

Does Your Performance Management System Just Keep Score or Tell a Story?

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If your performance management (PM) system just records data and prints out graphs without any explanation or prediction, you are not fully using the power that your data can provide. Without clear meaning, it is unlikely data alone will provide the information that helps motivate people to act or respond.

A growing number of public health officials are recognizing that data alone are not enough to gain public trust². The data we present needs to be engaging, such as in an infographic form, essentially telling a story through visual aids, as shown in Figure 1³.

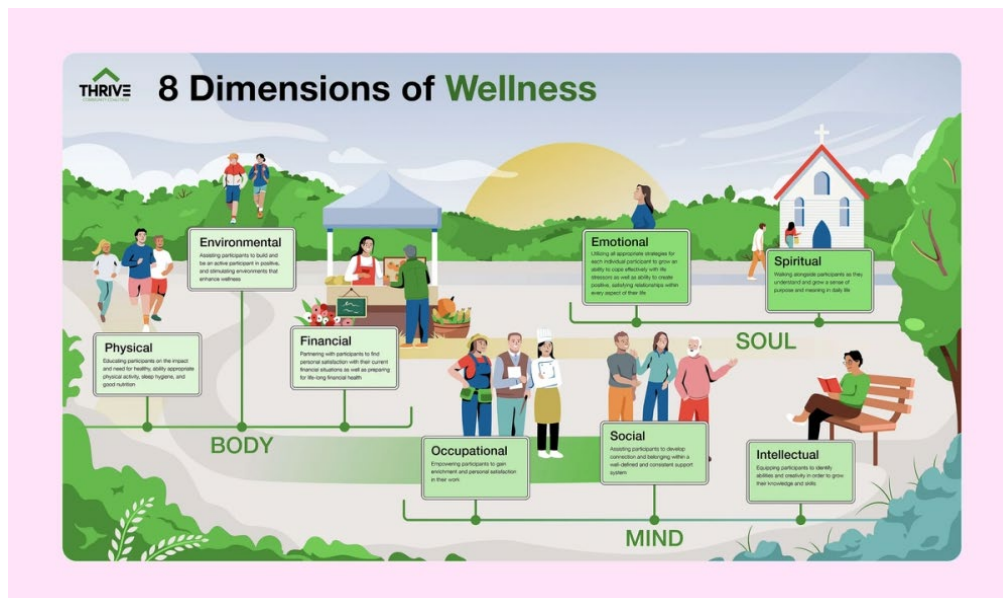


Figure 1

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² <https://www.governing.com/management-and-administration/a-colorado-county-reimagines-public-health-storytelling>, Accessed 3/1/2026

³ <https://dribbble.com/shots/24957827-Infographic-Design>, Accessed 3/1/2026

An infographic, or data visualization, is a visual representation that combines text, charts, icons, and/or images to explain complex information or data quickly. It can make complex ideas easier to understand and increase comprehension by making information simpler to compare, interpret, and act on.

Visualizing your data helps your audience quickly grasp your main point. A study by Massachusetts Institute of Technology found that visualization “speeds up decision-making since our brains can process images we have seen for as few as 13 milliseconds⁴.” It also allows you to identify insights that might otherwise be buried in a spreadsheet or report.

Data visualization is the process of turning numbers, patterns, and trends into visual formats, like charts and graphs, to increase comprehension. It’s not just about creating an aesthetically pleasing visual representation of data; it’s about making information easier to understand and act upon.

When developing an infographic:

1. Know your audience and target the message to the audience.
2. Have a consistent visual style.
3. Pick the right graph for the data, such as pie charts, bar charts, timelines, etc. Consider what your audience is accustomed to seeing.
4. Keep messages concise within text boxes. Aim for messages that are easy to understand.
5. List citations, if applicable.
6. Use a *Headline* that catches attention and a *Summary* that highlights the key point requiring action.
7. Use white space to make the graphic easy to read. Avoid overloading the message.

The following tools are available to help you create your infographic:

- [Canva](#)
- [Venngage](#)
- [Aha!](#)
- [Adobe Express](#)
- [Visme](#)
- [Infogram](#)
- [PicMonkey](#)
- [Piktochart](#)
- [VistaCreate](#)
- [Snappa](#)
- [DesignCap](#)
- [Easel.ly](#)
- [Animaker](#)
- [Genial.ly](#)

⁴ In the blink of an eye, Anne Trafton, MIT News Office, January 16, 2014

We do not make any recommendations as to which tool is best. You should review the available options and determine which one is best for your needs. An Infographic Tools Comparison Chart is available at <https://visme.co/blog/best-infographic-tools/> to help guide your selection.

Conclusion:

If you want to support faster decisions and better buy-in from your audience, infographics are key. Storytelling with charts and graphs can help simplify large and complex datasets into a clear visual that shows what is happening. Because our brains process visuals much faster than tables of numbers, trends and outliers may be spotted more quickly than when reviewing spreadsheets alone. The result can be faster decisions and clearer next steps. Choose your infographic tool wisely to inform your audience clearly and easily.

Caution – keep it simple and avoid overcomplicating the infographic with too many messages.