

Graph Your Data-Reveal Your Stats

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If you have to hold the interest of a group than by all means show a lovely multi-colored graph. For yourself remember a graph is meant to show the behavior of data and data can be represented in many ways. Most importantly data has to be related to business activities of the company or to compare it with rivals. Everyone in the company should understand that data can be used to base strategy and tactics. Also they should understand the process so as to ask for data analysis and provide inputs.

Firstly schedule your report dates. Everyone should get used to the idea that a data report is being released on a particular date. Now that you know the reporting dates work backward to fix the date you need to start work.

You will be using various analytical tools be sure that you are expert in using them. If you are trying out a new tool don't immediately plan to use it for the final report. Do a dry run and release a simultaneous test report while releasing the final report. Don't submit reports which are sloppy or contain errors. Remember some people thrive on others errors.

Who should you prepare reports for? Even if the CEO, COO and CFO don't ask for reports prepare customized reports for them. At some time they will take a peek into them and use them. As an analytics man you are much lower than those in MIS and you may not gain an audience with the high and mighty.

Cuddle up to the Sales Manager and provide him/her with reports. Here you have to understand the business and provide information which the Sales Manager can use to increase sales or improve performance in some way. Usually Sales Managers are the hardest pressed in any organization so if you are able to help one, then you have taken the first step to stardom.

Prepare the metrics which you are going to present. Number of visitors, Sales, leads, prospects to leads, page views, time on sales page, bounce rate etc. Remember when you are presenting it in the report don't write jargon like 'bounce rate' create descriptive phrases understandable to everyone.

One of the most common data fluctuations is seasonality, but every company and industry has its peculiarities. Get to know these.

Insert your Analytics tool in every page and milk each page for data. You have to process the data so automate it. Don't start doing a cut and paste to bring home the data. Reach a stage of importing CSV files fluently from sources.

Don't offer to many changes the first few reports. In many websites the About Us page is the least visited. You may have this data in within the first three weeks but don't suggest that it should be shifted to the bottom. Wait until the higher ups take notice of the data you are sending in. Please ask for feedback. Long before you are asked to do so, get ready to make a presentation.

Check out what worked and what failed. Document everything you are doing. This will help you and also your boss and others in case someone else has to generate a report.

Try and make some parts of your report interesting. You could have a title like 'Best Performer of the Month' and which ever stat you think is suitable. Or you could have Oscars for the Month if more than one stat is interesting. Dog of the Month for a downer.

Finally for yourself don't forget that you are a learner. This is one field in which experience alone is not enough, you have to keep learning. Any number of tools are being produced to further your understanding of what is going on. So go ahead joyfully.