Script notes for animated video

As you might know by now, I am a data science professional, have three degrees from the U in math, statistics and business. What you don’t know is that I have been married for nearly 19 years (at the time of the development of this course) and have four children.

We purchased a house in north Utah county in March of 2017. The house is a little bigger than we might have planned to buy but not too big. One important feature of the house is the sandbox area in the backyard. This is a large patch of sand poured on the side of the house in the backyard so kids would have a place to play. My kids really like to go over there and play in the dirt, it’s great.

When my son was about 8, he discovered that the hose that plugged into the back of the house would actually reach into the sandbox and that if he turned it on it would create a river. Seriously, it would create a river. This caused a few issues. First of all, he would turn the water on and leave it on while he played which might go on for 30 minutes to an hour. The water at the back of the house was connected to the water bill for the rest of the house. He enjoyed playing in this manner quite a bit so he might play in the sandbox for four hours (or more) during the week. You can see what I’m getting at ($$$).

The second issue you might recognize if you’ve been to a river delta. Rivers carry sediment from one place to another. In this case, the sediment is the nice sand that was poured into our backyard and the delta now exists on the other side of the back fence where several cubic yards of dirt now stands. This isn’t a huge issue except that there is less dirt in the sandbox to play with and it’s a bit of a hassle to dig the dirt out and put it back where it started.

My wife and I had several discussions about what we could do to get my son to stop using so much water. We decided to take him out for ice cream and have a serious discussion. Now, serious discussions don’t typically work on this kid. However, my wife had the great idea of bringing along the water bill. The bill showed clearly our water consumption by month in a simple bar chart. She walked him through each of the months and described what was going on in those months. Lastly, she pointed out the two months at the end of the winter when he started playing in the sandbox noting that our water consumption (for the whole family mind you) doubled in those months. His eyes got really big and he uttered a very satisfying “woah”. Even though he doesn’t have any advanced mathematical or statistical training, that simple visual helped him understand that his actions had consequences and he was able to see very clearly what it did to our water bill. He has seriously limited his playing with water in the sandbox since that day. We’re even able to leave the hose laying out in the yard (for the most part).

The point is that simple and effective communication of business data and business analytics can provide the “woah” moment for our collogues and help them to change behavior and change the direction of our business.