

<HOW TO BE/>

<Data-Informed/>

Data is everywhere, but it can be challenging to harness it to improve your performance. Use these **five principles** to better incorporate data into your everyday work life.

Data lets you see the world more clearly

<!-- "Be data-literate" -->

Understand what you're measuring and make it meaningful. First, decide what type of metric you're using, and **give that data context** by establishing benchmarks with varying frames of reference. Then, **compare your subject to similar targets.** How these items relate to each other greatly enhances your understanding.



Process metrics
Measure how well the steps of the process are completed
(e.g., DFW rates)



Outcome metrics
Measure how well actions achieve their intended goal
(e.g., first-year retention)

Benchmarks

- <!-- Generally higher standards -->
- >Zero-defect performance
 - >All-industry performance
 - >National performance
 - >Peer performance
 - >System performance
 - >Institutional performance
 - >Department history
- <!-- Generally lower standards -->

Data tells you what works—and what doesn't

<!-- "Be curious" -->

SET UP TESTS
{whenever possible}

Using analytic tools to build tests and experiments is great.

USE THE TOOLS
{the ones you have}

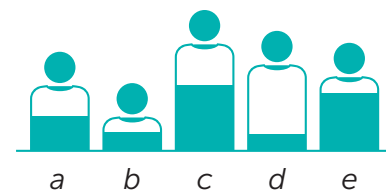
The basic resources of today's electronic office are enough to start evaluating data.

SIMPLIFY
{if you can}

Strive to reorganize your data so comparisons are more direct and data makes more sense.

ASK YOURSELF

WHAT'S MOST?
— & —
WHAT'S LEAST?



HOW MANY?
— & —
HOW MUCH?

<#=>
<\$=>

Data keeps you focused on your goals

<!-- "Be action-oriented" -->

Think beyond descriptive, contextualised, and insightful analysis. The best way to ensure that you are being action-oriented is to push your observations past "what happened?" to "so what?" and "**what do we do about it?**"

Descriptive

"The first-year retention rate was 85% this year."



Contextualised

"The first-year retention rate was 85% this year, down from 86.5% last year."



Insightful

"The first-year retention rate was 85% this year, down from 86.5% last year; the students most likely to leave are those who did not meet with their advisors about major selection."



Action-oriented

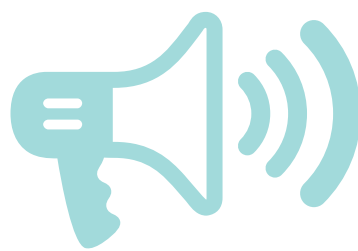
"We need to require that first-year students complete potential major maps with their advisors! The first-year retention rate was 85% this year, down from 86.5% last year; the students most likely to leave are those who did not meet with their advisors about major selection."



Data helps you prove your point

<!-- "Be communicative" -->

It's easy to feel constrained by existing management structures and information flows, but **you can achieve data-driven progress with less formal efforts.** Informally sharing data-driven insights in person, or proactively reporting on metrics individually, can be very powerful.



Send a timely one-off email about what you've learned—and what ought to happen as a result

Informally share your data-driven insight at a meeting

Make a regular data report update and email it to your stakeholders

Create a presentation of your insights

Set a goal based on a metric you can both track and improve, and report on progress

Teach others to find insights in data as well

Data helps you prove your value

<!-- "Be skeptical" -->

If you are refining your own data-driven conclusions or looking at the conclusions of others, **ask these essential questions:** Does the data track the right metrics? Has it been collected and categorised accurately? Is the analysis sound? Is the data presented clearly?

IMPORTANT QUESTIONS

Have I drawn the right conclusions?

- Is this data shown objectively?
- Is the metric better represented as a percentage as opposed to an absolute number (or vice versa)?

Am I looking at these results correctly?

- Is the difference we've observed as big as it looks?
- Is the difference statistically significant?
- Have we accounted for a margin of error?

Are these good goals and benchmarks?

- Are our goals sufficiently ambitious?
- Are our goals sufficiently realistic?
- Are we comparing ourselves to the right peers?

Do I have the right metrics?

- Are we focused on the right outcomes?
- Does what we're measuring reflect those outcomes?
- Does what we're measuring help us understand the success of our tactics?

Is this data accurate?

- Is this data timely?
- Is this data reported honestly?
- Has this data been collected accurately?