Money Talks

Making sense of dollars and cents through financial storytelling and data visualization

Taylor Otstot

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1 Introduction	
~~	
2 Crafting your story	# Agenda
~~	What we'll learn today
3 Successful Visualization	

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About Taylor

15 years of Finance, Operations, and Strategic leadership

Year	Title	Company
2009	Audit Senior	EY
2013	Finance Manager	Spirit Realty Capital
2014	Senior Director, Finance	GoDaddy
2022	VP, Finance	Dashlane

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Persuading through STORY

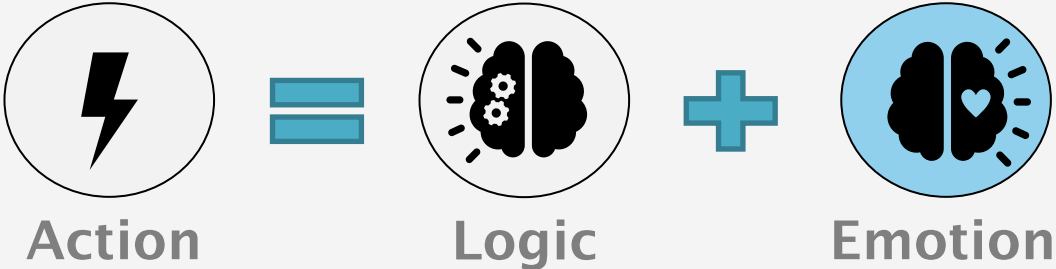The art of communicating financial information.

Why storytelling?

Our audience...

1 Has their own facts and experiences

2 Isn't inspired to act by logic alone

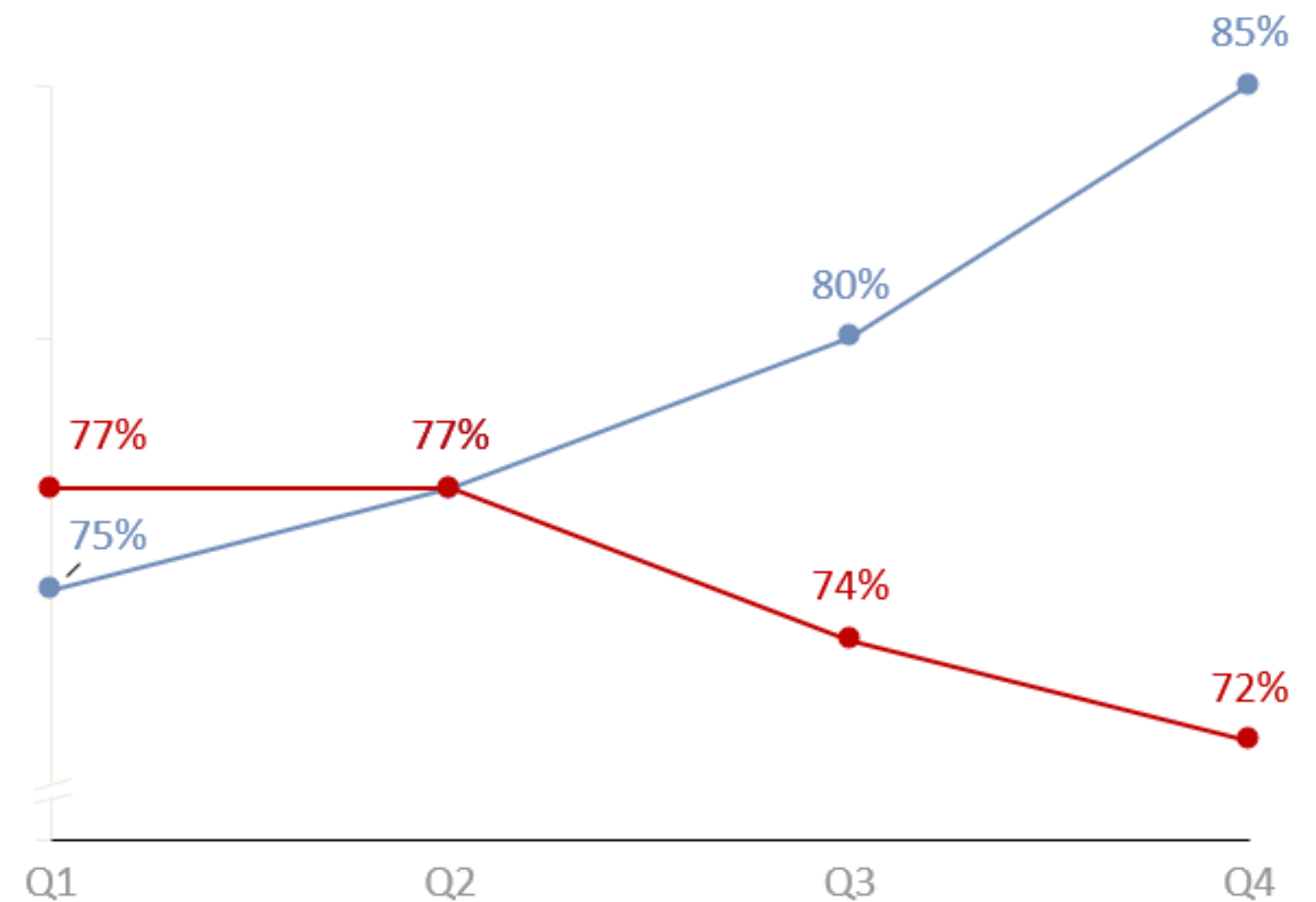Action   Logic   Emotion

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Data doesn't influence... it reinforces

Just because it's true doesn't mean it's relevant

- Data must be translated into information to create a shared perspective that is meaningful for the audience

- Data can help set the scene, but only the narrator can focus the audience's attention

Account Exec Quota Attainment
vs
Sales Budget Attainment

85%
80%
77%   77%
75%
74%
72%

Q1   Q2   Q3   Q4

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Logic doesn't inspire action

Change requires appeal to the rational (Rider) and emotional mind (Elephant)

- **The Rider** provides direction, but that alone cannot create sustained effort
  - Perceived laziness is often exhaustion

- **The Elephant** provides motivation, but it needs to be channeled towards a goal
  - Perceived resistance is often a lack of clarity

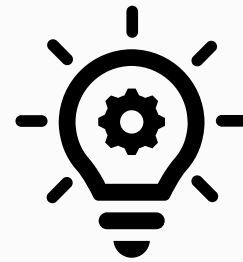TOTS.BLOG
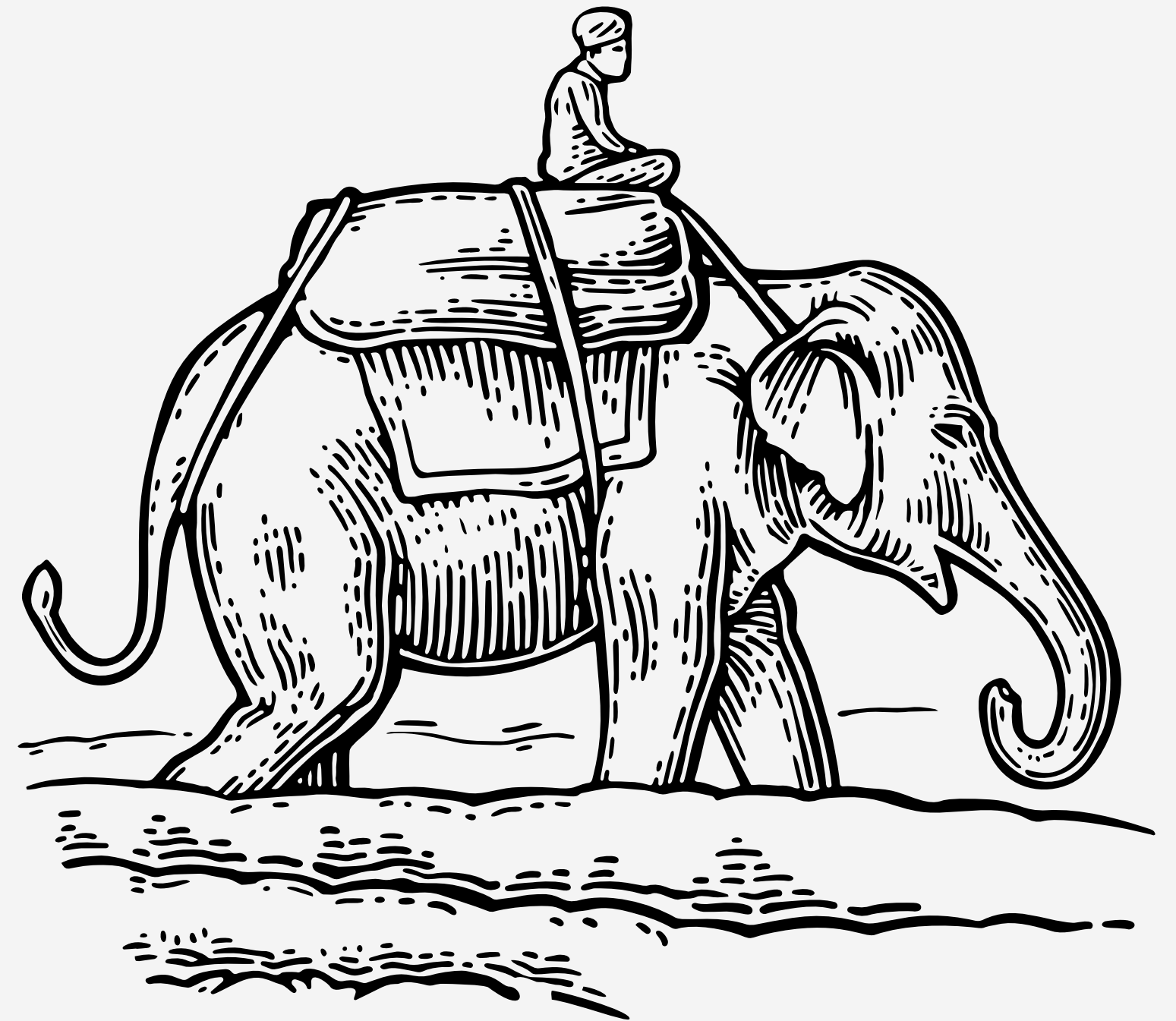
Leverage STORY to connect logic & emotion

Subject	**T**reasure / **O**bstacle	**R**ight lesson / wh**Y**
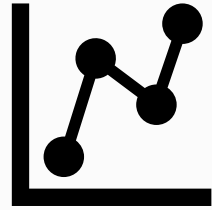
Information

- **Identify the main character** (hint: it's not the data!)

- **Set the stage** to provide context of what your audience will see and why it matters

Insights

- **Highlight the tension** between the objective (treasure) and what is in the way (obstacle)
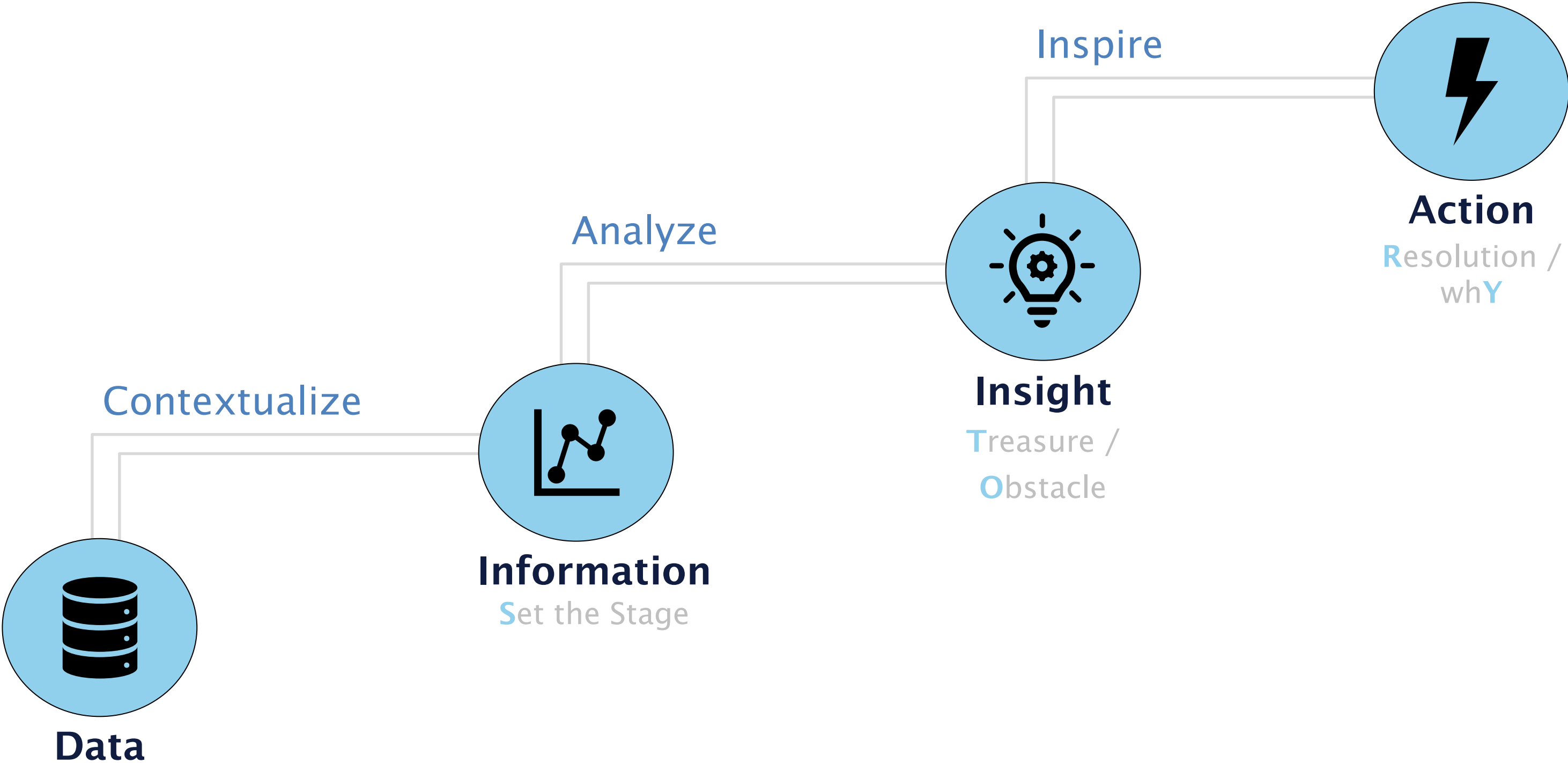
- If there's no tension, there's no story

Action

- Implicitly or explicitly state how the action clears a path to the treasure (right lesson)

- Link the action back to the Subject – why does this matter?

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STORY in Action

Effective Visualizations

Three A's of Effective Visualization
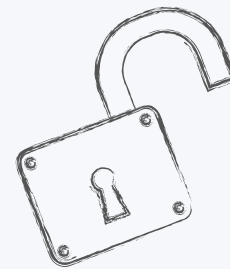
Form follows function

what we want our audience to do with data

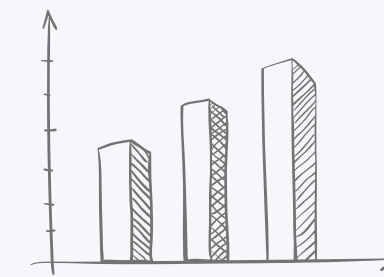what the visualization enables

Affordances

The more intuitive it is, the more likely it will be used.

Accessibility

If it's hard to read, it's hard to do.

Aesthetics

The prettier it is, the more likely our audience is to use it.

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Affordances

Highlight the Important Stuff

Draw attention to where you want the audience to focus.
- Only ~10% of the visual should be highlighted!
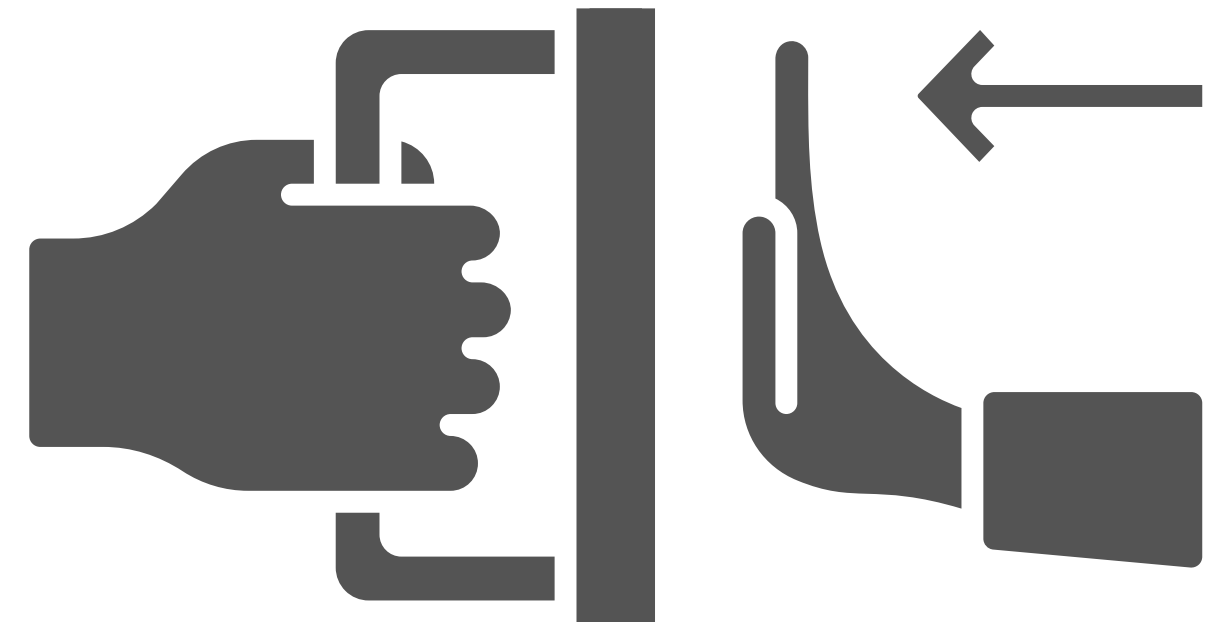
Eliminate Distractions

Perfection exists when you have nothing to take away.
- Remove clutter without removing context

Create a clear hierarchy of information

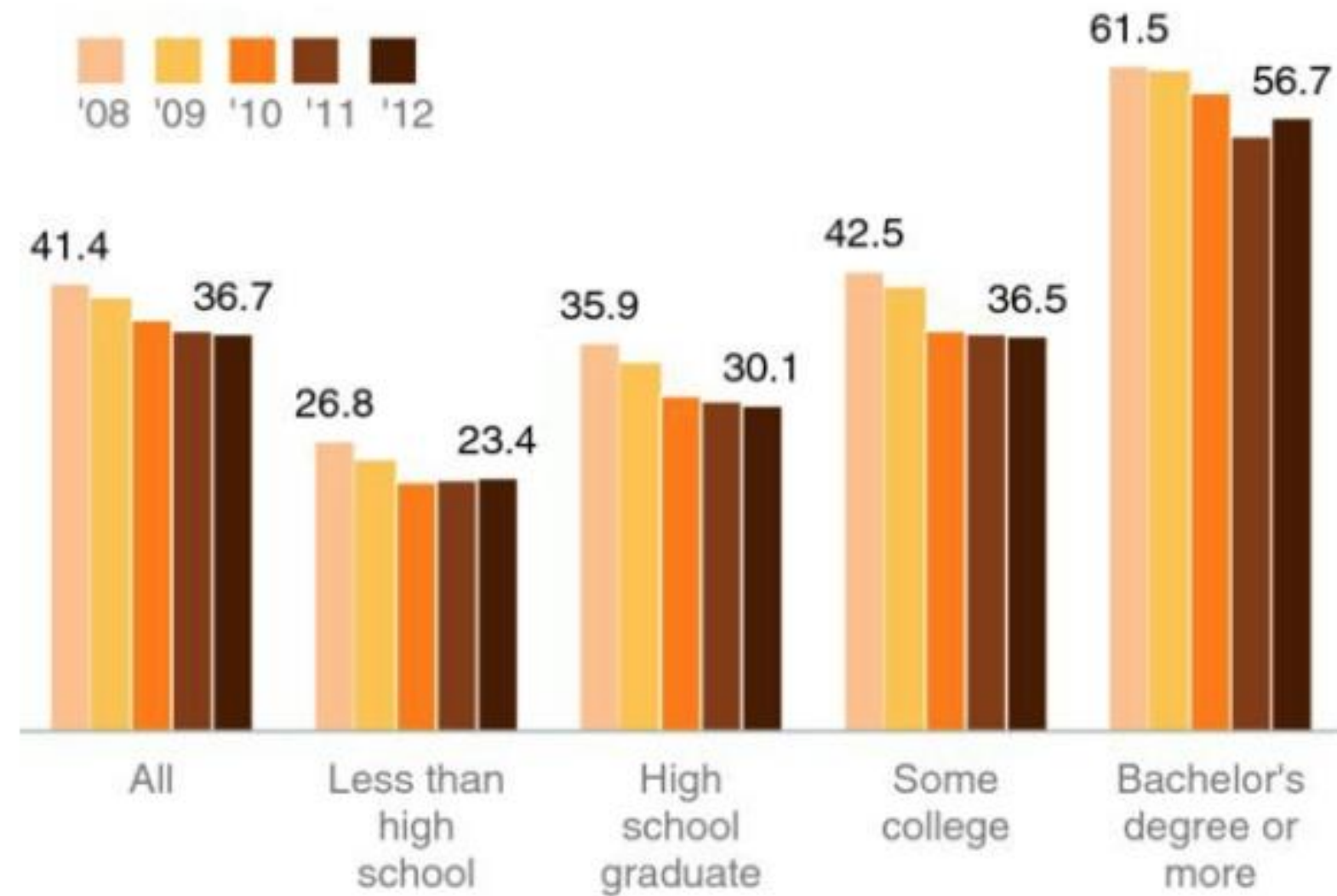Visually pull some items to the forefront and push others to the background.
- Use formatting to help your audience process the info in the right order

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Affordance Example

New Marriage Rate by Education

Number of newly married adults per 1,000 marriage eligible adults

'08 '09 '10 '11 '12

All: 41.4 ... 36.7
Less than high school: 26.8 ... 23.4
High school graduate: 35.9 ... 30.1
Some college: 42.5 ... 36.5
Bachelor's degree or more: 61.5 ... 56.7

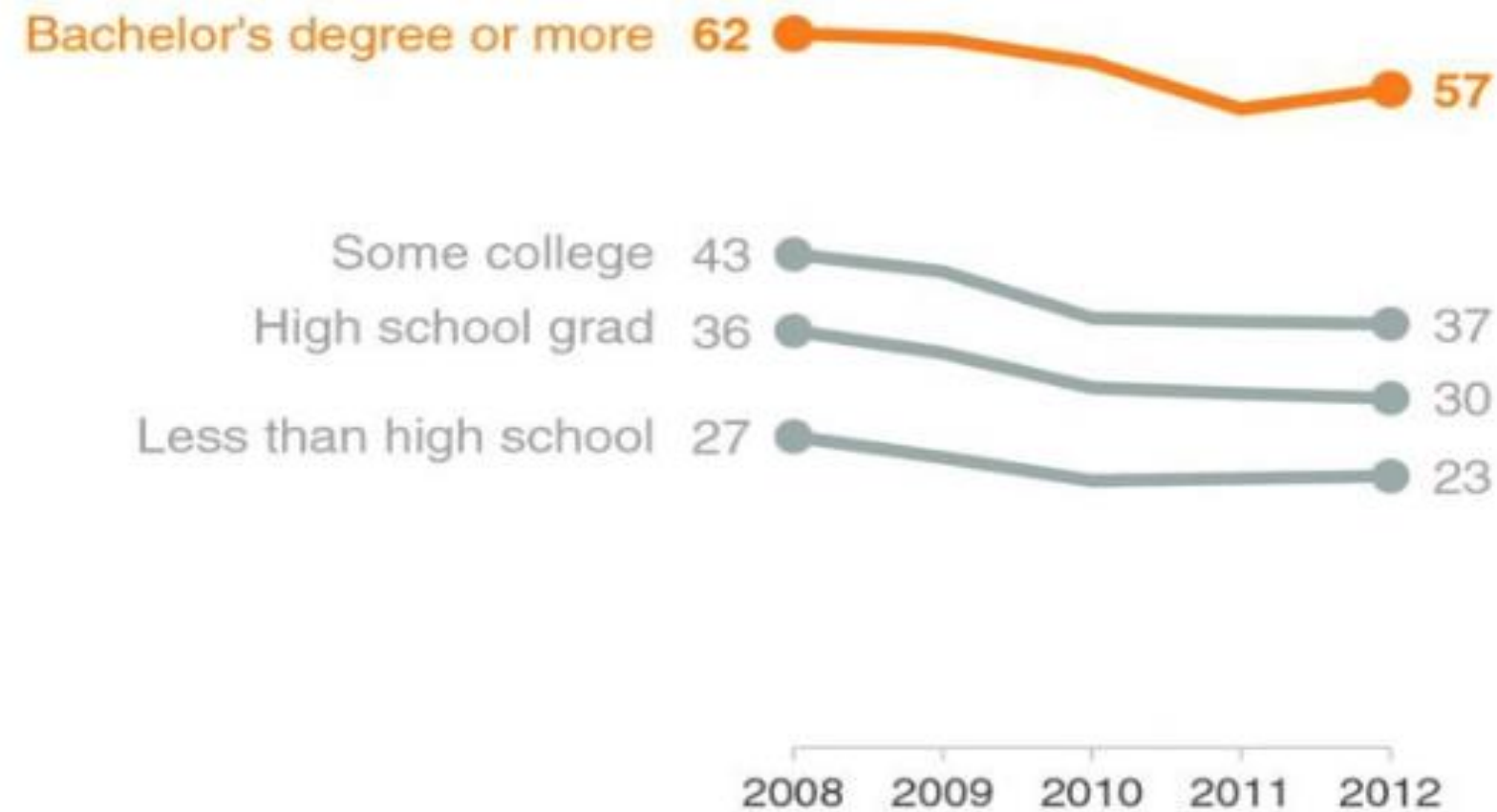Note: Marriage eligible includes the newly married plus those widowed, divorced, or never married at interview.
Source: U.S. Census
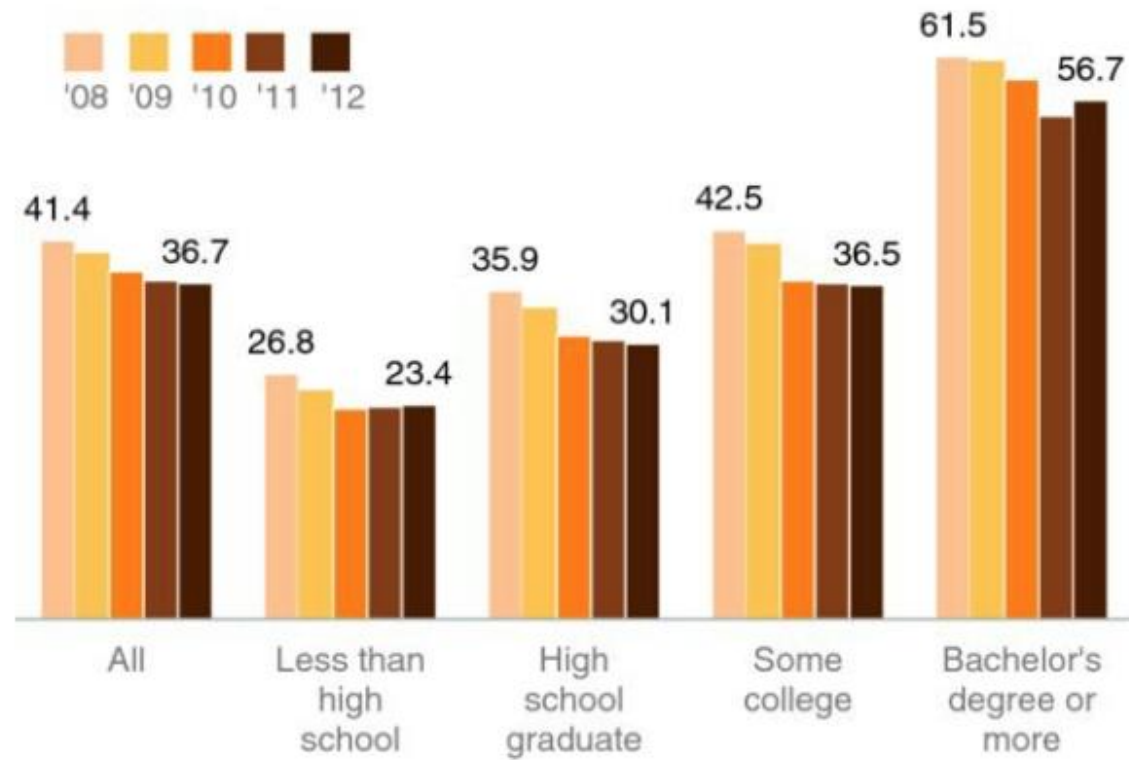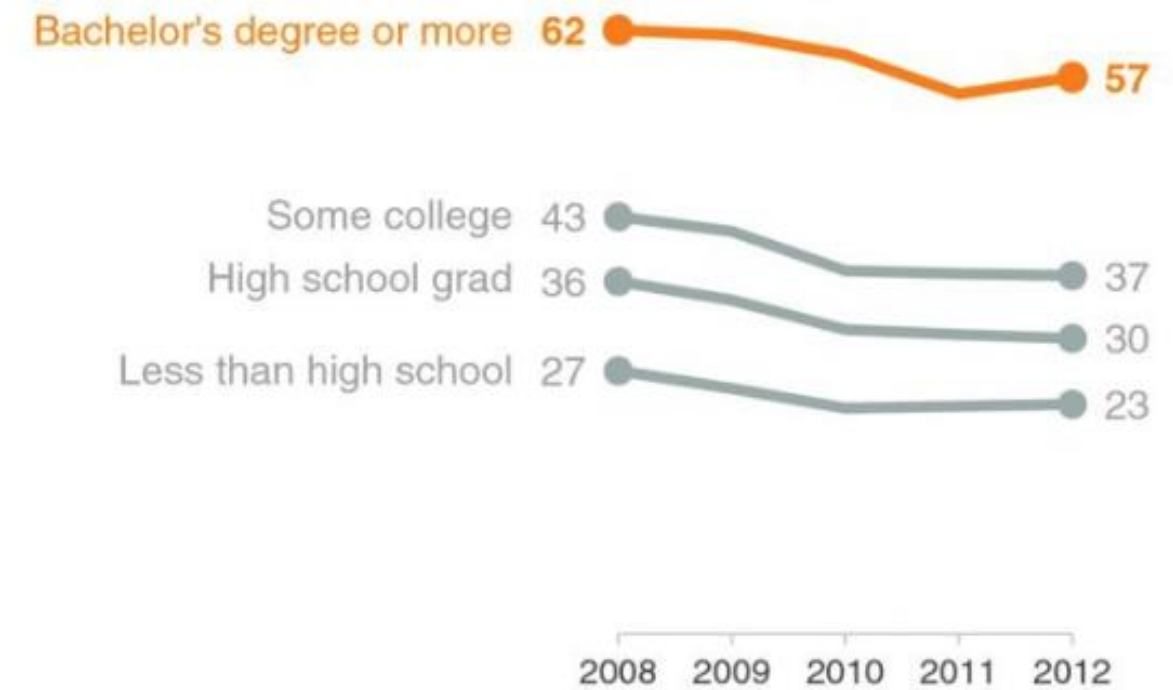Adapted from PEW RESEARCH CENTER

Affordance Example

New marriage rate by education
Number of newly married adults per 1,000 marriage eligible adults

Bachelor's degree or more **62** — **57**

Some college 43 —
High school grad 36 — 37
— 30
Less than high school 27 — 23

2008 2009 2010 2011 2012

Note: Marriage eligible includes the newly married plus those widowed, divorced, or never married at interview.

Source: U.S. Census
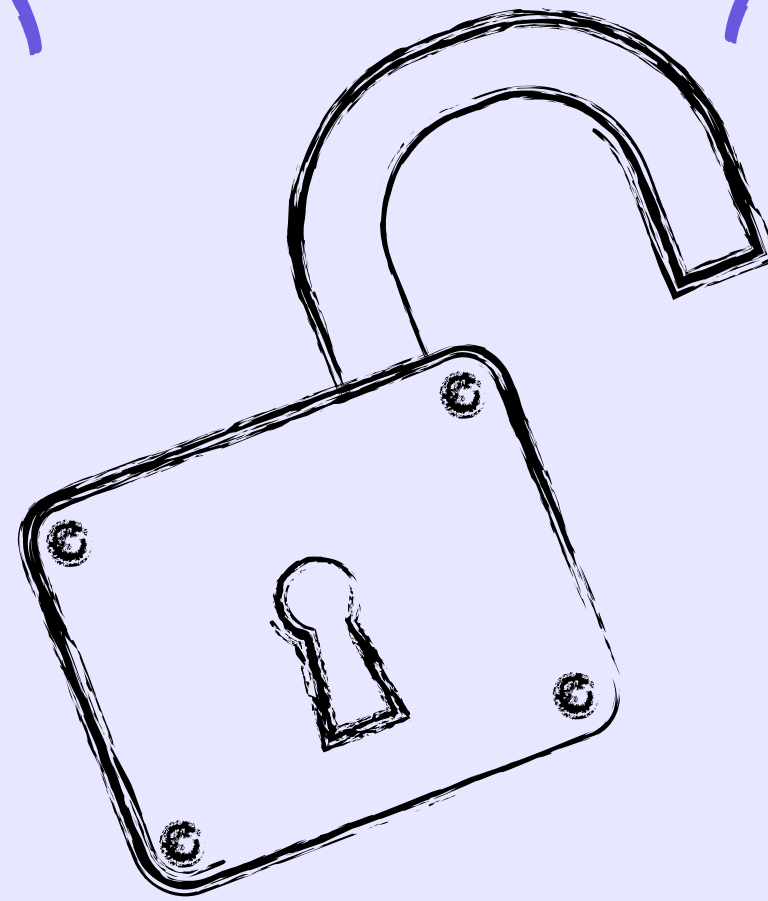Adapted from PEW RESEARCH CENTER

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Affordance Example

Accessibility

Keep it simple

- make it legible
- keep it clean (affordances)
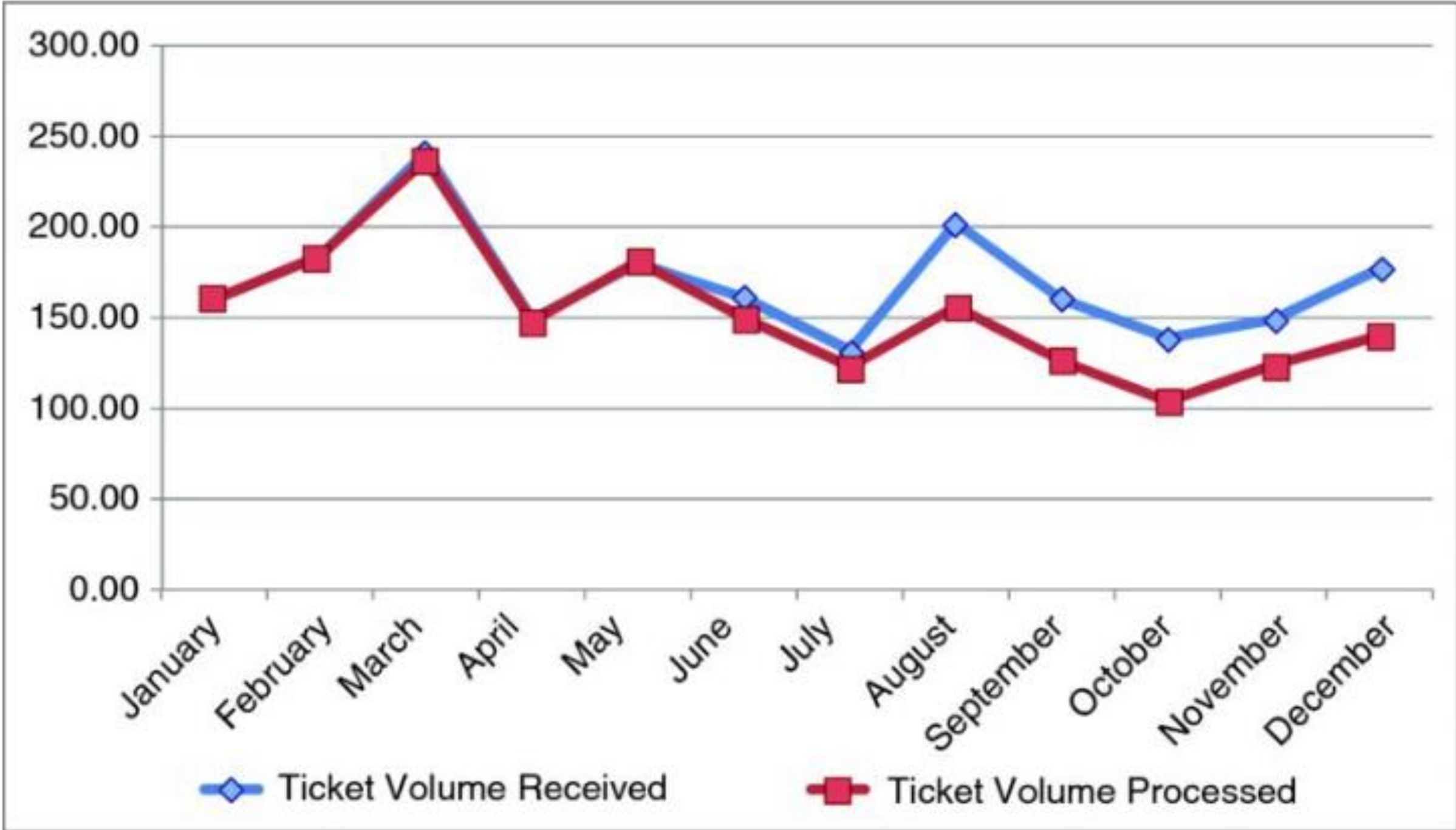- straightforward language
- remove complexity

Text is your friend

- use action titles
- label axes
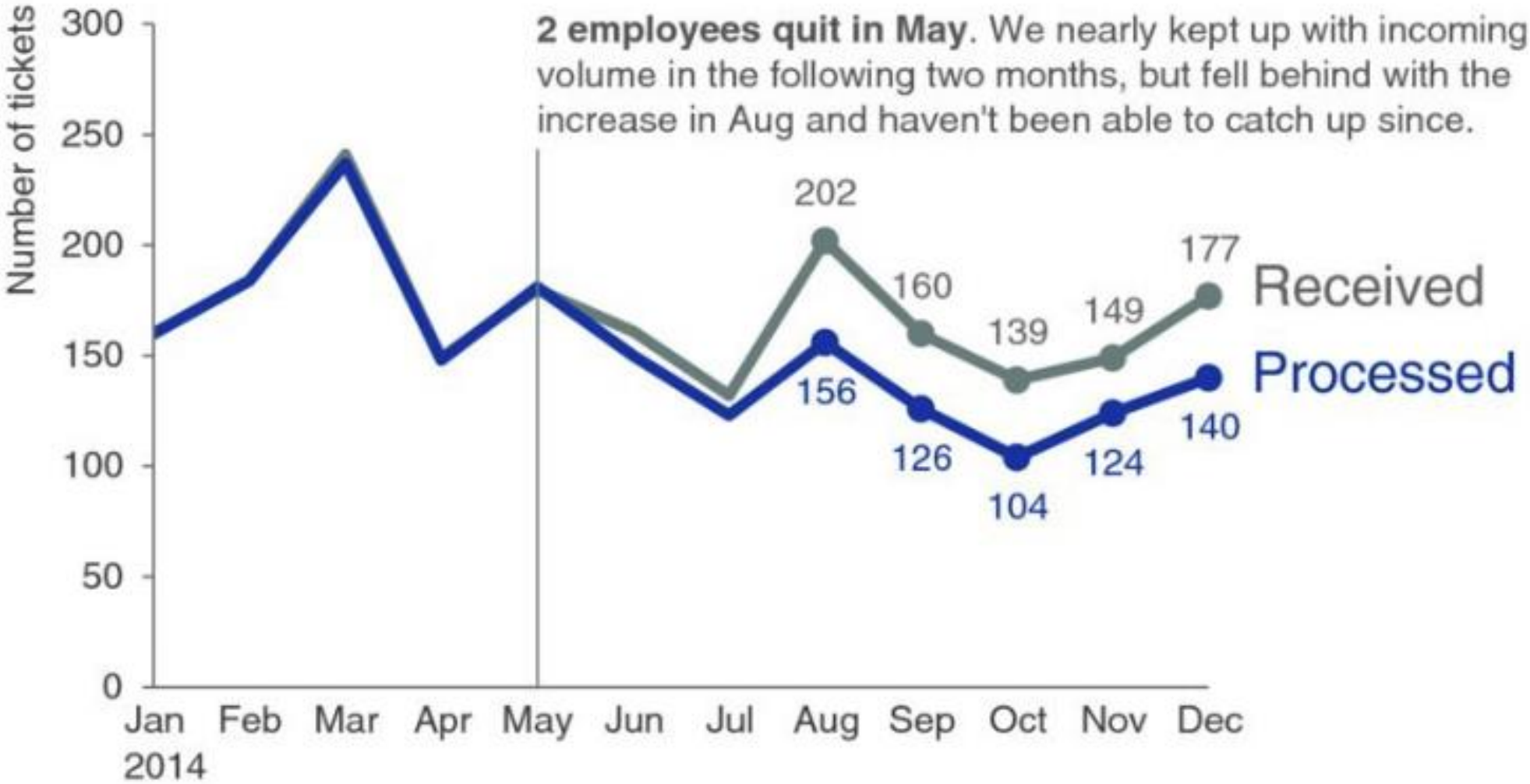- annotate important points
- tell a story

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Accessibility Example

Accessibility Example

Accessibility Example

AESTHETICS

Color

Use of color should be intentional.

Use it sparingly and strategically to highlight the important part of your visual.

Alignment

Establish a sense of unity and cohesion.

Organize elements to create clean vertical and horizontal lines.

White Space

Preserve margins to reduce clutter.

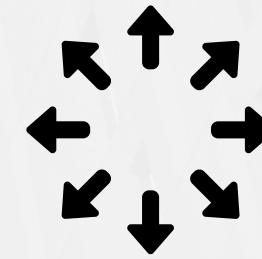Don't add or stretch things just to fill the space.

Aesthetics Example

Distribution by customer segment

Aesthetics Example

Distribution by customer segment
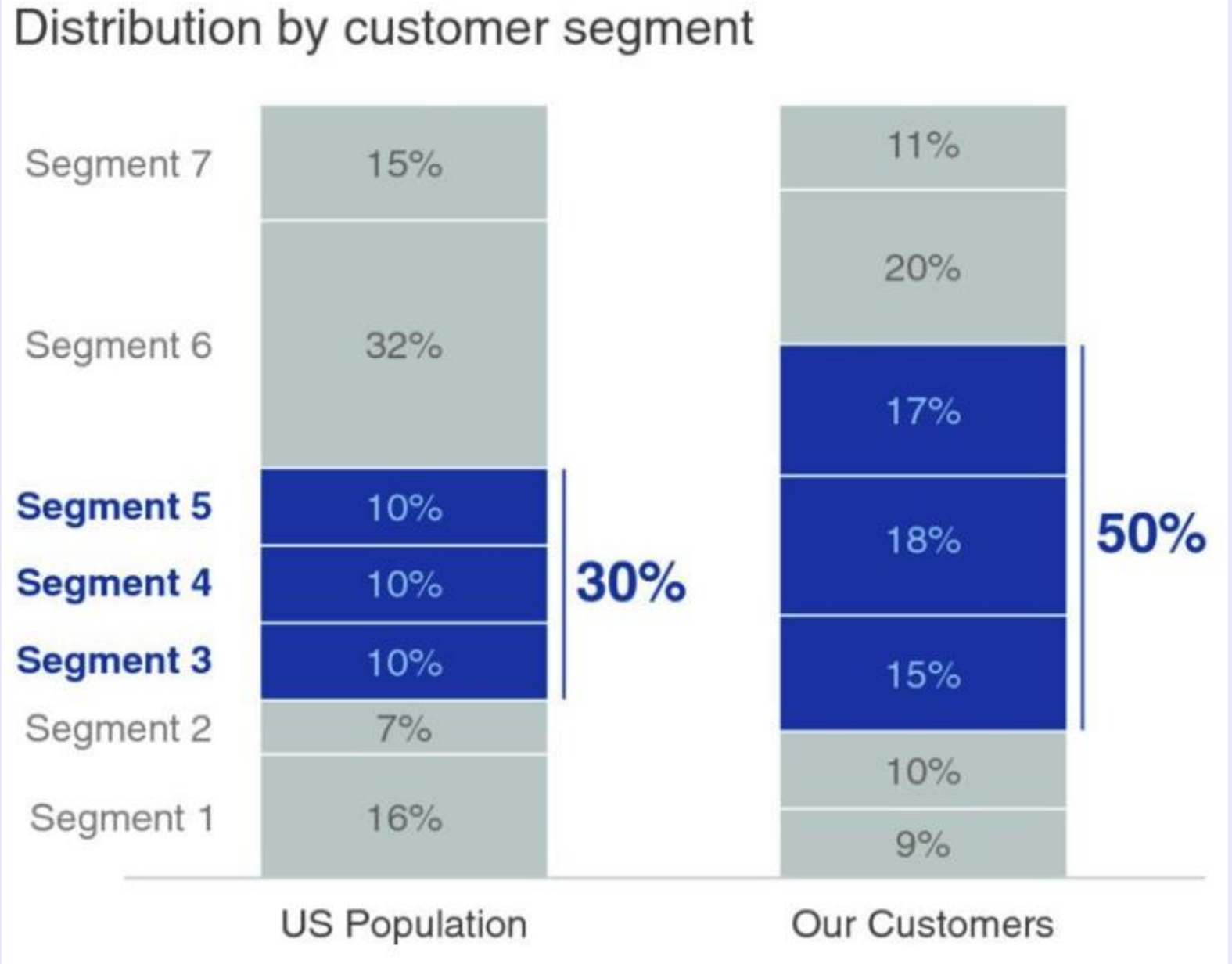
	US Population	Our Customers
Segment 7	15%	11%
Segment 6	32%	20%
Segment 5	10%	17%
Segment 4	10%	18%
Segment 3	10%	15%
Segment 2	7%	10%
Segment 1	16%	9%

30%

50%
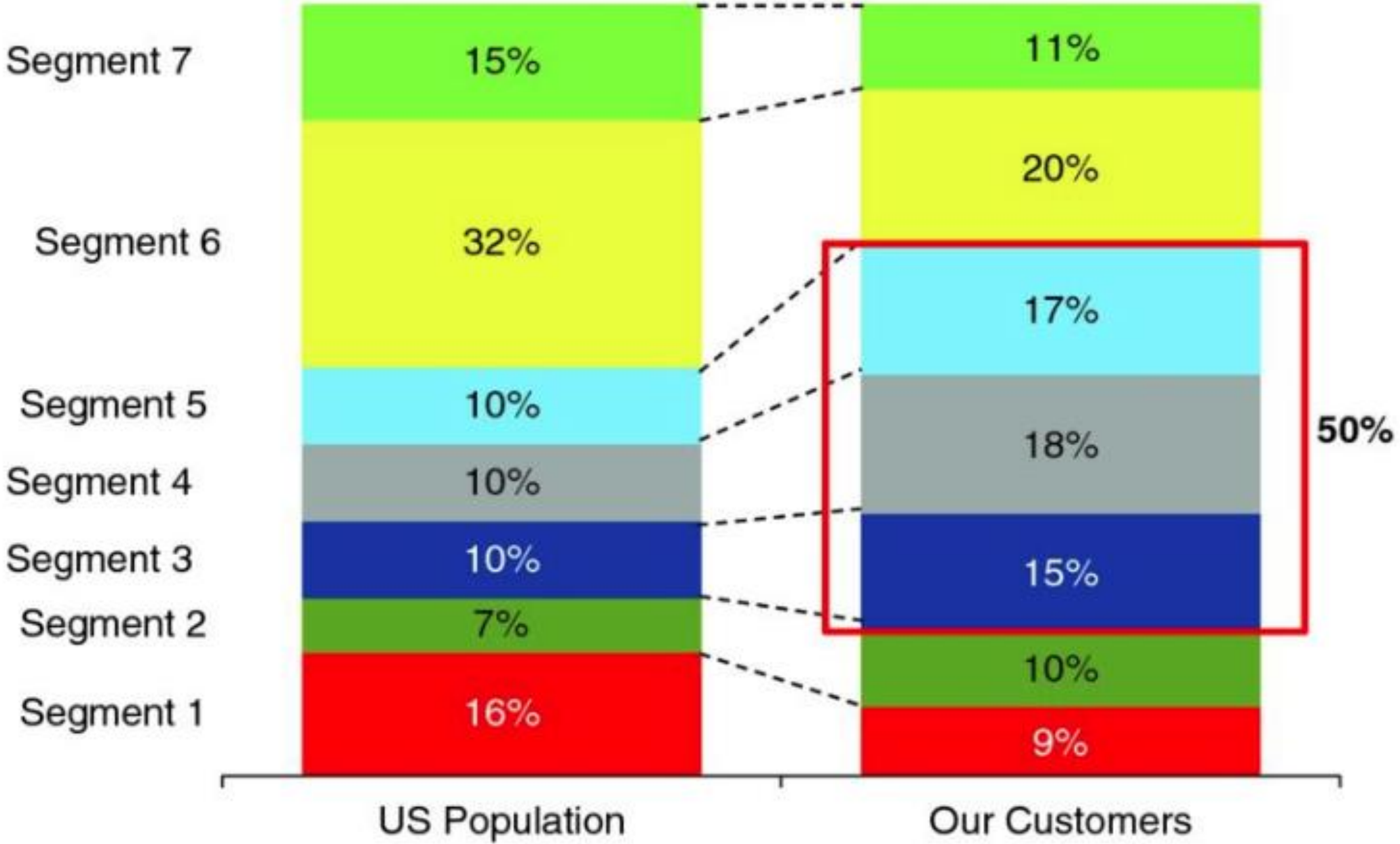
Accessibility Example

Before

Distribution by customer segment

	US Population	Our Customers
Segment 7	15%	11%
Segment 6	32%	20%
		17%
Segment 5	10%	18%
Segment 4	10%	15%
Segment 3	10%	
Segment 2	7%	10%
Segment 1	16%	9%

50%

After

Distribution by customer segment

	US Population	Our Customers
Segment 7	15%	11%
Segment 6	32%	20%
		17%
Segment 5	10%	18%
Segment 4	10%	15%
Segment 3	10%	
Segment 2	7%	10%
Segment 1	16%	9%

30%   50%
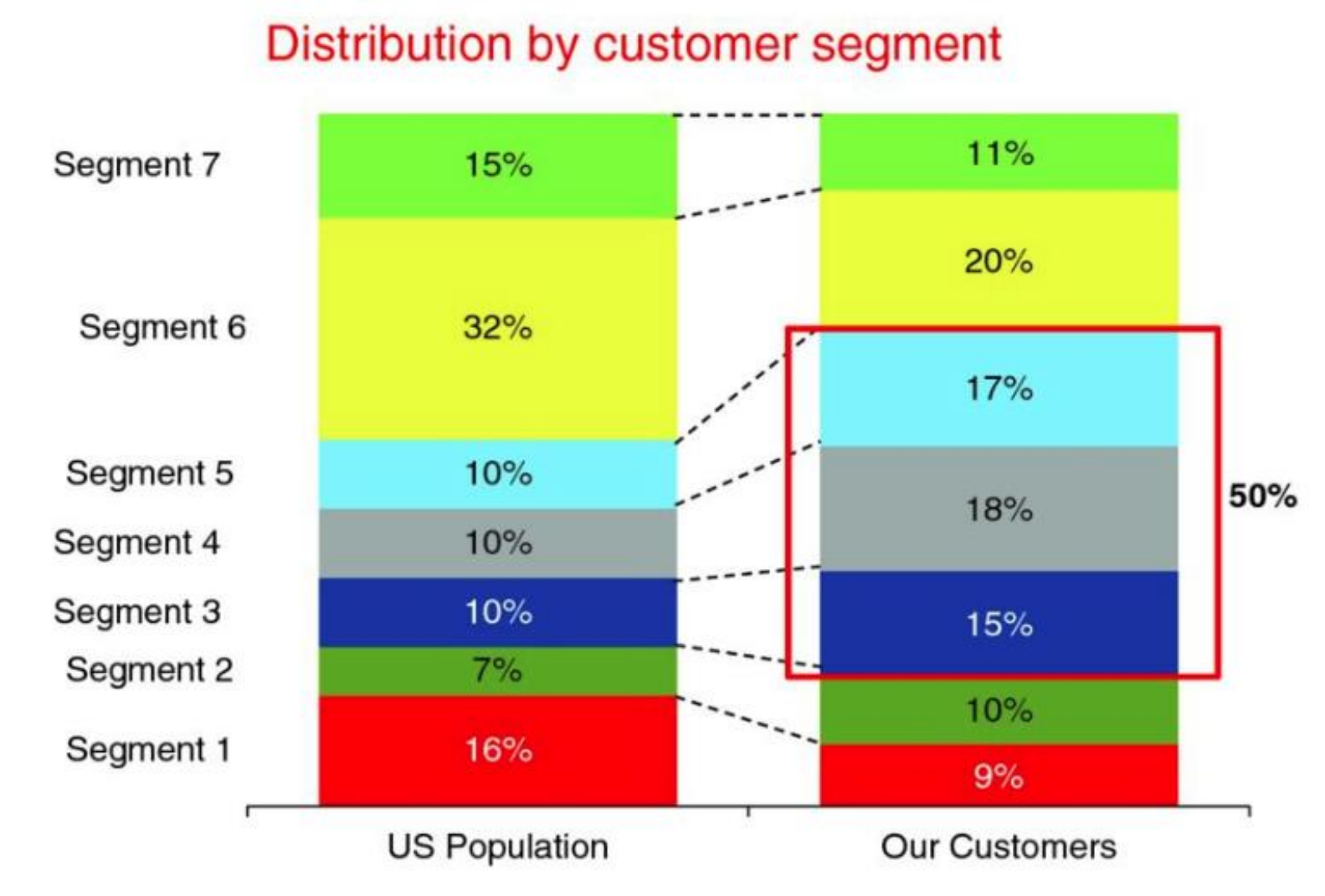
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Recap

What we learned today

1 Don't report numbers; tell a story

Action = Logic + Emotion
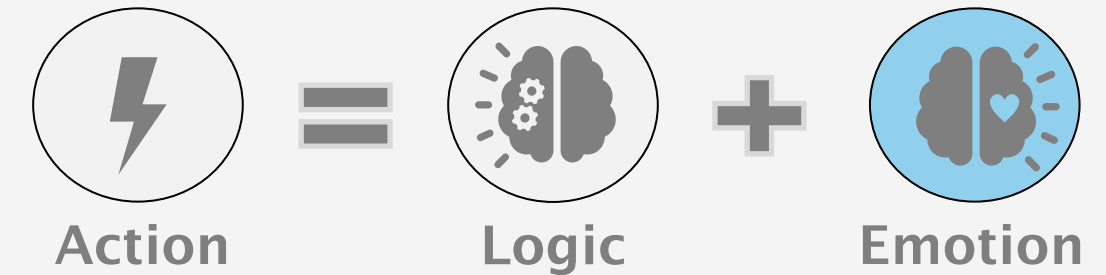
2 Use the 3 A's of effective visuals

Affordances   Accessible   Aesthetics

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Stay connected

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www.tots.blog

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