

The 12 Commandments of Managing Information

Measure as much as possible

Look for differences and changes

Don't judge from the figures - ask why

Ratios mean more than absolute figures

Compare with similar
Compare with the best
Compare over time

Always draw a graph

... for understanding

... for getting a message across

Check for false zeroes on the vertical axis of graphs

Don't extrapolate trends on a graph unless you understand the underlying forces

Always ask yourself: "Is this person biased?"

- Unconsciously
- Deliberately

When someone gives you an interpretation of the figures, check the base data

see the figures
see a graph

Complicated problem or situation:

Make it visual
On one page

- mind map
- decision tree
- table
- rating chart

Ask whether differences are significant

There will always be a best or worst
Differences could be small
Sample size could be small
Could it have happened by chance?

Compare apples with apples

Are they from the same population?

What differences in the samples might there be?

Just because two occurrences are related (or appear to be) does not mean that one caused the other

Never add percentages or averages

Go back to the real numbers, add them, and then work out the total percentage or average