

Creating a Visual Abstract

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STARTING WITH A SOFTWARE



While the work can be done with expensive software (e.g. Adobe Photoshop Suite), most (or even all of it) can be done in Microsoft PowerPoint or Keynote. In fact, to facilitate the “thoughtful restraint” mindset as a core design principle, I almost exclusively stick to Power Point.

If you have a higher end design taste and want to create images more sophisticated than *Paint* allows, try *Pixlr* (<https://pixlr.com/editor/>) a free online image editor.

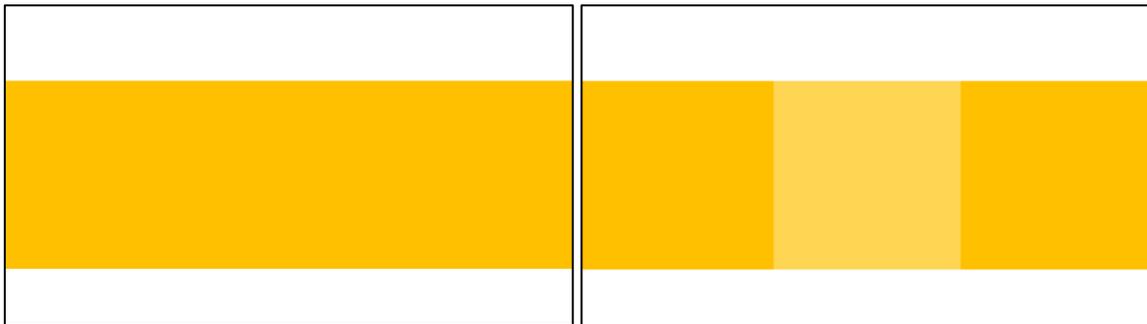


STEP BY STEP PROCESS OF CREATING A VISUAL ABSTRACT

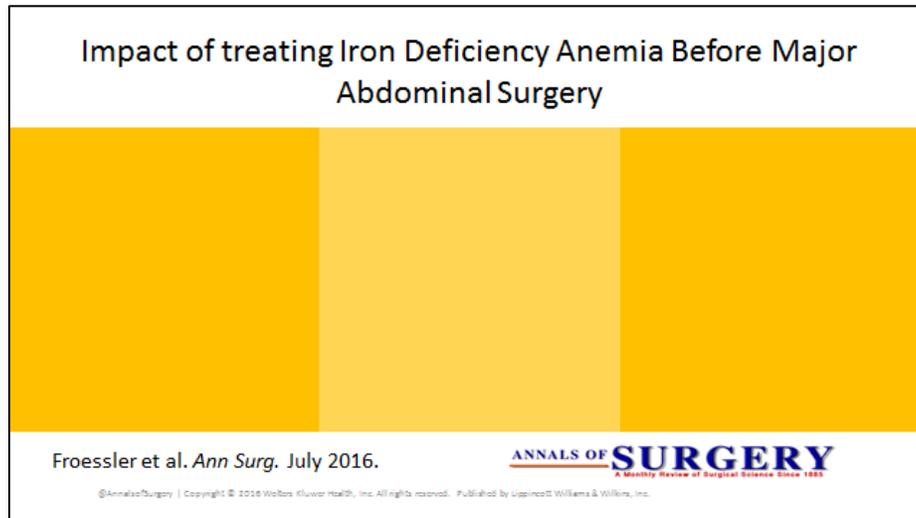
The following steps in this order can help you create a simple visual abstract:

Step 1: Choose an Article. Choose an article and spend time identifying the key message is that you want you convey. Pull out the key outcomes. While most articles have several key points, it is difficult to convey more than 2 or 3 in a visual abstract.

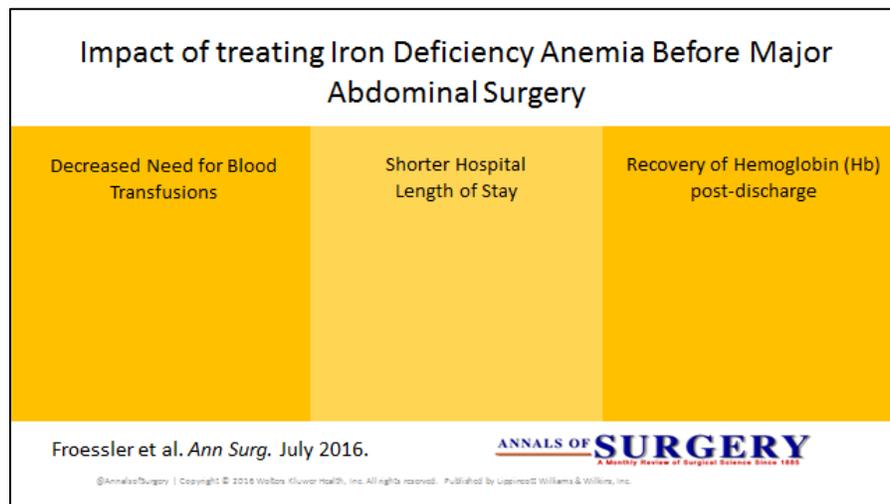
Step 2: Create Your Visual Fields. There are many ways to do this, but colored boxes can be quite easy and helpful.



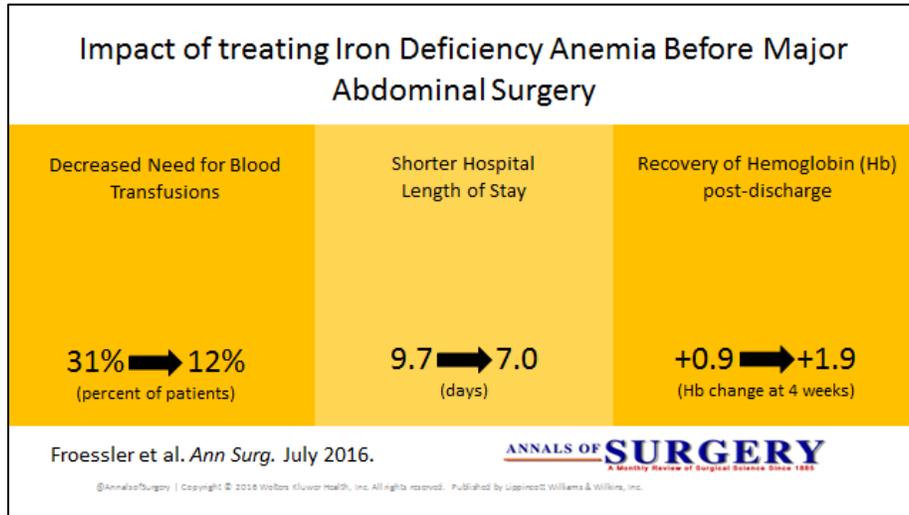
Step 3: Add Author, Journal and Title. Starting filling in some of the essential information.



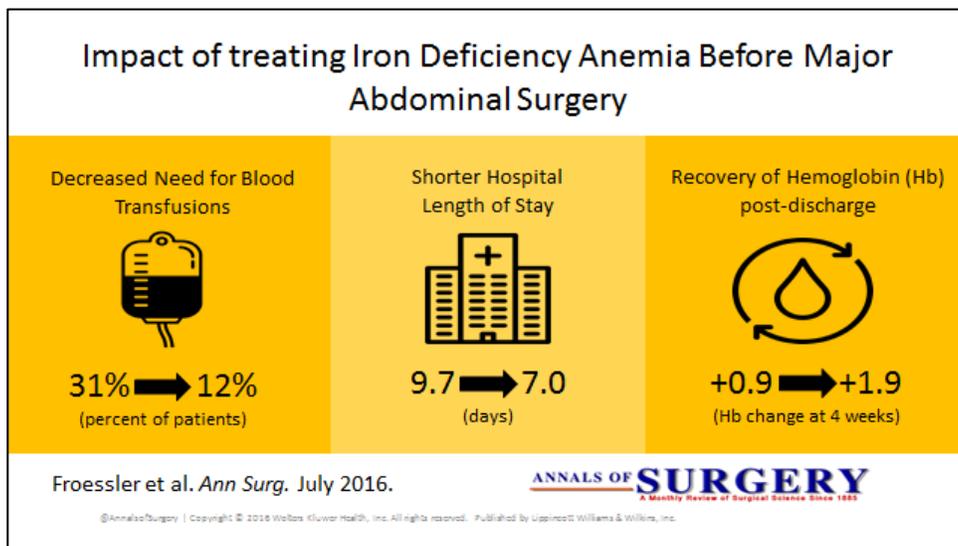
Step 4: Layout Your Outcomes. Describe the outcomes across the top in short phrases with comparative phrases inside of text boxes.



Step 5: Add in Values for Each Outcome. Add in the numeric values of each outcome, including the units.



Step 6: Add Visuals. This is arguably the hardest part for most people, and an entire section (“Making It Visual”) is dedicated to it below. It is CRUCIAL that you do not use images for which you do not have permissions or rights.



Step 7: Export your File. You will want to save the file as a JPEG or other image file to make it easily usable for social media. Be sure to proof read and double check all your outcomes so that they are consistent with the article. If the methods (e.g. randomized trial, retrospective review) are not clear in the visual abstract, be sure to include it in the text of the Tweet.

#VisualAbstract

SHORT VIDEO SUMMARY ON CREATING A VISUAL ABSTRACT

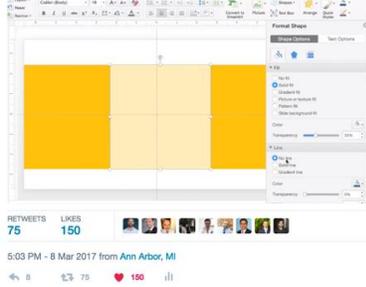
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A very quick video demo on laying out a #VisualAbstract in PowerPoint.
Full PDF Primer can be downloaded here:
SurgeryRedesign.com/resources



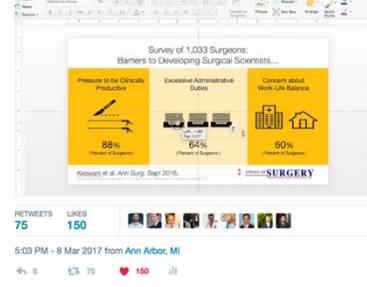
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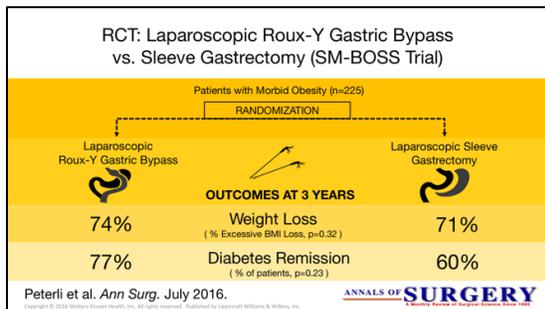
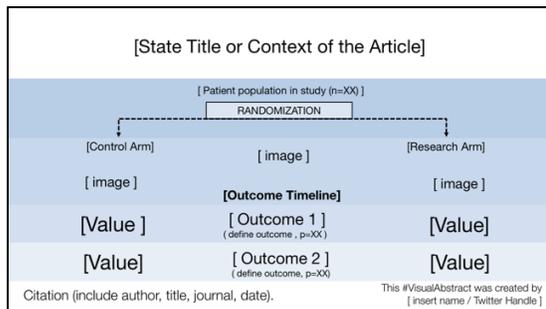
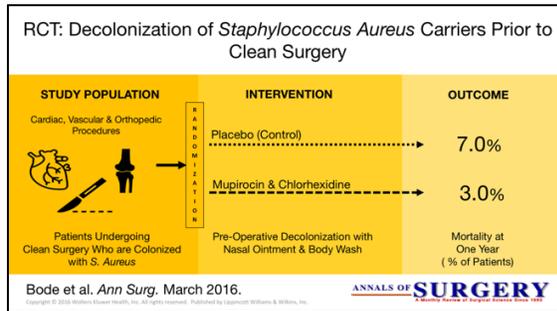
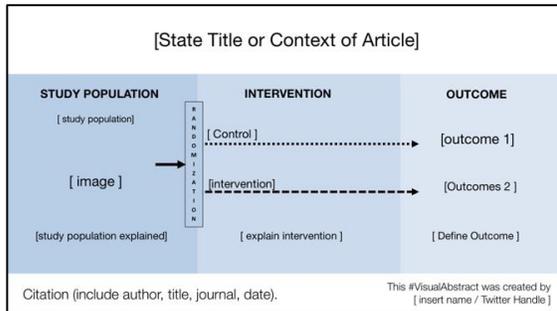
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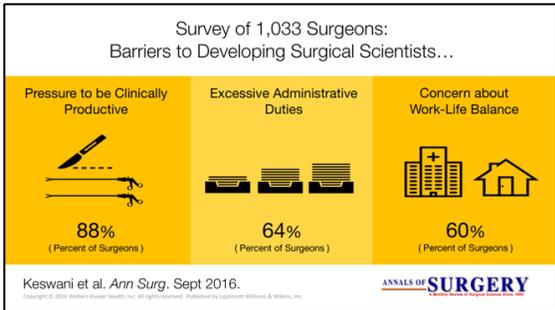
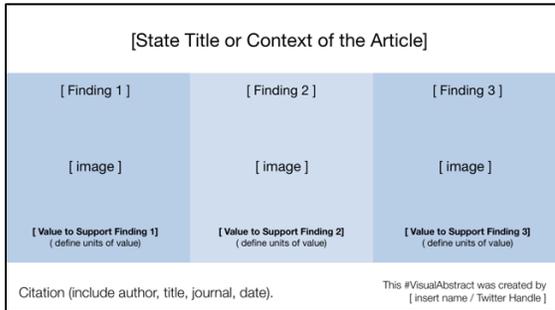


The key steps described above are summarized in a two-minute video here:
<https://twitter.com/AndrewMIbrahim/status/839642707089899520>

ALTERNATIVE LAYOUTS

Below are additional visual abstracts layouts shown in their template form (blue) and their final form (yellow) as used at the Annals of Surgery.





Here are more examples from the *New England Journal of Medicine* using similar templates but with their own branding and color schemes:

