

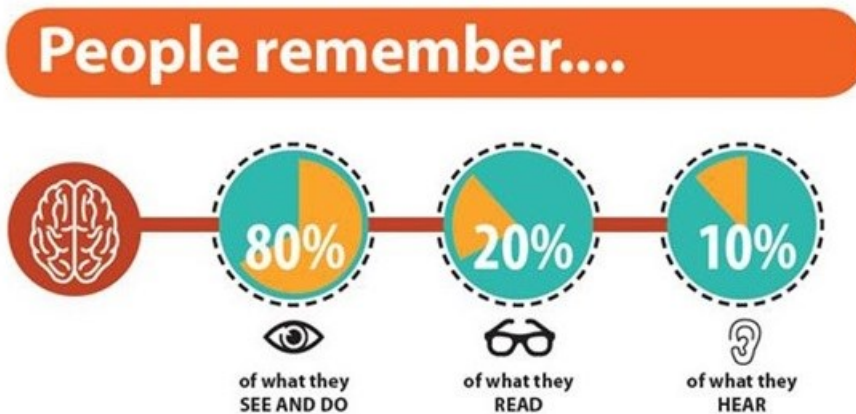
Graphic the hell outta that info!

By  Sarah Heuer

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Why are infographics such a great way to convey information? It's simple, really. Our brains are much better at processing **visual** content. In fact, you're 30 times more likely to really reach your audience with an infographic.

Try and recall the four sentences you just read. Tricky? Tiresome? How about this instead:



Courtesy of Jonathan Long, founder and CEO of Market Domination Media. See more [here](#)

Let's face it: we humans are shameless magpies when it comes to pretty things like infographics. In fact, Google searches for these wonderful creatures have increased 25 times in the last five years. No matter what your background, your education level or your reading preferences, you're probably no different from the rest of us: always looking for the quicker, easier, more entertaining route to enlightenment. Because being a Buddhist is bloody hard.

So, it's agreed - infographics should be a strong contender for the biggest design trend of 2015, and you should definitely be experimenting with the application of these babies. But if you want your graphic information to be memorable and effective, you have to make sure to get it right. It won't necessarily happen the first time round - you'll need to get the hang of it, and brainstorming will need to happen (possibly over a beer or two). Other than loosening your creative muscles by means of a beverage, there are a few more conservative suggestions you can apply.

Follow the five 'S' rules to become a graphic guru:

- 1. Structure** - does your infographic tell a logical story? Is the content suited to the format? Does it make sense and align with your brand? If your layout isn't appropriate, or if it's too busy, you'll end up confusing and frustrating your target audience far more than if you'd kept to basic text. Look around for free online templates to get you started.
- 2. Simplicity** - there's no point to a graphic illustration of content if it doesn't ensure that the content becomes easier to grasp, and most importantly, to retain. So if you're trying to explain the theory of relativity, perhaps you should make sure that your intended audience has the requisite amount of education and perception, before you turn $E=Mc^2$ into a pretty picture. Or perhaps you should rethink the content you're using. Not everything can be visually simplified. Sad, but true.

3. Summing up - the whole point is to get the most important data across in a short amount of time (before your audience loses interest). So make sure you use fewer words and less space than you would have in a purely textual version. A **lot** fewer and a **lot** less. Keep it simple, keep it obvious! Infographics are not about fine print. They're the 'cheat sheet', the cue-card summary of the really important stuff that you can't afford to let slip through the cracks.

4. Styling - your visual elements should be uniquely tailored to your topic. And they should be gorgeous as well! An ugly, cluttered infographic is no good at all. Why not try using a photograph for a more creative, bold approach? It can hit really hard if it's done right. And make sure your tone is carried through in the colours and pictures that you choose. Don't do an infographic about mortality rates in the form of an ice cream cone with fewer scoops of lovely strawberry ice cream for fewer years of life expectancy. Just... don't.

5. Spot on - make sure you're sure of your facts, and don't forget to **cite** your sources. If your infographic is clever and interesting, people will share it, and that should always be good news. But it would be very embarrassing if it were to be shared and you received an angry call or email from an indignant author or designer who doesn't appreciate how much you admired and drew inspiration from his or her work.

Once you've covered all these bases: Happy infographicking!

ABOUT SARAH HEUER

Has been in the language and communication business for 15 years. She holds Cum Laude Honours degrees in English Literature and Publishing. She has lectured Journalism, taught English, and written and edited in a variety of sectors, including law, the culinary world, secondary and tertiary education, psychology, the arts, finance and economics, and marketing. In her spare time, she toys with the idea of writing a best-seller. She is currently head editor and copywriter at inSite Innovative Education Solutions.

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