Let Your Data Speak for Itself:
DATA VISUALIZATION
TIPS FOR SUCCESS

No matter how great your big data is, it won't be as effective if no one can understand it. That's where data visualization comes in.

Data visualization is the graphical representation of information. It reduces large, complicated chucks of data into easily digestible visuals. Data visualization also allows you to comprehend information rapidly and easily find trends, patterns, and outliers. In addition, visualized data can hold audience interest longer, promote engagement and increase the retention of key concepts.

DESIGN FOR COMPREHENSION
Create a specific message you want to communicate. Then, align the data to your message and organize it logically.

ELIMINATE CLUTTER
Be succinct. Exclude redundant information, including excess text, borders, and gridlines. Avoid squeezing too much data in a small space.

IDENTIFY THE RIGHT VISUALS
Your message needs to pair well with your design, otherwise it can confuse readers. This may mean experimenting with different visuals before discovering the right one.

CONSIDER YOUR AUDIENCE
Your data should be relevant to your audience. Design your visuals with their goals in mind.

TELL A STORY
Your data is a story you are telling your audience. Include a beginning, middle, and end. Engage their emotions and make it relatable and memorable.

A Cornell University study revealed that if a scientific claim is presented in pure words or numbers, 68% of people will believe it is accurate and truthful. But if you put a graph with the claim, the number jumps to 97%.

Additional Resources

Nussbaumer Knaflic, C. (2015) *Storytelling with data: A data visualization guide for business professionals.* Hoboken, New Jersey: John Wiley & Sons, Inc.
Non-Designer's Guide to Creating Visually Captivating Presentations. [free eBook]. Visme.

MARTINA A. CLARKE, PhD, MS
College of Medicine | @MartinaAClarke

Nebraska Medical Center
UNIVERSITY OF