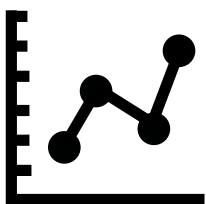


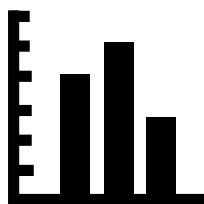
## STORYTELLING WITH DATA: HOW TO MAKE THE CASE

You have research that you'd like to share, whether it's data that's your own or that you've compiled from various sources, but how do you bring the data to life in a way that'll resonate with your audience? Through storytelling!

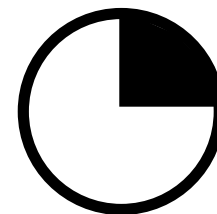
- **Know your audience.** Understand who you aim to reach, their context, what they care about, and the level of detail they need. If you're presenting the data to lawmakers, consider focusing on high-level insights and trends and be selective about the data points you include. Tailoring your story to your audience's needs and interests ensures that your message resonates and is more likely to be well-received.
- **Select your story format.** There are various ways to present your data story, from a traditional slide deck or memo to a more visually engaging infographic or blog post. Consider your audience's preferences and expectations when choosing a format, and if you plan to use multiple formats, make sure to optimize the story for each one.
- **Use storytelling techniques.** Incorporate elements of a story, such as a clear beginning, middle, and end. Stories also include settings, characters, and conflicts. Framing your data in the form of a story helps provide context and structure, making it easier for your audience to understand and remember the information.
- **Focus on the story.** Storytelling with data is not just about presenting numbers – it's about crafting a narrative that engages your audience. Think about the key message you want to convey and structure your data around it.
- **Mix and match the data.** Don't be afraid to blend different data sources. A quote from a relevant stakeholder might reinforce a data point from a survey. Pairing diverse data points can provide a more comprehensive and convincing narrative.
- **Incorporate visuals.** Including graphs, charts, tables, and infographics can make your data more accessible and engaging. Choose visuals that best represent your data, and avoid cluttering your visuals with unnecessary details.



**Line graphs** show data over many points in time



**Bar graphs** are ideal for comparing data points



**Pie charts** show parts in relation to a whole

- **Include a call to action.** What do you want your audience to do with the information you're presenting? Do you want them to make a decision, take action, or change their behavior? Make sure to include a clear call to action that encourages your audience to act on the insights you've provided.
- **Edit and iterate.** Continuously revise and refine your story until the narrative is compelling and clear. Consider sharing your story with someone to get feedback and ensure your key points are getting across effectively. A good story is always a work in progress!

## PRACTICES TO AVOID

- **Avoid overloading.** Be careful not to overwhelm your audience with too much data. Be thoughtful and selective about the data points you include, and present them clearly and concisely.
- **Don't manipulate data to fit a particular narrative.** Present the data as accurately and honestly as possible. Avoid cherry-picking data to fit a preconceived narrative – let the data speak for itself.
- **Don't repeat or restate your opposition's argument.** Stick to yours! Repeating the opposition's messaging can inadvertently give their point legitimacy and spread mis or disinformation – and could simply give the message more air time than it deserves.

