10 Tips to Create Useful and Beautiful Visualizations
1 Tell a story!

**Profitable vs. Unprofitable IPOs**

Every viz should tell a story. As you create your visualization, make sure to continually ask, “What story does this tell?”

This viz shows us that companies that IPO’d after reaching profitability were far more successful in the long run.
Sometimes the small changes make all the difference in understanding.
Avoid pies! Except on maps…

Bar charts beat pies every time!
The human eye can compare height much easier than area.

But… pies can be effective on maps.
The same comparison problem exists, but pies allow analysis in small spaces.
4 Use multiple views

Unemployment by Decade and Year

Month over Month

Use two coordinated views to show depth, rather than trying to place everything into one view.
5 Bullets beat Gauges

Besides being difficult to read, gauges take up tons of space. Use bullets charts!
Increase effectiveness with color

American League Statistics

The human eye can detect subtle differences in color much faster than it can read subtle differences in text. Using color saves on space too!
But not too many colors at once

District of Columbia Crimespotting

Using more than 10 colors can cause them to blend together and confuse. This view is only using 8 colors, but it is still difficult to differentiate the greens.
Labels make it clear

Labels are wonderful for calling out key data points and actions.
Make it interactive!

Major contributors to obesity by county
Eat your vegetables, go for a run and don't smoke, while you're at it!

Click to highlight region:
- Midwest
- Northeast
- South
- West

Select a state:
(All)

Select point(s) to view details in chart below:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>State</th>
<th>County</th>
<th>Obesity</th>
<th>Consume few fruits or veg.</th>
<th>Persons who do not exercise</th>
<th>Smokers</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Georgia</td>
<td>Burke</td>
<td>39%</td>
<td>77%</td>
<td>41%</td>
<td>21%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Illinois</td>
<td>Madison</td>
<td>28%</td>
<td>78%</td>
<td>24%</td>
<td>25%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Ohio</td>
<td>Clark</td>
<td>36%</td>
<td>73%</td>
<td>21%</td>
<td>24%</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Enable filters, highlighting and clicking for more detail to supercharge the usefulness of your visualization.
This viz shows the National Activity Index. Not exactly exciting stuff. Yet, this simple visualization tells a story and does it without ornamentation or added presentation layers. Let the data tell the story!