

Dashboard alignment with stakeholder needs

So far, you've learned that cloud data analysts need to clearly understand the needs of their stakeholders to create effective dashboard designs. Cloud data analysts can clearly present relevant data and become better communicators by taking the time to get to know stakeholders' business needs. One way to better understand stakeholders' needs is to ask SMART questions that are specific, measurable, action-oriented, relevant, or time-bound.

In this reading, you'll learn more about how you can communicate with stakeholders to better understand what their goals are for a dashboard.

Align your dashboard with stakeholder needs

There are countless ways that you can present information in a dashboard depending on your design process. No matter how you choose to design your dashboard, working backwards from clearly identified stakeholder objectives can ensure your dashboard addresses stakeholder needs.

Get to know your stakeholders' needs

To get started, you first need to obtain a general sense of how stakeholders will interact with your dashboard, and what they'll want to analyze. If you ask your stakeholders effective questions, they'll provide you with helpful information about their analysis goals. Ask your stakeholders questions like:

- What's the purpose of this dashboard?
- Who will this dashboard be used by (for example, junior managers, department directors, or executives)?
- What type of dashboard would best meet your needs: strategic, operational, analytical, or tactical?
- What aspect of the business are you interested in analyzing?
- What are the most important metrics or trends you want to review in the dashboard?
- What types of comparisons do you want to observe in the dashboard's visualizations (for example, yearly comparisons, various regions, product types, or locations)?
- What time frame would you like the data to cover?

Remember, these are just a few of the questions you might ask stakeholders. You can also modify them to be more specific, measurable, action-oriented, relevant, or time-bound. For example, instead of asking: "What are the most important metrics you want in the

dashboard?”, you might ask: “What are the three most important marketing metrics you want in the dashboard?” By adding a limit of three metrics, and including the topic of marketing, you make the question more specific, measurable, and relevant. Asking SMART questions can focus the stakeholders responses on their top priorities, and encourage more detailed responses.

Pro tip: Be prepared to take notes on your stakeholders’ responses, so that you can look back at their responses while designing your dashboard.

Work backwards to address stakeholder needs

After stakeholders have answered your questions, take time to reflect on their responses, and make sure you clearly understand their analysis goals. Once you’ve identified their goals, you can work backwards to build a dashboard that will meet them.

First, you should determine which data is relevant to your stakeholders’ goals, and should be included in your dashboard. Consider the purpose for the dashboard, the type of dashboard the stakeholders requested, and the aspect of the business that they want to analyze. This information will help you gather only relevant data.

For example, a stakeholder wants to monitor website traffic and compare how sales revenue relates to website traffic. Based on this information, you decide not to include data on marketing and customer service. Instead, you include the current sales revenue for the year, and website metrics, like the number of people visiting the page, the number of successful sales, and the number of abandoned carts.

Next, think about how much data is necessary to achieve your stakeholders’ analysis goals. Consider the time frame that the stakeholder is interested in, how many metrics they want to monitor, and the variables they want to compare. Taking the time to consider the most important data, and defining the time frame will help you keep the dashboard organized, and ensure you don’t confuse stakeholders with too much data.

Key takeaways

A key aspect of being a cloud data analyst is working with stakeholders, and providing them with dashboards that help them better understand their business. To ensure that your dashboards are relevant to stakeholders needs, it’s important to ask questions to clearly identify a goal for your dashboard. Using the SMART question method encourages clearer stakeholder responses. Once you understand your stakeholders’ goals, you can work backwards by considering what type of data is relevant, and how much data is appropriate to include in your dashboard. By working effectively with stakeholders, you can translate their needs into a dashboard design that helps them make data-driven decisions.