DATA VISUALIZATION 101

Data visualization is a great way to communicate, but just like all communication, there are some best practices to help ensure your message gets through. There are a few simple things you can do to make sure you are telling the right story.

START AT THE BEGINNING

- ☑ **Review the raw data**

- ☑ **Determine your audience**

- ☑ **Meet with the key teams involved to choose most important data points**

- ☑ **Determine what data visualization is best to display what you want people to know**

Now you are ready to make your visualization!

BEST PRACTICES

1 **Use your headline to tell the main point**
- Yes, you always need a headline.
- Your headline tells your story. One sentence should summarize what you want the audience to understand in the chart in concise/direct language free from jargon.

2 **Keep it simple**
- Make sure labels and axes are clear and legible.
- Remove gridlines and any unneeded information.

3 **Use the OEC Style Guide to dictate your aesthetic choices**
- Use OEC fonts. (Calibri / Montserrat)
- If using color, use OEC colors. Use color to show contrast.

4 **Always include your source!**
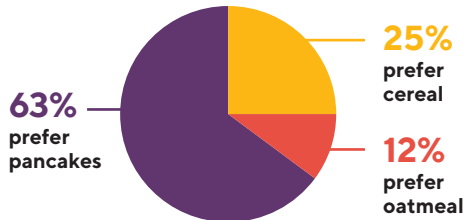- Tell your audience where you got your data.

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5 **Choose the right graph for your story** (If you're not sure ask Rachel)

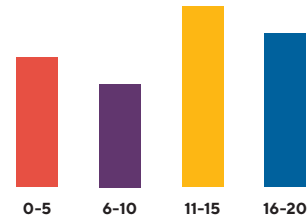> **Clean charts are easier to read – remove gridlines and only label what is necessary**

PIE CHART
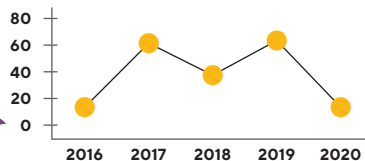Best to show no more than two or three parts of a whole (should always equal 100)

25% prefer cereal

63% prefer pancakes

12% prefer oatmeal

BAR CHART
Best for showing comparisons. Remember to order the data so it helps tell the story

0–5   6–10   11–15   16–20

LINE CHART
Best for showing change over time. Make sure to only feature one to two sequences so it is easy to read.

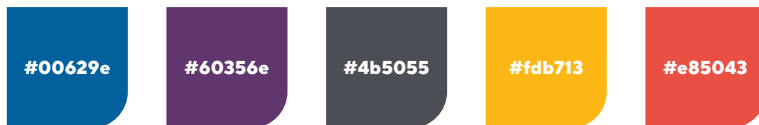> **Axis should always start at zero and use whole numbers so your data is not misleading**

80
60
40
20
0

2016   2017   2018   2019   2020

BIG NUMBER STAT
When you have one key numerical take away to convey

93%

responded Yes

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6 **Use OEC colors and limit to a few**

#00629e   #60356e   #4b5055   #fdb713   #e85043

TIP: If you have one key piece of information you can have all other data in grey and the key finding in OEC purple so it **stands out.**

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7 **Avoid Shading, Gradients, or 3D Effects**

X   X   X

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8 **Consider ADA compliance** (Make sure to review for color contrast)

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9 **Finally, get a second opinion!**
Share your visualization with a colleague to see if they clearly understand the story you are trying to tell.

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