7 Reasons Why You Should Present Posters at a Conference

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Why should you go to all the trouble to present a poster at a conference?

1. Posters offer the opportunity to engage with other conference attendees interested in the same subject and application as yourself. You might strike up a conversation with someone about your poster that may lead to future collaboration or even a job offer! One-on-one conversations about your poster enable you to talk about very specific aspects of your research that may not be possible in a presentation.

2. A poster session is a good way to disseminate your work, particularly if your research falls within a narrow field of specialization. It also gives you the opportunity to actively engage with others during the conference in a way that networking alone does not, since by its very nature the poster defines the topic of conversation.

3. If your topic does not fit within the conference organizer’s themes for the tracks, a poster is a good way to present research that doesn’t fit into one of the track categories well. That’s not to say your research doesn’t fit the conference or the audience, it just may not be a good fit for the agenda. Certainly, posters can offer a strong supplement to the conference agenda, as well as provide you with a means to present your research.

4. Another good reason to present a poster is that you can expect to receive compliments on your work and critiques that can help you in the future. An insightful, impartial discussion of your work by a peer can often provide ideas for improving your work downstream.

5. Sometimes a poster session is better than an oral presentation due to time constraints in the latter. During a typical oral presentation, you will have 10-15 minutes for questions and comments while a poster session typically lasts several hours, allowing for more in-depth discussions. Moreover, not all people will manage to make it to your oral presentation because there will probably be concurrent tracks.

6. Poster sessions offer the opportunity to practice your presentation skills. One advantage of presenting a poster is that it enables you to try explaining a concept in different ways, and see which explanation is most well received. At the same time that you’re honing your ability to communicate verbally, you can also hone your ability to present information visually in a simple way.

7. A poster session is ideal for the early stages of the research, when you may not have much more than an idea, and you stand to benefit a lot from discussing your idea with other researchers from the same field.

*This material was found on University of Florida’s News page.