

6 Principles of Communicating Data



- 1** know your **goal**
 - Who? identify your target audience
 - What? articulate your intended message
 - Why? define the desired effect
- 2** use the right **data**
 - Necessary: get data that supports your point
 - Sufficient: enough data to draw conclusions
 - Relevant: eliminate any extraneous data
- 3** select suitable **visualizations**¹
 - Quantitative: position > length > angle > area
 - Ordinal: position > gray ramp > color ramp
 - Nominal: position > shape > color hue
- 4** design for **aesthetics**
 - Clean up fonts, borders, gridlines, alignment
 - Add graphic elements that aid cognition
 - Ensure data is not occluded or distorted
- 5** choose **medium & channel**
 - Medium: static, interactive, or animated?
 - Channel: standalone, recorded, remote, live
 - Mode: broadcast or directed?
- 6** check the **results**
 - Reach: did you reach your target audience?
 - Understanding: did they get it?
 - Impact: did they react in the desired way?