

NIDDK 2017 Employee Appreciation Poster



Objective: Create a poster for NIH: NIDDK 2017 Employee Appreciation Awards Poster.

Basic Requirements:

- Include the name, date, time and location of the ceremony:
“Employee Appreciation Awards Ceremony and Reception, October 30, 2017, at 2:00pm, in the Lipsett Amphitheater”
- Include the NIH and NIDDK logos
- Designs should be 8.5 in x 11 in

Design Process and Looking for Inspirations

I started with Googling for ideas using the follow search terms:

- [Employee appreciation posters](#) - First, I reviewed the samples of what kind of posters may be out there as a source of inspirations specific to the topic.
- [2017 design trends](#) - I didn't see anything that stood out or design styles that I gravitated towards. So, I reviewed design pattern based on the current design trends.
- [Photoshop posters](#) - After reading a few design trends articles, I continued the search for inspiration...
- [2017 design posters](#) - I spent some more time browsing through ideas, then found a set that stood out to me: [source](#)
 - I like the vibrant colors and motion... ideas are starting to form in my head, and I want to try to spin ideas based on these samples.





Research Take Away

- The current design trends shifted towards vibrant mix of colors, big bold fonts, and minimalistic approach. This is a bit different than a few years ago, where the card layout or a singular hero image was prominent.
- I know I want to add a photo in the poster, but I also believe it would be a distraction away from the content. I'm thinking some sort of silhouette may be useful, but unsure yet how that would play out.
- The key take away for me is to try to design something and keeping it minimalistic. I want to have the design be visually stimulating, but not clutter it with text everywhere. This is where typography will come into play.
- I also want to have motion, the phrase "Rising Stars" will be the theme I'll design towards.

Design Foundation

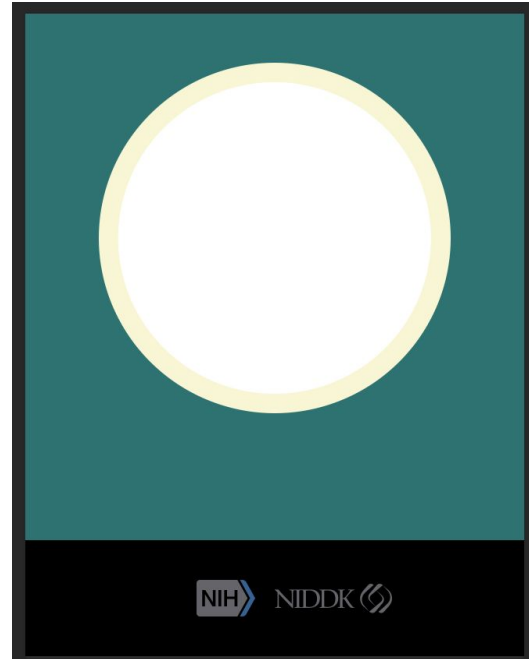
As seen in the samples, I wanted the design to have the circular focus point. This is where I'll put the content and the message.

The ceremony is happening in October, so I'm thinking a Fall-ish patterns (orange, leaf, dust). I want to stay away from bright colors like, green, yellow... as those would feel like Spring or Summer. I'll go for some kind of Autumn feel, but I always start my base with a pastel color, even if it's not the intended color.

Searched for images for "[US East coast leaf circle](#)". This may sound silly, but I thought using East Coast would give me tree species that would not be grown normally on East Coast... that idea didn't come up with anything fruitful.

I ditched that idea, and used search term "[Leaf design circle](#)". I was thinking to find a huge leaf, or bunch of leaves to fit in around the circle I have. There were some interesting results, but nothing that really do want I wanted in my head. Even though, I have no idea what I want, my approach is I'll know when I see it.

Searched "[tree logo leaf](#)" and I saw something that interests me.



This idea intrigues me... circles that conform to make a representation of a tree, with hands as the tree trunk.

Employee Appreciation = Tree Growth. I thought the idea was clever, and I have something to go by as a starting point.

At this point, I started to look for fonts that may fit into the design idea that I have... Trees are tall and thin, so I want a font that is tall and thin.

I went over to [Google Fonts](#), and filters for Sans Serif and Display. Right away I saw something I want to use in my design.

I didn't want to spend too much time looking, and "[Oswald](#)" was perfect. Thank you, Vernon Adams!



I put in the required text in the focus area within the circle, and reformatted the text around based on a minimalistic approach. Noticed I didn't use commas or period, because I feel like it was distracting from the simple feels.

Now, I need some graphics to start the design. At this point, I still wanted to make the circle a tree somehow, but realised that there weren't enough room, and the hand "tree trunk" will block the text.

I started looking for another idea, maybe a graphic of employees or people?

Found this [image](#) searching for "[people](#)". Wow, that was a lucky break. I thought it would take a lot longer than that looking for something that's usable..



As I mentioned in the Research Take Away, I want an image, but not to detract away from the main message. So, I dropped in the people image as a silhouette at the bottom, and added a halo around the circle to emphasize the focus area. I made sure the halo are transparent for the colors to come through.

Now, I'm looking for colors and texture to add add to the design.

I know I want to have orange-ish colors for my Autumn theme. I started searching for "[background orange splash](#)" and found some pretty interesting graphics.

I also tried looking for radiance of colors by searching for "[background gradient splash](#)". The result is interesting are pretty good and giving me some ideas for the mix, and found a few images that I blended together.

The bottom right corner is a bit bright, so I sample the orange color from the top left corner, and tone over the yellow. The hope is not to draw attention to that area, and to get the flow going from bottom left to top right. This is to simulate the "rising" motion.

Next, I want to add "stars" to the top of the poster, because one of the NIDDK's core value is for employee to be a "rising star", so searched for "[background stars glitter](#)". I found something I liked and blew that up to cover the poster.



With some minor adjustments, the stars were added to the poster and the result, I think, is very good. I removed a lots of stars to line it up for that rising motion from bottom left to top right.

I think it's starting to look pretty good! However, there's something missing. The poster is static, and I want that motion to move the viewer.

I searched for light line in the hope to find something that will give the motion I wanted. The search key term "[background light line](#)" gave lots of good results, but one really caught my eyes. [I believe this will work out perfectly for what I'm trying to do.](#)



Again, after a few adjustments, the poster now have what I call the "oomph". That final touch that just makes the graphic have a feel to it.

At this point, I also updated the NIDDK logo and placement to emphasis the rising motion.

Added subtle shadows, updated the font styles and colors and I think we're done!



Final Thoughts

This is one of my process of going from having no ideas, doing research, and executing the design ideas on the fly. The whole poster took roughly 2 hours to make from beginning to end.

The key thing for me is reviewing the problem, then doing the research, and do really evaluate results of the research. I think it's important to continually do research on each new project, so I can keep up with the current trends and to not deliver designs based on stale styles.

