



Factory floor Reporting constructively



Handout

Using Data Constructively

Data backs up your story and gives it credibility. But just presenting numbers and statistics isn't enough. Present data in a way that leads to understanding and doesn't just overwhelm.

Zoom into key data points and zoom out to provide context:

- Flat/absolute numbers are difficult to comprehend.
- Facts put in relation to something else make more sense (e.g., "...that is equal to the size of 10 football pitches.").
- The farther an issue is from the audience's everyday life, the less likely it means something to them – "My reality is not your reality."
- Do not take the reader's knowledge for granted.
- The reporter helps create the public's worldview.

Steps to take:

- Put the data in context and offer perspective – why is this figure important? What does it mean?
- It's better to offer perspective early in the report instead of waiting until the end.
- Environment and circumstances are always relevant.
- As percentages and numbers should be in relation to something else, events should be put in context.
- Describe developments, trends, breakthroughs and collapses.

(Source: Minna Skau, editor at the Danish news agency Ritzau)