
Days of Data – Step By Step

A “Days of Data” campaign is a way to grow an internal culture around data visualization and use. It is way to get a diverse set of people who are not the “data visualization specialists” to learn, engage, create new visuals, and reinforce how you can use well-designed visualizations to promote data use within your organization.

Step 1 - Identify Other Data Visualization Enthusiasts

A general call for visualization enthusiasts is a good starting point even if you are not doing a “Days of Data.” Identifying other interested individuals is a good way to share tips and grow interest.

Step 2 - Provide Data Visualization Guidance to a Wide Audience

The objective of a campaign like this is to raise awareness and kick-start “do-it-yourself” beyond just the self-identifying data viz enthusiasts. You want to “demystify” data viz and show how easy it is to tweak what people already do to communicate their data more effectively and allay fears of “how do I begin.”

Step 3 - Work with Leadership to Define a Scope and Duration

Just like any good visualization, before you do anything, identify the message and the story you want to tell. It could be as simple as introducing new types of visualizations, or it could be related to a sector theme or results from a particular project. Leadership support is important both for the campaign and for future related initiatives.

Step 4 - Recruit Volunteers to Create Visualizations

Your initial groups of enthusiasts and some of those whose interest you piqued in Step 2 will be great candidates. They will identify data and stories to tell that are meaningful to them. Work with them closely under Step 6!

Step 5 - Make a Plan and Assemble the Team

Identify when you want to do your communications and plan for iterative reviews and possible additional clearance. It will always take longer than you think it will, so build in a buffer! If you can identify at least one helper to work with the volunteers and coordinate with you, the process will go smoother.

Step 6 - Create (and Revise) the Visualizations

This is the fun part — you get to serve as part consultant and part designer, assisting the volunteers to refine their story and select a visualization (which isn’t the Excel default bar chart). It is important to work collaboratively and, if you wind up creating visuals, run each iteration past the stakeholders for their approval and buy-in.

Step 7 - Share the Visualizations

Send to your communication channels. Solicit feedback and identify what kinds of interest this generates.

Step 8 - Plan the Next Phase

Your feedback might show that some people will want to see another round of more or less the same thing, while others may want to have broader discussions about data use. See what you can build on and start planning!