

Presentation and Dissemination of Data

I. Define your target audience

- Who cares about this information?
- Is there a primary and a secondary audience?

II. Determine key data messages for audience

- What does your audience want from data?
- What do you want them to know and do with this information?
- Do you want knowledge or awareness, attitude, or behavior change?

III. Determine format for displaying data

- What is the best way to reach them?
- What level of literacy (number of messages, complexity, use of graphics, technical language) is right for the audience?
- How much information are you providing?
- What is your budget?

See exercise.

IV. Identify the best method to display data (handout)

- Tables, Charts, Maps, Text
- Apply general principles to graphic design
- Color or black/white considerations

See exercise.

V. Develop materials and review

- Who within the target audience could review for clarity?
- Does the data show your key messages?
- Don't skip the review process

See handout.

VI. Disseminate in various ways

Keep the data in front of people in multiple ways:

- Hard copy mailed and distributed
- CD
- Email PDF
- Website
- Powerpoint with handouts
- Press releases

See samples of materials.

Please check out the AssessNow website, Competency 6 - Orientation Resources, at <http://www.assessnow.info/> for additional information.

General Principles to Graphic Design

In general:

- ❑ Table: Non-comparative, highly labeled data sets showing many fields of data
- ❑ Charts: Visual graphics of a time series or comparative relationships
- ❑ Maps: Used to carry a large volume of data in a small space to show geographic or spatial relationships
- ❑ Text: Narrative to explain a few data points or to describe a complex chart or map

From William Cleveland's book, *The Elements of Graphing Data*:

- ❑ **Make the data stand out.** Avoid superfluity.
 - Use visually prominent graphical elements to show the data.
- ❑ **Do not clutter the data region.**
 - Do not overdo the number of tick marks.
 - Do not allow data labels in the data region to interfere with the quantitative data or to clutter the graph.
 - Avoid putting notes, keys, and markers in the data region. Put keys and markers just outside the data region and put notes in the legend or in the text.
- ❑ **Error bars should be clearly explained.**
- ❑ Subject to the constraints that scales have, **choose the scales so that the data fill up as much of the data region as possible.***
 - Choose appropriate scales when graphs are compared.
 - Do not insist that zero always be included on a scale showing magnitude.
 - Showing data on a logarithmic scale can improve resolution.
 - Choose appropriate scales when data on different panels are compared.
- ❑ **A large amount of quantitative information can be packed into a small region.**
- ❑ **Graphing data should be an iterative, experimental process.****
 - Many useful graphs require careful detailed study.

Graphical excellence is that which gives to the viewer the greatest number of ideas in the shortest time with the least ink in the smallest space. - Edward Tufte

Presenter's notes:

* *Question consistency depending on audience.*

** *Creative display of data can be powerful.*

References:

Cleveland, W.S. *The Elements of Graphing Data*. Summit: NJ, Holbart Press. 1994.

Microsoft Office Assistance: Available Chart Types, <http://office.microsoft.com/en-us/assistance>.

Ossiander, Eric. *Graphics for Data Presentation*, Washington State Department of Health, May 2005.

Tufte, Edward R. *Visual Display of Quantitative Information*. Graphics Press, Cheshire, Connecticut. 1991.

Principles of Well-Written Data Materials

Following are some questions to consider when reviewing your data publications:

- ❑ Is the format (e.g., fact sheet, technical report, website) the most effective vehicle for the goal of the piece? Does the piece provide readers with a call to action? Should it? Is it meant to change awareness, knowledge, attitudes, or behavior? Does it?
- ❑ How effective is the use of color? Is the typeface appropriate? Legible? Is the print the right size?
- ❑ Is the layout used to draw the reader's attention to specific areas and items of importance? Are your key data points emphasized and not lost in the information? Are the sections sequenced logically?
- ❑ Is the writing and data display technically appropriate for the audience? Are terms/abbreviations/acronyms clearly defined?
- ❑ Is the information presented factual and accurate? Is there anything in the materials that is misleading?
- ❑ Do the visuals/graphics (charts, tables, maps) effectively support the text? Do the graphics need a lot of explanation or are they clear and understandable?
- ❑ Are the visuals/graphics known to the target audience(s)?
- ❑ Are more visuals/graphics needed or are they used too much?
- ❑ Is there contact information provided on the piece? Is a contact(s) or website(s) listed explaining where to get more copies?
- ❑ Does your document comply with the American Disabilities Act?
- ❑ Are your data sources cited properly?
- ❑ Do you need a glossary of uncommon terminology or data definitions?
- ❑ Are methodology and data limitations described in the document or is there a contact listed for more information on methodology and data limitations?
- ❑ Did you have the document edited for proper grammar, spelling, clarity, and punctuation*?
- ❑ Is there a date of publication on your document?

Adapted from: *Marketing Matters: Building an Effective Communications Program*, National Clearinghouse on Child Abuse and Neglect Information, Department of Health and Human Services, PO Box 1182, Washington, DC 20013-1182.

*Hacker, Diana. *A Writer's Reference*, Fifth Edition. Bedford/St. Martin's, Boston, Massachusetts. 2003.