

Questions Typically Asked by Policy Makers

SEPTEMBER 2002 (FELVER)

WHAT COMPARED TO WHAT?

- **Trendlines** — “Before and after” or forecasting data
- **Bar charts** — One item measured against another
- **Combination charts** — Data measured against a target or another type of variable, used for performance measures

WHAT DOES THE UNIVERSE LOOK LIKE?

- **Pies** — The whole and the pieces
- **Images** — One out of how many?
- **Area charts** — The trendline is filled in to give a better idea of the whole

WHAT DOES A PIECE OF THE UNIVERSE LOOK LIKE?

- **Linked pies** — A piece of the whole

WHAT DOES IT LOOK LIKE IN SPACE OR TIME?

- **Space** — Maps (relationships)
- **Time** — Timelines

HOW DOES THE WORLD WORK?

- **Flow charts** — Work study analysis
- **System diagrams** — Information technology, plumbing

THE COMPASSIONATE

- **Photos** — Program participants, the facility, the outcome

The Principles of Effective Graphics

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EFFECTIVE GRAPHICS

- Are readily understood by the reader
- Are relevant to the world we live in
- Are timely
- Are formatted with a sense of balance and proportion, clarity of design
- And have integrity (data/analysis)

COLOR

- Blue is basic
- For slides, white and yellow work well for text
- Red provides emphasis
- Green provides an additional color
- Strong colors convey a sense of confidence in your data
- Red may convey a sense of alarm when used for numbers
- Use gradient shades when showing incremental transition in data or scale
- Use consistency in color throughout a presentation or publication

BLACK AND WHITE

- For data points, use black for most significant piece of data
- Use white for least significance
- Use gradients for transition
- Avoid too many shades of gray

TEXT

- Upper case is unfriendly
- Lower case is friendly
- Avoid overuse of upper case text, italics, underlines, and combinations of these

FONTS

- Fonts with straight edges work well for headlines, tables, and bold text
- Fonts with curved, flowing edges work well for text in general
- Avoid using more than two fonts in any publication

SIZE AND SPACE

- Main headings, subheadings, and text each decrease by 30 percent
- Never deviate from the grid

Tufte in Brief

(FELVER, SEMINAR NOTES)

THE BASIC CHALLENGE

- **Displaying multi-dimensional information on a flat surface.** Concepts are complex, thus difficult to convey via the one-dimensional media of paper and print

THE BASIC QUESTION

- **What are we comparing to what?** In analysis, visual displays should draw a comparison or show cause and effect. We are answering visual questions. The principles of thinking follow a visual path.

CONTENT DRIVES DESIGN

- **Not the reverse.** Direct labeling or good design can solve half of all problems. $1+1=3$. Less is more.

THE ARCHITECTURE SHOULD BE SIMPLE, THE CONTENT RICH

- **These principles are universal, transcending time and culture:**
 1. Avoid "chart junk" (3-D charts, needless gridlines, extra words, glaring colors)
 2. Display thoughts together
 3. Use high resolution, good contrast, clear design

THE FINAL MERIT OF THE ANALYSIS RESTS ON ITS SUBSTANCE

- **The data must be credible.** If the data is credible and the architecture is good, the message will carry.