

Nobody reads your 40-chart dashboard.

D8A.ACADEMY/RESOURCES/DASHBOARD-6-RULES

ONE QUESTION

one job	the decision it serves
top-left	the number that matters
5 seconds	← if they cannot say it, cut.

NUMBERS

vs target	alone, a number means nothing
vs last period	direction + size
round it	← 4.2M, not 4,213,877.

TRUST

last updated	printed on the page
define the metric	hover or footnote
one owner	name on it

SIX RULES

≤ 6 charts	per screen
no pies	bars beat angles
same scale	or the eye lies
label the so what	title = the insight

LAYOUT

F-pattern	top-left is read first
filters on top	one row, no sidebar
whitespace	is not empty

GOTCHAS

truncated y-axis	drama, not data
40 KPIs	zero priorities
red/green only	8% of men cannot see it

WORTH MEMORIZING

01 The 5-second test

Hand the page to someone who has never seen it. Five seconds. Then ask four questions.

the number	Which single number did you read first? It should be the one the page exists for.
the direction	Up or down versus target? If they hesitate, the comparison is missing.
the action	What would you do now? A page with no answer is a report, not a tool.
the date	When was it refreshed? If they had to hunt, trust is already gone.

→ Every chart that did not help answer one of the four is a candidate for deletion. Most pages lose half their charts on the first pass.

02 Trap: the charts that lie

Three defaults that turn honest data into drama.

THE CHART	WHY IT LIES	THE FIX
y-axis from 80 to 100	a 2% dip looks like a crash	start at zero, or say so
pie with 9 slices	angles are unreadable	sorted bars
40 KPIs, no target	everything is important	six charts, each vs target

→ Interview phrasing: a dashboard is a decision tool, so I start from the decision, pick the six numbers it needs, and show each one against a target.