

Best practices for helping people understand that every statistic comes with context, caveats, and possible bias:

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1. Normalize “the footnote mindset”

Make it part of your culture that **every KPI has a footnote**.

- Add a small italicized note under every metric in reports:
“*Source: Google Ads — excludes call-only campaigns*” or
“*Lead status updated manually — possible lag in conversions.*”
- Encourage team members to ask: “*What’s the story behind this number?*”

2. Show data lineage (where it came from and what it means)

Build simple visuals or one-liners that explain:

- **Platform source:** e.g., “Meta Ads impressions = served on-screen for ≥ 1 second” vs “Google impressions = ad loaded on page.”
 - **Tracking method:** Pixel-based, UTM-based, manual, or API-fed.
 - **Attribution window:** “7-day click / 1-day view” means something very different than “last-touch model.”
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3. Pair every stat with its “taint factor”

When presenting a metric, list one or two “ways this number might lie.”

Examples:

Metric	Potential Bias / Caveat
Click-through rate	Click fraud or accidental taps on mobile
Conversion rate	Missing call-in conversions or offline sales
Cost per lead	Campaign includes brand terms that inflate conversion quality
Occupancy % (Self Storage)	May include delinquent or discounted tenants

This helps non-analytical stakeholders appreciate uncertainty without being overwhelmed.

4. Tell “data stories” instead of dumping dashboards

When briefing executives or team leads:

- Begin with “**what we’re confident about**” → then “**what we’re still testing.**”
- Use plain-language phrasing like:

“According to Facebook’s definition, we reached 28,000 people — though this likely includes repeat impressions. Our CRM shows 800 distinct inquiries.”

5. Align on a shared glossary of terms

Create a “KPI dictionary” across teams:

- Define each term *once*, and store it in a shared doc or Notion page.
- Update quarterly as platforms or tracking methods change.
- Include “*How this metric can mislead*” in each definition.

6. Educate continuously

Use short “Data Literacy Moments” in meetings:

- Take one KPI each week and explain how it’s captured, where bias might occur, and how to interpret it responsibly.
- Turn it into a standing agenda item — it trains people to think critically.