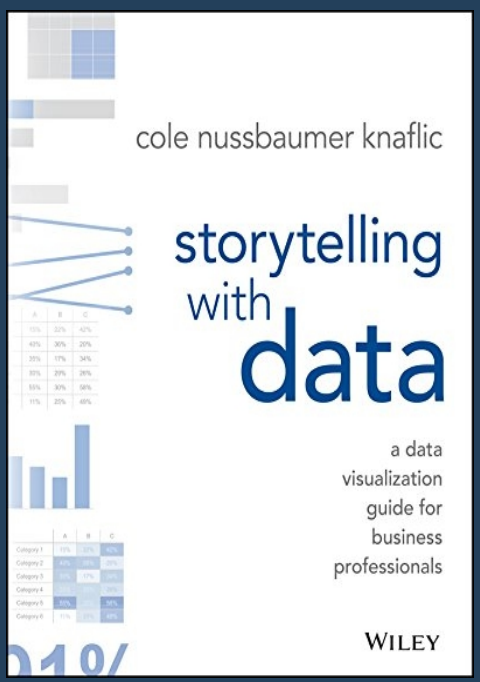
Storytelling with Data



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Does giving a presentation about your company's data and reports scare you? Do you have difficulties in analyzing your metrics and results? Already fixing on acquiring the ability to make something complex into something simple?
If you answered "yes" to some of these questions, the summary of the book "Storytelling with Data" by Cole Nussbaumer Knaflic was made for you!
The communication problems with the interpretation of business data by executives and their employees directly affect the profit and professional performance of each one, after all, this ability is extremely important for those who work with results and data analysis, people who deal with numbers and self-explanatory reports.
In this summary, an author talks about the importance of data science as a tool for making the best decisions in the corporate world. Therefore, the predictability of scenarios and an excellent visual communication of the data are decisive for the future of a company and its employees.
What parameters to adopt in a critical analysis? What is the best way to make your presentation? What tools can you use to make everyone understand you better? These and others will be answered below! Stay with us and discover the power of storytelling!

Score

9

9 Aplicability
8 Inspiration
9 Innovation
9 Impact on results
9 Structure

Main ideas of the book

Below are some main ideas from the book to guide your learning, check out:

- Understand the context: what, who, when, where, how and why.
- Choose a visual presentation suitable for the audience
- Eliminate the saturation of images, make them pleasant to the public.
- Focus your attention where you want it, be objective!
- Think like a designer, what the presentation is for and what your goal is.
- Tell a story, engagement is power.

To whom is this book indicated?

The book "Storytelling with Data" is aimed at people who need to express themselves with the use of data, improve their graphics and the story they want to tell, whether they are analysts who need to guide their customers, managers who need to evaluate the performance of the branch or philanthropists who want to demonstrate the extent of their projects in the community, as well as designers and marketing professionals.

Overview of the book

Overview: The importance of context

To build your project, first, you must know and decide who your audience is, what is the most efficient communication and the desired context so that when entering the data they can be used and more likely to have a solid understanding of its content, that's why, creating a familiarity with the topic and establishing a connection will make the audience more interested in the topic covered.
The author stresses that the credibility of the information is not in the amount of documents shown to the public, wanting to present all the data at once will only disperse them and make them waste time analyzing each activity again, the important thing is to select only the information most relevant to the purpose of your presentation and your purpose.
Therefore, you must define who your target audience is, who you are among the others, what is your credibility to pass on this information and finally, you must also establish an order so that the story has a pleasant and continuous flow.
The presenter can also determine an action plan, the articulation between his ideas and how it will reach the audience. You can stimulate a conversation focused on the desired topic and thus, recommend the product or service.
Some words cited as stimulating public action:

- Accept, believe, support, learn, ensure, authorize;
- Begin, agree, collaborate, create;
- Defend, demonstrate empathy, desire, differentiate;
- Empower, encourage, engage, understand, establish, stimulate, examine;
- Facilitate, make, familiarize, train;
- Implement, include, influence, initiate, invest;
- Receive, recommend, report, respond;

Did you read the slides in full in any presentation? If the answer is yes, never do that again! It's tiring for the public ...
Live presentations should be practiced beforehand, the slides should serve only as a quick consultation to find out what the next topic is to be addressed, a line of thought to be followed together with your explanation. Only a few notes will be ideal for doing a good job.
The author presents a draft technique used for the structure of the presentation called storyboard. It consists of sketches that summarize the total communication of the story you are going to present.
Therefore, the storyboard is a part of the action plan and it is recommended that it be done on a simple blank sheet of paper so that there is no rework on visual platforms. In addition, it should be done by estimating the presentation time to just 3 minutes containing as much information as possible.

Overview: Choosing an effective look

Once you have defined your target audience, you must choose the best look for an effective presentation. This presentation is a very important part of storytelling, it is in it that the appropriate tools are established, such as pie charts, bars, lines or tables with different colors, 3D models or pie, these resources will be your allies for a decisive approach.
After extensive research and consultation in behavioral and marketing and design books, Cole addresses seven models:

1. The plain text;
2. The scatter plot;
3. Tables;
4. Line graph;
5. Heat map;
6. Horizontal and vertical bar graph;
7. Pie chart.

Plain text

The plain text can be enlarged to generate more impact on your visualization, when there are only 1 or 2 values to be highlighted, otherwise, use the table, so that the information is more organized.

Scatter Plot

The scatter plot is advisable for observing numerical data and for showing the correlation between them. Therefore, it is close to the line graph and indicates with more visibility the tendency to be projected on the studied subject.

Table

The table is the best way to organize a lot of numerical data by time periods or several categories. It is most used when you want quick access when you have to supply a lot of data at once.

Line chart

The line graph is more succinct and more easily understood than a table, even if organized. It is observed that the line graph is most commonly seen in political opinion polls with the participation of a larger audience.

Heat map

The heat map is an alternative to give more visual clues to the customer, demonstrating the magnitude of the data. At this point, it is also important that you pay attention to the levels of color saturation in distinguishing the information, as they must be from the same matrix but present different intensities.

Horizontal and vertical bar charts

Bar graphs can be used because they are more easily understood due to the familiarity of covering more information. They must be leveled and have the same start on a neutral line. This recognition of what is already familiar is called small data.
Remember that for the representation of categorical data, whenever using vertical or horizontal bar graphs, these bars must have height and width proportional to the actual data. In addition to maintaining the order of the content, it will also facilitate the understanding of your customers.

Pie Chart

Although the pie is associated with good times, the author reveals that it is the worst type of graph to be used, as it does not represent a uniform distribution of data with visual clarity. The graph can be tilted as in a 3D model, which could make the analysis of the information even more difficult.
In addition, according to behavioral research conducted by the author, people in general do not have a good sense of comparison between the area relationship of a two-dimensional object.

Overview: Saturation is your enemy

The importance of the correct distribution of information ensures greater ease in the interpretation of data by the public. In addition, honesty when presenting data is essential to ensure transparency and trust to your customers!
Saturation can occur due to extrinsic cognitive load, which is the excess of information that is conflicting with each other and expressed through strong and disharmonized colors. Therefore, those complicated or misidentified images should not be in the presentation.

Gestalt Principles

The Gestalt Principles are teachings of the 1900 Gestalt school of psychology, where a form of visual perception of information is analyzed, based on a signal that is the main information to be passed and the saturation that are the visual distractions.
Therefore, the Gestalt principles are formed by visual elements that are: the proximity that defines the formation of groups, the similarity that establishes connection with elements that have the same color, shape or size and the approach that is the delimitation of a territory.
In addition, we also have the concept of closure, which are simple and well-known figures, continuity which is the aesthetics of alignment and visual order demonstrating progression and evolution and finally, the connection which is the connection of elements by lines connecting points.
Anyway, we have to emphasize the importance of white space!

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Felt uncomfortable, right? This is also a way to get attention! In an oral presentation, breaks are important and provide greater comfort for the listeners, as well as the correct dimensioning of the space in a slide show.

Overview: Focus your audience's attention

In this chapter, the author addresses the way the audience interacts with presentations and behavioral science that when combined with design produces more engagement and absorption of content.
The color, the use of bold and italics, the size, the outline of the words, underlined or spaced are called pre-attentive attributes and can be used in order to ensure concentration and more efficient communication.
The human being has three types of memory: the iconic, the short-term and the long-term. In the first, the response speed is super fast, in the second we have limitations in the processing of information and the last one does the pattern recognition and the permanent storage.
Now I propose a counting exercise:
Try to remember this sequence for 20 seconds: 345691073582
Now close your eyes and speak the sequence out loud!
Don't be worried, it is normal to forget some numbers and even change the order, this process is done by our iconic and short-term memory.
First, we want to reach the iconic memory so that it draws attention quickly. With a good presentation, we achieve short-term memory and, as a final goal, long-term memory so that a hierarchy of information is created in the minds of customers to associate data with previous knowledge of the world.

Overview: Think like a designer

What is the purpose of the presentation? What message does she want to convey? Is it easily accepted by the public? Because of this, this chapter is dedicated to the function and the form to be performed by the presentation. So, what are the classic concepts developed by marketing for the best interpretation of data?
Affordances are characteristics of objects that do not need to be stimulated to understand their function, the characteristic allows the absence of explanations for an effective design, in this way, the translation of the concept of affordances for data communication can be reflected with some attributes with highlighting the most important information, eliminating distractions and creating a hierarchy.
Distractions are a hindrance to a design, we can conclude that not all data has the same importance, some details are decorative and do not necessarily need to be in this presentation, to know which ones are important, eliminate them and see if the main message is changed , otherwise take them off!

As previously stated, the information hierarchy defines what will be in the foreground and background, this will ensure that the public processes the information in an orderly manner and the meaning remains intact, in addition to ensuring good accessibility of the content.
It is important to align the lessons learned in the previous chapters and possible adaptations in the future.
With all that explained, it can be concluded that the aesthetics of data presentation is also very important! Therefore, it is possible to use color intelligently and moderately and pay attention to the alignment of images and graphics.

Overview: Lessons on storytelling

Storytelling is the way to present something, a story told focused on the marketing of a purpose, so for a good presentation it must have a beginning, middle and end. The influence on business and finance presentations that are objective and complex environments requires a narrative strategy and information flow different from a commercial or presentation from other areas.
Author Cole Nussbaumer uses real, fictional examples to develop the storytelling process in the book by demonstrating how to use data more efficiently. It can be said that art and science when allied cause more impact, more emotion and more energy.
In the storytelling process with data, we can adopt a three-act structure with conflicts and tensions. Similarly, in plays, the first act introduces the protagonist and the world in which he lives.
Right in the second act comes the main story, the meeting of other characters and other adverse situations that through his special skills, the protagonist develops awareness about who he is and what is happening.
Then, an accident occurs, usually a problem that will guide the whole story, and that, finally, in the third act the resolution of the conflict occurs, being a decisive point in his life and the solution of the biggest problem at the climax of the story.
Given this structure, shall we create a script?

1. Find a subject that you really care about.
2. Simplify information, have the courage to cut out irrelevances.
3. Be yourself, say in your words what will happen.
4. Be empathetic, pity your readers and listeners.

The author concludes that stories move the world, tell us what happened in the past and remind us of mistakes so that they do not repeat themselves and humanity can evolve. Well-told stories thrill, captivate and hold the attention of those who listen to them soon, that should be your goal with the storytelling process!

What do other authors say about it?

In the book, "**Neuromarketing**", by the author Darren Bridge, you learn to develop your strategies of engagement with customers from neuroscience, which is the behavioral research applied in the design of presentations, sales and communication techniques with the recipients of the messages.

In the work "**The Storytellers Secret**", by the American author Camine Gallo, storytelling is treated as a way to enchant people to pay attention to something of interest. In this summary, he teaches how to build this process in a way to enhance emotions, passion, motivation and rapprochement with the public.

In addition to these books, we can also point out "**This is Marketing**", by Seth Godin, which talks about creating engagement with the public, the innovation of a culture with customers, the improvement in communication skills with the public and identification efficient marketing, contributing to the understanding of Storytelling with Data.

Okay, but how can I apply this in my life?

After reflecting on the countless adaptations that we can apply, see below some quick tips to better define your data analysis:

- The design for the data analysis must be legible, clean, with a simple language and without high complexity.
- The simplified context of the message should contain who, what and how.
- The look should be designed with a title, only essential elements, captions and variations in colors for different elements are welcome.
- Pay attention to design and history, as well as your ultimate goal!

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