friends dealing with media agrees on the best layout. Use bold headlines that catch people’s attention and sound interesting.

**When** you do the layout do each page on a separate sheet of paper. Use a computer if you have access to one. If you are going to reduce the page to a smaller one, remember to use a big type size like 12 point. Check spelling and proof read your pamphlet carefully. Before you take it to the printers make a copy as printers sometimes lose or damage your master copy. Print only enough to distribute to your target group.

**How to distribute pamphlets**

**Think** carefully about the target group before you plan distribution as different sectors of people gather in different places. Youth, for example, won’t be on the trains and buses going to work, but outside the school gates. Thousands of pamphlets are wasted if they are distributed in an irresponsible and unplanned way.

**Handing** out pamphlets at taxi stands, bus stops and train stations is not a very good method as so many people are either rushing or have their hands full of shopping bags. They just throw the pamphlets in the nearest bin. It is better to ask someone in the taxi, bus or train to pass a few around so that the passengers can read them while they travel.

**The** best way of distributing is through door-to door where a team drops them off at each house in the area you are targeting. You can also use schools, factories, churches or other targeted venues depending on who your target group is.

**It** is also good to distribute pamphlets when you are having marches, information tables or other public events. You have already attracted people’s attention and a pamphlet gives you a chance to explain your message to people who do not have time to stay and discuss it with you.