

3 reasons why you need a story, not just data



Data can be enlightening and powerful.

But the purpose of data is not to simply create charts and graphs.
The purpose of data is to answer questions and spark curiosity.





**Storytelling
helps bring
data to life.**

It adds context,
engagement, and
emotion to fact.



Here are three reasons why
you need more than data—
you need a story.

1

Stories **create
structure** for
presenting data

2

Stories
**strengthen the
communication**
of data

3

Stories
make data
persuasive





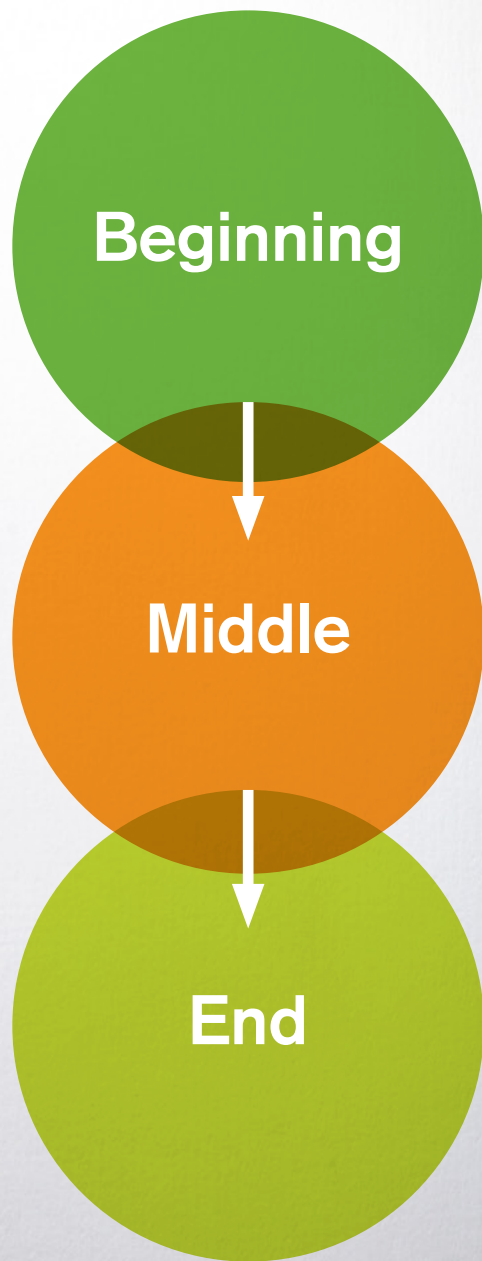
Stories create
structure for
presenting data



“Data are just summaries of thousands of stories — tell a few of those stories to help make the data meaningful.”

Chip and Dan Heath
authors of *“Made to Stick”*





Stories have structure —a beginning, middle, and end.

This structure lets you organize data into a meaningful narrative and create a guided pathway that is linked to the original data source.

The audience can follow along with the story, taking in data point by data point. Because the original data is right at your fingertips, the discussion takes place in an environment where there is trust in the data and results can easily be reproduced.

By the end of the presentation, you will have guided your audience to a solution or decision. They can see how the pieces form the greater whole.



EXAMPLE

Compiling internal audit reports

Compiling internal audit reports is typically a time-consuming and complicated process. Internal auditors must articulate business risk in a format that the executive team can easily understand and use to make decisions.

VS.

Assembling data into a story enables

Assembling data into a story internal auditors to create a more cohesive presentation. They can identify risks and issues, simplify and add meaning to facts, and provide recommended solutions.

This structure helps C-suites understand cause and effect. They are empowered to make better-informed decisions.



Stories
strengthen the
communication
of data



“Stories are
remembered
up to 22 times
more than
facts alone.”

Jennifer Aaker

General Atlantic Professor of Marketing,
Stanford Graduate School of Business





Humans are wired to tell stories.

It's how we naturally communicate information and ideas. Even boring topics become interesting with a great story.

The same is true of data.

Numbers in a spreadsheet can be confusing and disengaging. But packaging that data into a story makes the facts digestible, contextual, and memorable.



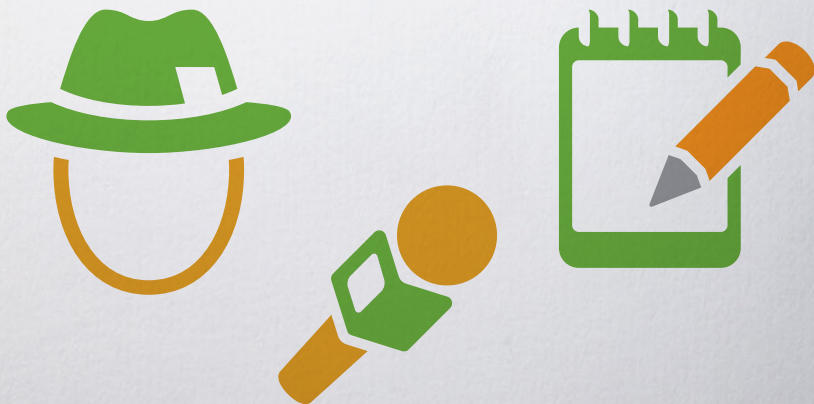
The most engaging stories are multi-way conversations.

They give listeners room to ask questions, just like an interactive data visualization.



EXAMPLE

Journalists have always been publishing statistics and facts in their articles. But the rise of data analytics and data visualization has caused more reporters to adapt their traditional narratives into data stories.



The Guardian pioneered the concept of “data journalism” in 2009 when Simon Rogers created the Guardian Datablog.

Today nearly every media outlet reports stories using infographics, maps, charts, and graphs.

The reason is simple. Data visualizations drive traffic and sharing. Data storytelling has become a primary way media serve readers in the digital era.



Stories make
data persuasive



“Numbers have an important story to tell. They rely on you to give them a clear and convincing voice.”

Stephen Few

Consultant and educator
on business intelligence
and information design





A big part of decision making is convincing others to adopt your point of view.

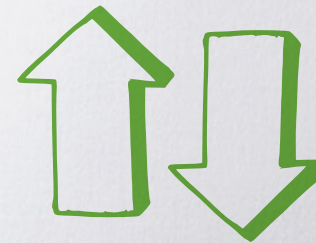
Sometimes hard numbers are enough. More often you need something that connects the audience to the data on an emotional plane in order to gain buy-in.

Stories add this emotion to data.

Storytelling lets you talk about how the data relates to people and scenarios. You can inspire imagination. You can galvanize supporters for a cause.

By moving seamlessly between presentation mode and the original data set, you can answer questions on the fly to explain your argument.

This helps you reach common ground, which is crucial for persuading others to support a decision and drive change.



EXAMPLE

Marketers often face challenges when gaining internal buy-in for new campaigns. Securing budget typically requires marketers to calculate and prove the ROI of their plans.

ROI!

Data plays a natural role here—and it is made more powerful by storytelling. Marketers increase their power of persuasion by explaining and proving how their ideas will help internal stakeholders achieve their goals.

Marketers can describe how the data relates to the needs of the business and internal team members.

Marketers can convince stakeholders because they are establishing context for the data and providing evidence of the potential results.

Data storytelling is changing the face of data visualization.

The audience gets more than numbers.
They get wisdom, guidance, and empowerment.





Check out
these videos to
learn more about
data **storytelling**
in **Qlik® Sense**

How to work
with data
storytelling



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