

Dashboard Design CHEAT SHEET

Refer to this curated list of essential *dashboard design best practices* for a quick and easy way to perfect your work.

DATA



Consider your audience's needs and expectations before building.



If your chart is looking busy, remove some of the detail. It's okay not to show every data point if what's important is the trend.



Place KPIs and other broad summaries at the top of the dashboard and more detailed data below.



Use additions such as benchmark lines and trend lines to help people understand what the data is saying.



If possible, give your viewers access to interactive controls, such as filters and drilldowns.



Break up more complex charts into two or three that tell different parts of the story.



Pick the chart type that best conveys the information you want to impart.



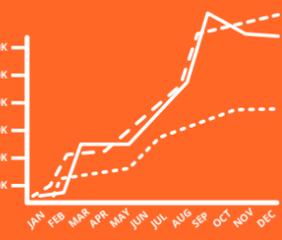
Keep pie charts to five slices or fewer.



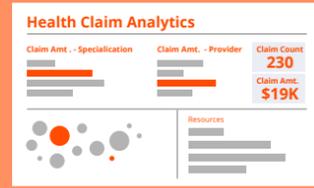
If possible, set your dashboard to refresh regularly so data stays up to date.



Try a bar chart, line chart, or scatterplot before resorting to more specialized chart types.



Double-check your data to avoid unintentionally misleading your audience with insufficient, poorly designed, or dubious information.



Group related information together.

STYLE



Apply color sparingly, using it to draw attention to key information.

EMPLOYEE SALES	
Buchanan	\$168.00
Callahan	\$7,549.00
Davalio	\$1,203.00
Dodsworth	\$209.16
Fuller	\$83.45
King	\$415.98

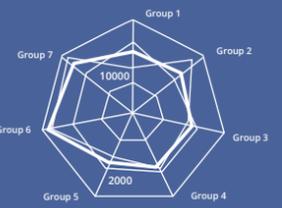
Use conditional formatting to highlight the values that matter most, leaving others in a neutral tone.

Aa
Aa

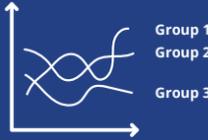
Use simple fonts and eliminate unnecessary text.



Keep dashboard elements evenly spaced.



Avoid flashy or complex graphics that distract from the data's message.

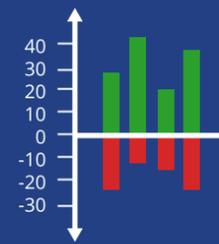


Apply chart labels and annotations selectively.

27% ▲

49% ▼

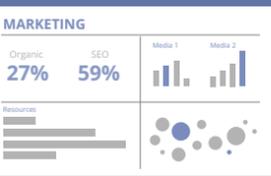
When using green and red, keep in mind their strong association with good and bad, respectively.



Supplement green and red indicators with additional visual cues, like arrows and labels.



If your dashboard is looking full, consider making multiple dashboards, each for a different audience.



Original Chart Colors



Color Blind Chart Colors



Consider how your dashboard may look to someone who is colorblind.

EDITING

Get feedback from a colleague first.



Does your dashboard feel complete?



Squint at your dashboard from a short distance and notice which elements stand out. Are they the ones you wish to emphasize?



What actions does your dashboard inspire? How might you help your audience get started on them?



Test your dashboard on real users, or craft personas to see how the dashboard might look to them.



Best Embedded BI For SaaS