Complex Visualization Reading Exercise

**Grace Kennedy Division Performance Analysis**

**The Visualization: "Grace Kennedy Q3 2024 Strategic Dashboard"**

**Visual Description:**

*Multi-panel executive dashboard with integrated performance metrics*

**Panel 1: Division Revenue Performance (Top Left)**

**Chart Type:** Clustered column chart with trend lines

**Data Displayed:**

* Food Division: Q3 $847M (+12% YoY), Q2 $798M (+8% YoY), Q1 $723M (+15% YoY)
* Financial Services: Q3 $234M (+3% YoY), Q2 $241M (+8% YoY), Q1 $228M (+12% YoY)
* International: Q3 $156M (+22% YoY), Q2 $142M (+18% YoY), Q1 $134M (+25% YoY)

**Visual Elements:**

* Green trend arrow on Food and International
* Yellow caution symbol on Financial Services
* Dotted line showing overall target: +10% YoY growth

**Panel 2: Profit Margin Analysis (Top Right)**

**Chart Type:** Waterfall chart showing margin changes

**Data Displayed:**

* Q2 Baseline: 14.2%
* Volume Impact: +1.8%
* Price Realization: +0.4%
* Cost Inflation: -2.3%
* Operational Efficiency: +0.7%
* **Q3 Result: 14.8%**

**Visual Elements:**

* Red bars for negative impacts
* Green bars for positive impacts
* Target margin line at 15.5%

**Panel 3: Market Position Matrix (Bottom Left)**

**Chart Type:** Bubble scatter plot

**Axes:**

* X-axis: Market Growth Rate (0-25%)
* Y-axis: Grace Kennedy Market Share (0-35%)

**Bubbles:**

* Food Division: 15% growth, 28% share, bubble size = $847M revenue
* Financial Services: 8% growth, 22% share, bubble size = $234M revenue
* International: 20% growth, 12% share, bubble size = $156M revenue

**Visual Elements:**

* Quadrant lines dividing into: Leaders, Challengers, Followers, Niche
* Competitor bubbles shown in gray for context

**Panel 4: Forward Indicators (Bottom Right)**

**Chart Type:** Multi-metric scorecard

**Metrics Displayed:**

* Q4 Pipeline Confidence: 87% (Green arrow ↗️)
* Customer Satisfaction: Food 8.2/10, Financial 7.9/10, International 8.8/10
* Employee Engagement: 78% (Target: 80%)
* Cross-Division Synergy Revenue: $12M YTD ($15M target)

**Visual Elements:**

* Color coding: Green (above target), Yellow (near target), Red (below target)
* Sparklines showing 6-month trends
* Alert icon on Employee Engagement

**Executive Reading Exercise**

**Instructions for Participants:**

"You have 2 minutes to extract the top 3 strategic insights from this dashboard that would matter in a Grace Kennedy board discussion. Use the Executive Reading Method."

**Executive Reading Method Reminder:**

1. **Scan for Exceptions (10 seconds):** What's performing unusually?
2. **Identify Trends (20 seconds):** What direction are key metrics moving?
3. **Assess Implications (30 seconds):** What strategic questions does this raise?
4. **Determine Actions (60 seconds):** What needs investigation or decision?

**Sample Executive Insights (For Facilitator Reference)**

**Insight 1: International Division is the Growth Engine**

**Evidence:** 22% YoY growth, highest growth rate, expanding market share in high-growth markets **Strategic Implication:** Should we reallocate resources to accelerate International expansion? **Action Needed:** Resource allocation review for International division

**Insight 2: Financial Services Division Showing Concerning Deceleration**

**Evidence:** Growth slowing from 12% Q1 to 3% Q3, margin pressures, market share stable but not growing **Strategic Implication:** Competitive threats or structural market changes affecting performance **Action Needed:** Deep-dive analysis of Financial Services competitive position and strategic options

**Insight 3: Cost Inflation is Eroding Overall Profitability Despite Revenue Growth**

**Evidence:** 2.3% margin impact from cost inflation, overall margins below 15.5% target despite revenue growth **Strategic Implication:** Need pricing power or operational efficiency to maintain profitability **Action Needed:** Division-level cost mitigation and pricing strategy review

**Insight 4: Employee Engagement Risk Could Impact Execution**

**Evidence:** Below-target employee engagement with declining trend **Strategic Implication:** Execution risk for strategic initiatives, retention challenges **Action Needed:** HR strategy review and leadership engagement assessment

**Discussion Framework (Post-Exercise)**

**Round 1: Individual Insights (3 minutes)**

Each participant shares their top insight and supporting evidence from the dashboard.

**Facilitator Questions:**

* "What caught your attention first and why?"
* "Which insight would you want to discuss first in a board meeting?"
* "What additional information would you need to validate this insight?"

**Round 2: Strategic Implications (4 minutes)**

Group discussion on what these insights mean for Grace Kennedy's strategy.

**Facilitator Questions:**

* "If these trends continue, what strategic adjustments should Grace Kennedy consider?"
* "Which division deserves the most executive attention right now?"
* "What questions would you ask your leadership team based on this analysis?"

**Round 3: Executive Actions (3 minutes)**

What would participants do next if this were presented in their actual executive review?

**Facilitator Questions:**

* "What additional analysis would you commission?"
* "How would you change resource allocation based on these insights?"
* "What timeline would you set for strategic decisions?"

**Key Learning Points**

**Executive Reading Skills:**

* **Speed Over Completeness:** Executives don't need to understand every data point
* **Pattern Recognition:** Similar business challenges create recognizable data patterns
* **Strategic Context:** Every metric should connect to strategic decisions
* **Action Orientation:** Good analysis points toward specific next steps

**Dashboard Consumption Best Practices:**

* **Trust Your Instincts:** What catches your attention probably deserves investigation
* **Ask "So What?":** Every insight should have strategic implications
* **Demand Context:** Numbers without benchmarks or targets are incomplete
* **Focus on Trends:** Direction matters more than absolute values

**Common Executive Mistakes to Avoid:**

* **Getting Lost in Details:** Don't try to understand every chart perfectly
* **Accepting Unclear Analysis:** If you don't understand it quickly, send it back
* **Passive Consumption:** Ask strategic questions, don't just absorb information
* **Single-Metric Focus:** Consider interactions and trade-offs between metrics

**Facilitator Coaching Points:**

* Praise executives who identify strategic implications, not just data observations
* Encourage questions that would improve the analysis or decision-making
* Connect insights to actual Grace Kennedy strategic priorities
* Reinforce that speed and strategic focus are more valuable than analytical perfection