Contents

The book is divided into four parts. The chapters within each part build on each other, but the parts can be read and taught in any order.

The parts proceed from the micro to the macro. Part I starts within your own brain and how it perceives data. Part II focuses on how to optimize an individual graph. Part III moves out to the structure and organization of an effective communication. Finally, Part IV ends with strategies to present data well and deal with the ultimate complexity: other people's responses.

Introduction 1

Who this book is for 1

What makes this book different 1

How this book is organized 2

PART I

Understanding Perception

How and why graphs work 7

Chapter 1

Know Your Own Mind (in order to change others') 8

Understand the challenges of communicating data 10

Shift your mindset to explain data to others 16

Chapter 2

See How Graphs Work (inside your brain) 20

How we decode graphs 22

How graphs encode data 28

Exercise: Break down the graphs 41

PART II

Designing Your Data

How to design effective graphs and slides 45

Chapter 3

Choose the Right Graph (for your data) 46

Pick the graph based on the relationship 48

Use taxonomies to expand your library of graph types 71

Exercise: Categorize the relationships 73

Chapter 4
Simplify to Amplify (your message) 78
Maximize the data–ink ratio 80
Make the most important information the most salient 86
Exercise: Redraw the graph 98
Chapter 5
Build Effective Slides (with the point in mind) 100
Identify a single point for each slide 102
Write your point as a headline 102
Use headlines to clarify your graphs 106
Test your slides to maximize clarity and impact 109
Exercise: Sketch the right slide for this headline 121

PART III
Organizing Your Data
How to arrange data into compelling communications 125
Chapter 6
Structure Your Data (so others can follow it) 126
Begin with your ending in mind 128
Structure your communication with a Minto pyramid 129
Synthesize your key points into a single main idea 133
Maximize the impact of your points 138
Support your points with sound reasoning 145
Convert your Minto pyramid into a complete communication 150
Exercise: Making the case at Craigstone—Part I 157
Chapter 7
Frame the Data to Persuade (so the audience acts) 160
Audiences evaluate more than just the data 162
Understand how audiences evaluate your ideas 162
Maximize the likelihood of central processing with the WIIFT 165
Use story to create a compelling context 173
Take advantage of peripheral processing signals 177
Exercise: Making the case at Craigstone—Part II 184

PART IV
Delivering and Defending Your Data
How to prepare for and respond to your audience 189
Chapter 8
Present Your Data (with less preparation) 190
Give your data a voice 192
Master each component of the TOP-T framework 193
Practice some advanced techniques 202
Exercise: Practice presenting 205
Chapter 9
Prepare for Resistance (because resistance shows they care) 210
Resistance can be productive 212
Resistance can be predicted 213
Resistance can be anticipated with the Audience Confusion Matrix 216
Resistance can be defused 226
Exercise: What type of scenario is it? 230
Acknowledgments 236
Bibliography 239
Index 241