



MAKING SENSE OF YOUR DATA: A GUIDE TO REPORTING & VISUALIZATION

It's no secret that the way data is reported can make or break a study's impact. At Research Results, we've seen how even the most rigorous research can fall short if findings aren't presented in a clear, accurate, and actionable format.

To support researchers who are navigating the growing range of reporting and visualization options, we've pulled together the following ideas based on our collective experience across hundreds of studies.

Consider this a practical guide to help you choose the right reporting approach, so your data not only informs but truly drives decisions.

WE'VE CREATED THESE TIPS TO HELP YOU MAKE INFORMED PROGRAMMING DECISIONS THAT STRENGTHEN YOUR STUDY FROM THE START:

#1:

Static Reports (Topline and Full)

What this is:

Slide-based reports that present research findings in a fixed format. These can range from high-level topline summaries for quick readouts to comprehensive full reports with deeper analysis, charts, and interpretation.



Key Advantages

- Clear, focused storytelling tailored to stakeholder needs
- Full control over what insights are emphasized and how data is framed
- Easy to share, present, and archive
- Ideal for aligning teams around a consistent narrative



Best Used When

- You want to guide stakeholders through a clear, intentional story
- Executive audiences need a concise, decision-ready summary (topline)
- Teams need a detailed record of findings and methodology (full report)
- Interactivity is less important than clarity and alignment

#2:

Cross Tabs

What this is:

Data tables that show how responses vary across segments (e.g., demographics or behaviors).



Key Advantages

- Reveals patterns and subgroup differences
- Supports strategic audience segmentation
- Foundation for deeper insight and hypothesis testing



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Best Used When

- You're exploring how different groups think or act
- You need evidence to support strategic decisions
- You want to focus attention on the most impactful differences rather than wading through raw tables

#3:

Dashboards (Dynamic & Interactive)

What this is:

Interactive visuals created in tools like Displayr, Power BI, Tableau, or Forsta Dashboards can range from comprehensive multi-page solutions to one-page infographic-style displays.



Key Advantages

- Enables real-time exploration
- Supports self-serve insights for internal teams
- Great for ongoing trackers or multi-wave studies



Best Used When

- Stakeholders need on-demand access to data
- Dynamic filtering, flexible breakouts, and multiple views are needed to unlock deeper insights than a static report can provide

#4:

Automated/Dynamic Reporting

What this is:

Programmed reports that update automatically with incoming data and allow stakeholders to filter or export results without manual editing.



Key Advantages

- Saves time, reduces human error
- Ideal for frequent updates (e.g., tracking studies, global reports)
- Enables dynamic filtering by audience, region, brand, and other key variables across the whole report at once



Best Used When

- You run recurring studies that need regular updates
- You want flexible or subgroup-level reporting without repetitive manual work
- You want to export the results of automated charts, filters, and comparisons into a static deliverable that highlights key insights, removes nonessential slides, and adds context to tell a specific story



#5:

Analytics Visualizations/Tools

What this is:

Visual interpretation of advanced analytics like MaxDiff, TURF, segmentation, key driver analysis, and Van Westendorp, making sophisticated methods accessible. Ideally, model inputs and/or filters can be modified, and the results will change in real-time.



Key Advantages

- Brings analytical output to life
- Helps stakeholders see what drives results
- Makes complex methods intuitive and actionable



Best Used When

- You're sharing analytical insights with non-technical audiences
- Results require interpretation beyond raw numbers

Visual Design Tips for Better Insight

- Choose charts that fit your message: trends over time = line charts, comparisons = bar charts, composition = pie or stacked charts.
- Use filters and interactive elements to let users explore data on their own.
- Keep visuals clean and purposeful; avoid clutter; highlight what matters.
- Provide context and narrative around visuals; numbers alone don't tell the full story.

Why This Matters:

Whether it's a simple topline summary or a robust, interactive dashboard, choosing the right reporting and visualization approach ensures your research drives real decisions. Our team specializes in transforming raw survey data into actionable insights with best-in-class dashboards, automated reporting solutions, and analytics tools that help you:

- Uncover insights faster
- Communicate with clarity and confidence
- Make your findings easy for stakeholders to act on

Get Started Today.

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