

Designing a poster and a brochure

By Sue Wickham

Rev Sue Wickham is a Deacon in the Uniting Church and a Graphic Designer/Illustrator with over 20 years of freelance experience. She believes the church must present itself well in a visually competitive community.



The basic principles for any visual communication remain the same whether you are designing a poster, a brochure, a newsletter, a PowerPoint show or, in fact, just about anything! However, each of these products is attempting to communicate different types of information and will be read differently.

Posters and fliers are designed to capture people's attention quickly and give them basic information. The front page of a brochure is designed to have a similar function to a poster and the inside pages provide information in more depth. A newsletter is intended to convey a range of information in a coherent and readable way.

Posters (and fliers)

Choosing your primary and secondary information well for posters and fliers is crucial. You need to decide what is most likely to capture the reader's attention. Sometimes it may be an image. Alternatively, it may be a title. Occasionally it is a name. For example, if your church is hosting a well known speaker you need to decide whether a photo of the speaker is more likely to make people stop, or the title of his or her address, or perhaps the speaker's name.

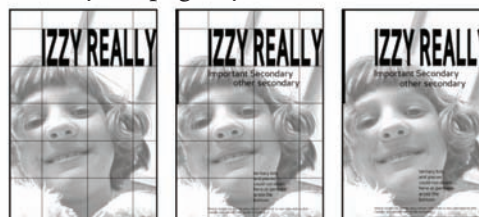
Secondary information develops the reader's interest by providing slightly more than the attention grabber. There may be several levels within your secondary information such as the information you decided not to use as primary and something describing what the poster is advertising. In the above case you would include the nature of the event – a forum, workshop, public address etc. and the date.

Tertiary information is what you expect the reader to look at if they are interested in attending the event. It usually includes the venue and address, booking information, a contact number and/or email and sponsors if there are any.

The best approach to poster design is to experiment a little. Make several copies of your images in different sizes. You may like to do the same with your main title. Start with *just these two* and combine them in different ways until you settle on something you like. You might be surprised at what you discover using this process.

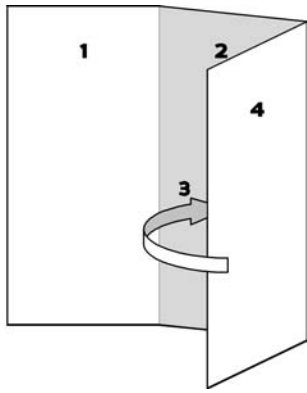


Once you have the first two elements placed satisfactorily you can begin to size and place the rest of your text (and other images if you have them.) Let aspects of your Primary information, image, text or both, help you create the grid upon which you will construct the rest of your page layout.



Brochures

Most brochures are based on a standard A4 page folded into 3 panels, as below, or in concertina style.



Designing the front of a Brochure is similar to designing a poster. It needs to be eye-catching and only has to contain basic information – i.e. very little secondary information and no tertiary information unless you want to include the name of your church or organisation

and/or a logo. Of course, the dimensions are different but the same process is applied. The back page of brochures is often the location for contact details and etc. Consequently, you have 4 panels available to use for information and/or registration and payment (if required.) Note: *If you are using one panel as a tear off registration or payment form, remember that any important information the reader needs to keep must NOT be on the reverse side of this panel.*

If your brochure is folded in the manner illustrated, you can treat panel 4 as a stand-alone page, as the first page of detailed information or as the last page of detailed information. However you decide to use this page, make sure it flows with your overall design, keeping in mind that it is often the first panel the reader will look at on opening the brochure. It is often easier to design panels 1, 2 and 3 before you consider the layout for panel 4 as the grid and placement of text and images on page 1 may need to visually carry to page 4.

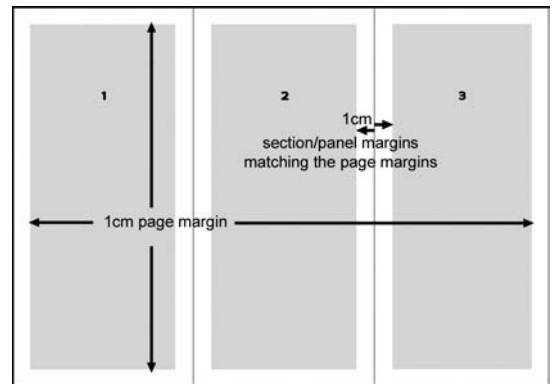
An A4 page measures 21cm x 29.7cm. If it folds in the standard way – as per the illustration – panels 1 and 2 will be 10cm wide and the third panel will be 9.7cm wide. You will also need to consider the method of reproduction before you start working on layout as this will dictate certain elements such as page borders and placement of images. If your brochure will be printed professionally, you are advised to talk with the printer before you start as each printer has particular requirements regarding artwork. If, however, you are printing/photocopying in-house, you may want to consider the following:

- Images and text that go across fold lines will probably “crack” when the paper is folded so it may be wise to avoid placing large, heavy (lots of black or colour) images and text on fold lines. A watermarked (faded) image across these

lines should be fine.

- Does your printer/photocopier print to the edges of the page? If not, you will have to build the margins into your design. Note – *I have discovered that my desktop printer will print to the edges if I use the borderless photo setting. However, it will not print directly from a Word or Publisher document using these settings. Despite giving the appearance that it is going to give me a borderless print, I still end up with a 1.5cm non-printing space at one end. If I convert the document to a PDF file and print from that, it prints across the entire page. There are numerous free PDF creators on the web if you want to try this and don't have Adobe Acrobat.*

Given the restrictions of in-house reproduction, the actual spaces you have to work with will be something like this:



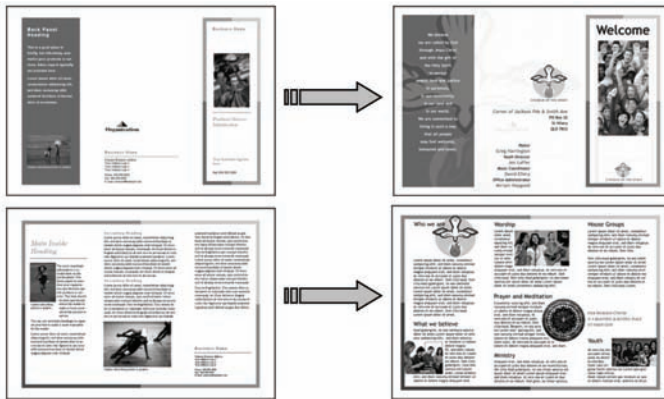
However, it is important to design the whole page to work visually as one regardless of whether or not the information in each panel is related. The key is to work to the grid across the whole of the page – including panel 4. The *best* way to make your brochure work is to start collecting brochures from anywhere and everywhere. Critique them. What do you *like* about a particular brochure? *Why?* What about those you *don't* like? What doesn't seem to work for you? Use the insights and ideas when you're putting your own brochures together. Nothing is ever new. Even the best designers find their inspiration from other things.

A note about Publisher templates – Open Publisher and have a look at the brochure template options. Make sure you have some actual, printed brochures you've collected with which to compare the templates. So... what do you think? I thought so. BUT, the templates are an excellent place to start if you're really baffled and don't know much about Publisher. Just remember that


for any Publisher template, you can change:

- The colour scheme
- The font(s)
- The images and logos
- The size and placement of images and text boxes

A few adjustments and changes and you can turn a publisher template into something quite different:



Type Hints

As stated in the previous article, it is best to use no more than 2 simple typefaces. If you are using a fancy typeface, limit its use to headings. There are a number of websites where you can download free fonts. I have found dafont.com the most useful. Fonts usually come in a 'Zip' file which can be downloaded to a specified folder. It may be useful to create a folder specifically for font downloads. Once there, right click on the file and go to "extract all." When the extract wizard has finished and you view the files, select the files that look like this  and move them to your Windows Font folder (MY COMPUTER > LOCAL HARD DRIVE > WINDOWS > FONTS.)


 A useful button to add to your Word toolbar is the character scaling button. Right click on a blank bit of one of your toolbars in Word and select 'customise' from the bottom of the list. In the window that opens, click on the 'commands' tab then 'format' in the left column and scroll down in the right column until you see the character scaling button: Drag the button up to one of your toolbars and drop it in. When you're having difficulty fitting text into a particular space, it may help to select all the text and reducing it to 80 or 90% of its normal width. There isn't a button like this in Publisher but you can scale text by going to FORMAT > CHARACTER SPACING.

Image Hints

Finding the right images can be extremely time consuming! If someone in your church has a digital camera, ask them to take photos here there and everywhere and start developing your own image library on a couple of CDs. Of course, there are millions of images on the web and most of them have some sort of copyright attached to them. However, there are a few image sites where you can buy individual images (photos and illustrations) for as little as one dollar per image. Have a look at istock.com and gettyimages.com to get you started.

If you want to crop a photo (i.e. use only a section of it) and you don't have any software other than MS Paint, you can still do it. Open the picture in Paint and select the area you want to keep using the box select tool in the top right. Move your selection to the top, left corner. Drag the bottom, right, corner point of the larger image up and across until it meets the edges of your new selection. Save the cropped image.

In *Publisher* and *Word*, you will find a picture toolbar. Spend an hour experimenting with what you can do using some of these tools... altering the contrast, changing the text wrap points, creating a watermark and much more.

To read this article and others in more detail go to www.sa.uca.org.au/goto/design_tips

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