Kristi Pelzel, kpelzel@pm.me

DATA VISUALIZATION CHECK LIST

Plant-based products have green packaging, and cleaning products use white packaging. Why? Our subconscious associations with specific colors to communicate their products' values. You can do that too as a Data Storytelling Designer.

o   Is my use of color directing attention?
o   Is my use of 'powerful' colors (red, black, neon) strategic?
o   Does my use of color improve the project's readability?
o   Do my selected colors support the meaning of my story?
o   Am I using the right color combinations? (https://www.canva.com/colors/color-wheel/)
o   Do all the colors in my story have meaning and purpose?
o   Am I using too many colors because I have more values than colors available?
Group values together for clarity.
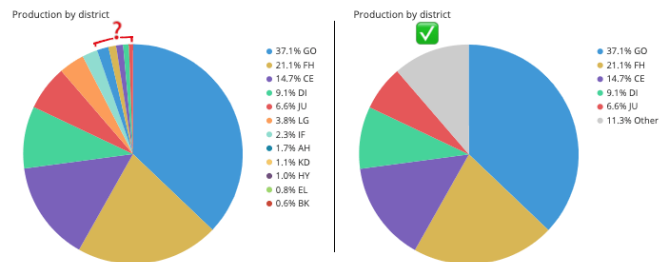
o   Are lower values associated with lighter colors and higher values with darker colors?
o   Am I using gray to indicate unimportant data like grid lines and supporting data, and am I using color to highlight the critical data points?

Resources:
Color Brewer
Viz Palette
Color Blind Simulator

While words and numbers can express values precisely, pictures or graphic representations have the power of allowing us to look for and highlighting patterns, trends, or exceptions among these values.

o   Why did I choose the chart that I did to display the data?
o   Did I plan for enough space between elements to allow someone to see patterns or points reasonably?
o   Does my design require people to move their eyes to multiple points to understand the story?
o   Do my shapes represent my intended meaning - Represent values accurately?
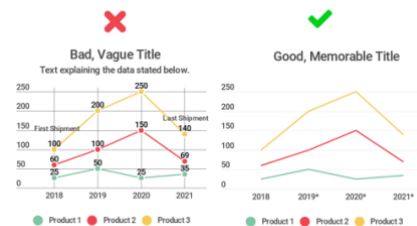
o   Are people "seeing" what I am saying or abstract objects?

o   After 10-seconds, can I understand multiple data points through the dual processing theory and pre-attentive processing?
o   Leverage likability – use audience (demographic or culture) similarity and association to encourage people to respond positively to what they are seeing.

Resources:
Chart Chooser
Visual Vocabulary
Dual Processing Theory

Storytelling activates both sides of the brain.

- o Great and influential stories do not "tell", they "show". Does my data story provide a visual of the data points?
- o Length – does my story take too long to get to the point?
- o Will my target audience relate to my main character or themes?
- o What is keeping people interested in my story? A great plot, mystery, humor?
- o We are immediately distracted when something sounds off, cliché, or is just out of place. Does my story sound believable?
- o If everybody is happy-go-lucky and the sun is shining, then what is the purpose of telling the story in the first place? Does this story answer "why" you need to tell anyone about this?
- o Does my story have a common theme that my target audience will immediately recognize and pay attention to?
- o Is there a personal touch?
- o From what point of view am I telling my story?
- o Do I have a hook?
- o Does my story stay on an organized course, leading to the point?
- o How am I sharing my story, and will my words support and not distract from the story?
- o Does my story leverage scarcity or urgency?
- o Do I give people reasons why they should buy-into my story – not just tell them "what" but "why what matters?"

The art of storytelling is simple and complex at the same time. Stories provoke thought and bring out insights that could not have been understood or explained before. It's often overlooked in data-driven operations as we believe it's a trivial task.

Listen to: Every Number Tells a Story

Don't Make Me Think!

Have you ever wondered why you remember certain details without even trying, yet other important information slips your mind so quickly?

- o Did I leave enough white space for people to recognize patterns quickly?
- o Did I avoid keys that make people move their eyes between points to understand a point?
- o Did I overload a chart with labels, colors, and images, but I don't really need it all to make a point?
- o Am I directing my audience's attention using design?

Fonts should go unnoticed;
Avoid dark backgrounds;
Research best use of color schemes;
Do not use vertical/angled labels;
Consider proximity, similarity, order, white space;
Soften gridlines and abbreviate.

- o Human nature = "Move or die." Is the information moving in a way that connects with what people want or need quickly?
- o People are looking for patterns in everything. Did I give them patterns to keep their attention and ease the amount of thinking they must do?
- o Is my data story easy to understand in under a minute, easy on the eyes, containing likable and recognizable patterns and images, and appropriately mapping my eyes around the page?