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Creating Effective Dashboards Summary

After creating a dashboard, you should always review your work against the standards outlined in this module and the previous module.

Here is a short check-list that even professionals can use to review their work.

1. Can you clearly articulate the purpose of your dashboard? What story are you trying to tell?
2. Does each of the metrics that you chose to display have meaning and importance to the organization? Can you articulate the purpose of each as it relates to the organization's goals?
3. Did you use charts, maps and other visual elements rather than lots of grids full of numbers?
4. Does each of the charts, maps and other visual elements that you chose appropriately reflect your data? Consider the following points from the previous module.

Chart Type	Considerations
Bar Chart	Does your numerical data fall into categories? Do you have too many categories for the viewer to digest?
Line Chart	Did you display numerical data over time?
Pie Chart	Did you show proportions with six or fewer sections? Does the whole have meaning? Beware the pie chart. It can be misleading.
Map	Is geography important? Is it the driver of your presentation?
Scatter Plot	Do you want to see outliers and trends across variables? Do you want to see a pattern of distribution?
Gantt Chart	Are you displaying project tasks/schedule?
Bubbles	Are you using them on a map or scatter plot to show how data is concentrated?
Histogram	Did you wish to group your data?
Bullet Graph	Do you wish to show progress toward a goal?



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Heat Map	Do you want to show the relationship between two factors?
Highlight Table	Did you want a heat map display with numbers?

5. Can all information be easily read? Or do you have too many scroll bars, tiny “squished” charts, illegible fonts, too many bright colors...?
6. Can the user/viewer of your dashboard filter data, drill down and otherwise interact with the dashboard to get answers to his/her questions?
7. Is the overall appearance of your dashboard clean, simple and to the point? Or do too many widgets, fonts and colors obscure your message?

