
THE TRIAL DATA VISUALIZATION CHECKLIST

Before you publish an exhibit, confirm it persuades — not just informs.

THE SINGLE OVERWHELMING POINT

- This exhibit has one claim — a Single Overwhelming Point — that you can state in a single sentence
 - The title makes an argument, not a label ("Revenue Fell After the Breach," not "Revenue, 2019–2023")
 - The visual would lose its purpose entirely if that one claim were removed
 - No second variable, comparison, or timeline competes with the primary claim
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ELIMINATING NOISE — CHARTJUNK AUDIT

- No 3D effects, gradient fills, or drop shadows appear anywhere in the exhibit
 - No decorative icons, clip art, or ornamental borders are present
 - Gridlines are minimal — only as many as are necessary to read the data
 - The legend has three items or fewer — or is eliminated entirely in favor of direct labels
 - No footnote is required to explain the axes or the methodology
 - A juror with no analytical training could understand what this visual shows within ten seconds
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STORY STRUCTURE

- This exhibit plays a defined role in the narrative arc — it shows a prior state, a disruption, or a consequence
- The moment of key choice or harm is visually marked and unmistakable
- This exhibit is a chapter in a sequence — the series of exhibits, read in order, tells a coherent visual story

- The sequence of exhibits builds momentum toward a conclusion that feels inevitable, not abrupt
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CONTRAST AND VISUAL HIERARCHY

- There is a clear visual entry point — one element the eye lands on first without being directed to it
 - The key data point or inflection is the largest, highest-contrast, or most spatially central element
 - Secondary elements visually recede — they support without competing
 - A single accent color draws attention to the critical element; all other colors are neutral
 - Size, weight, and placement reinforce the same hierarchy — they do not contradict one another
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HUMAN CONNECTION — DATA WITH A FACE

- The data is anchored to a human story — a person, a loss, a community, a moment in time
 - The exhibit does not allow abstraction to replace humanity — the numbers are connected to what they cost
 - A juror who sees this exhibit will feel something, not only understand something
 - If the exhibit shows damages or harm, it is paired with or sequenced near its human context
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WHITESPACE AND EMPHASIS — LET THE POINT BREATHE

- The key element — the number, bar, line, or moment — has breathing room around it
- The visual is not filled to capacity with labels, annotations, or secondary data

- Empty space is treated as emphasis, not waste — it tells the jury that what remains is what matters
 - The most important element would still dominate if every other element were removed
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CONSISTENCY — A COHERENT VISUAL LANGUAGE

- This exhibit uses the same color palette as every other exhibit in this case
 - Fonts, label styles, and axis conventions are identical across the full exhibit set
 - Timeline direction, scale, and date formatting are consistent with all related exhibits
 - A juror who has seen earlier exhibits in this case can navigate this one without re-orienting
 - Inconsistency does not exist anywhere in the set — no exhibit inadvertently signals that your case lacks coherence
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THE STANDALONE TEST — THE NAKED PRESENTER

- A juror could pick up this exhibit during deliberations — without you present — and understand its point
 - The title makes the argument; no verbal narration is required to activate the exhibit's claim
 - All labels are clear and self-explanatory without attorney interpretation
 - The visual makes the argument — it does not merely display the data and leave the argument to be made elsewhere
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COURTROOM CONSTRAINTS — EMBRACE THEM

- The exhibit is legible at the screen size and ambient lighting conditions of this specific courtroom
- Data sources are identified and defensible — the exhibit can survive a foundational objection
- If you were limited to one exhibit on this issue, you would choose this one

- Every constraint imposed by evidence rules or judicial discretion has sharpened this exhibit, not diminished it
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THE FINAL TEST

- A smart non-lawyer would instantly understand what this exhibit claims and why it matters
- You can state the Single Overwhelming Point in one sentence, without hedging
- Read only the titles of your full exhibit sequence — they tell a coherent, logical story on their own
- You can answer clearly: *what does the juror feel after seeing this exhibit?*

“The jury does not need to be impressed by the volume of your data – it needs to feel the truth of your story.”

Under 16 checked: The exhibit may be technically accurate and legally admissible — and still fail to persuade. Noise erodes credibility; signal builds it. Consider a StoryBar consultation before trial.

Every exhibit is a choice. The goal is not to display everything you know. It is to show the jury the one thing they cannot unsee.