

Task 1 Report

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Data Visualisation Critique and Creation - Task 1

ACCB4002

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Introduction

The Global Wellness Institute’s “Wellness at Work” infographic aims to present key information about workplace wellbeing using statistics, business frameworks, and historical data in a single document. Infographics are typically used in order to simplify ideas and present information in engaging formats, meaning their effectiveness depends on whether they successfully employed design principles related to colour, layout, typography, graphical elements and cognitive load.

The purpose of this report is to evaluate how effectively the infographic conveys its intended message to the target audience. The analysis examines both the strengths and weaknesses of the infographic, and proposes improvements that address any issues identified. The report concludes with a summary of findings and recommendations on how the infographic could better support clear and accessible communication.

Analysis of the Infographic

Message and Audience

The core message of the “Wellness at Work” infographic is that investing in employee wellbeing leads to measurable benefits for an organisation, including increased productivity, less absences, and improved financial performance. The infographic also aims to explain what workplace wellbeing consists of using its “building blocks” model, and a historical timeline.

These aims suggest that the target audience includes anyone who may influence workplace policy, such as organisation leaders or human resources professionals. However, by addressing several themes within one visualisation, the infographic may dilute the clarity of the core message. In “Information Visualization: Design for Interaction [1]” Spence highlights that visualisations should be designed around specific purposes, while accommodating the information needs of the audience. If there are multiple aims in one visualisation, viewers will have a harder time interpreting its primary message, reducing the visualisations efficiency. While the “Wellness at Work” infographic is engaging, the amount of content may make it harder for the target audience to identify and retain the intended message.

Colour Analysis

The infographic employs a bright and varied colour palette, which aligns well with the positive theme of wellbeing and helps attract the viewer’s attention. The use of colour contributes to an overall optimistic tone, which is appropriate given the subject matter. However, the extensive use of different colours across multiple sections means that many elements compete for visual dominance.

For example, the radiating rays behind the headline statistics and the densely coloured “building blocks” section can introduce visual clutter. This makes it less clear which colours are intended to encode information, and which are purely decorative. In addition, some text-background combinations offer limited contrast. The small white text used on the yellow background in the “Level 4” building block, for instance, may be difficult to read when viewed at a distance, particularly if printed at A3 size.

Text Analysis

The infographic relies heavily on high impact text fragments, especially in the opening section, which includes statistics like “37% lower absenteeism”, “147% higher earnings per share” and “22% higher profitability”. The poster often does, however, place blocks of small text underneath visually complex illustration, reducing readability at a distance. An example of this can be seen around the “Building Blocks” section, where there are long descriptions inside coloured boxes, and the font size is noticeably small when compared to the surrounding imagery. Overall, while key statistics are emphasized effectively, the infographic more often than not will use large spans of explanatory text, which makes information harder to access quickly.

Graphs

Although the infographic presents numerous numerical values, particularly in the opening section, these figures are not supported by conventional data visualisations. Instead, large typographic percentages are arranged around a central design element. While this approach is visually striking, it does not support direct comparison between values or allow the viewer to assess relative magnitude easily.

Few [2] argues that quantitative information is best represented using simple graphical forms, such as bar charts or dot plots, which enable accurate visual comparison. Similarly, Tufte [3] cautions against replacing data graphics with decorative elements, referring to such practices as “chartjunk”. In this case, the sunburst-style layout functions primarily as decoration rather than as a tool for analysis. Although the timeline section adopts a more structured, diagrammatic format, it also lacks measurable data. Overall, the absence of functional graphs reduces the analytical value of the infographic.

Graphics and Illustrations

The infographic makes extensive use of illustrations, the majority of which are decorative rather than data-based, which effects their clarity. The central “Building Blocks” section uses a large cutaway building featuring characters, furniture, and workplace activities. While this illustration is visually appealing, much of it does not hold any relevance to the surrounding information, contributing to what Tufte [3] calls “non-data ink”. Because the explanatory text for each level is placed directly beside the illustration, the graphics compete with the text for the viewer’s attention. A similar issue can be seen lower down in the timeline section, where colourful ribbons with illustrations along its length draw the eye more than the accompanying text. Overall, the infographic’s illustrations improve aesthetic appeal, but can occasionally draw the eye away from the information that is being delivered.

Cognitive Demands

The infographic places cognitive demand on the viewer as it combines several different types of information (such as statistics, a conceptual framework, and a historical timeline) inside of a single dense layout. Readers frequently have to shift attention between illustrations and text, such as in the “Building Blocks” section. In the book “Visual Explanations, Images and Quantities, Evidence and Narrative” [4], Tufte notes that when explanatory content is surrounded by complex graphics, the viewer must use extra mental effort in order to filter out irrelevant elements.

The infographic also asks viewers to interpret several percentages without any visualisations to support comparison. An example of this can be found in the productivity and profitability figures, which all appear as isolated items. MacInnes argues in “Little Quick Fix: Know Your Numbers” [5] that unstructured numerical information can increase cognitive load as the audience must mentally process values that could be intuitively presented through visual means. The winding path of the timeline also requires directional tracking, which can contribute to making the infographic more mentally demanding than necessary.

Improvements

There are several design changes that could improve the effectiveness of the “Wellness at Work” infographic by reducing the required cognitive load and improving clarity.

The first section containing the statistics could be greatly improved with the addition of simple data visualisations such as bar charts or scatter plots. This would allow readers to compare magnitudes visually rather than relying on memory to interpret isolated percentages, which can significantly improve understanding of numerical relationships.

The second section, containing the “Building Blocks”, could benefit from an increase to the font size and contrast of the explanatory text to increase legibility. The illustration in the section could also be altered to be more relevant to each level it corresponds to, such as level 2 containing an illustration of a sleep pod or quiet space as discussed in the text. Currently the only obvious link in this regard is in level 3 where stairs and cafes are both discussed, and visually represented. The integration of the “foundation” level of this section could also be improved by following the structure of the other layers more closely, as it is currently easy to mistake it as another section entirely.

Finally, the historical timeline could be refined by standardising the amount of text used for each era. Introducing concise headings to summarise key developments, followed by brief bullet points, would improve consistency and make the timeline easier to scan.

Conclusion

This report has evaluated the *Wellness at Work* infographic produced by the Global Wellness Institute, focusing on its effectiveness as a visual communication tool. Overall, the infographic succeeds in presenting an engaging overview of workplace wellbeing, particularly through its use of colour and familiar iconography. However, several limitations were identified, including issues with text readability, the presentation of numerical information, and the cognitive demands placed on viewers. By applying established principles from the visualisation literature, a number of practical improvements were proposed that could enhance clarity and accessibility without diminishing the infographic's visual appeal.

Bibliography

- [1] R. Spence, *Information Visualization: Design for Interaction*, Prentice Hall, 2006.
- [2] S. Few, *Show Me The Numbers*, Analytics Press, 2012.
- [3] E. Tufte, *The Visual Display of Quantitative Information* (2nd Ed.), Graphics Press USA, 2001.
- [4] E. Tufte, *Visual Explanations, Images and Quantities, Evidence and Narrative*, Graphics Press, 1997.
- [5] J. MacInnes, *Little Quick Fix: Know Your Numbers*, Sage, 2018.

Task 1 Report

GRADEMARK REPORT

FINAL GRADE

GENERAL COMMENTS

80/100

Generic Assessment Criteria	Marks available	Marks awarded
1. Engagement with Literature Skills		
Minimal amount but good quality / credibility of sources. Referenced throughout the text using IEEE standards.	10	6
2. Knowledge and Understanding Skills		
A nicely written report that carries a good narrative flow based on knowledge from research. Some knowledge based on research demonstrated and referenced well, justifying and backing up points.	15	12

3. Cognitive and Intellectual Skills		
Some good recommendations for improvements based on points raised. More detailed discussion of the improvements would have been desirable.	1 5	1 2
4. Practical Application Skills		
Good use of colour within the visualisations and overall design. Clear heading and good use of graphics with footer for sources too. Reasonably good use of visualisations clearly answering all questions. Good balance of visuals and text however, does the text add to the message or create minor cognitive load? Key takeaways is a nice touch though.	5 0	4 2
5. Transferable Skills for Life and Professional Practice		
A well presented and sectioned document with all the expected elements.	1 0	8

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