

# Heartbeats Behind the Headlines: Data Storytelling 101



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# Life-Changing Rural Hospital Experience

First Hospital CEO Job: 26 years old

BA, Business, Luther College  
MBA, MBA, University of Iowa

- ❖ John Pappajohn  
Entrepreneurial Center
- ❖ Co-Founder,  
Apple Valley Assisted Living Co.

*"The Rural Zealot"*

[www.ruralzealot.com](http://www.ruralzealot.com)



Doug

# Practical Hospital and Health Care Experience

BS, Health Care Administration -  
Southwestern College  
Master Health Care Leadership -  
Friends University



- \*Ward Clerk on a cardiac floor
- \*EMT/MICT
- \*Patient Care Tech in the NICU
- \*Paramedic in the ED
- \*Clinical Coordinator
- \*Quality Management Assistant
- \*Risk Manager
- \*Quality Manager
- \*Compliance Officer
- \*QIO Project Manager
- \*HEN/HIIN Program Director
- \*MBQIP Project Director



I have been in your rural shoes!

Susan

# The State of Quality Programs in Rural Hospitals

Domain/Question	2016	2023
Comm w/ nurses	80	84
Comm w/ doctors	82	84
Responsiveness	68	75
Comm about medicine	65	66
Cleanliness	74	80
Quietness	62	67
Discharge Information	87	89
Care Transition	52	56
Hospital Rating	72	78
Recommend Hospital	71	75

Step 5  
The Data  
Comes Alive

Step 6  
People Moved to  
Action

Step 4  
How to Tell Stories  
with Data

Data  
Misconceptions

*Engage  
Leadership and  
Others through  
Stories*

Step 3  
Your Future  
Quality Story

Step 2  
Your Brain On  
Stories

Step 1  
Why Stories?





Step 6  
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*Engage  
Leadership and  
Others through  
Stories*

Step 1  
Why Stories?



# Your Turn: Why Stories?

- What is your favorite movie? Why?
- Describe a movie where your heart pounds, or you startle, or you become tearful.
- What is the most read book in human history?
- How many charts and graphs are in that most read book?

*Emotional connection.  
We are moved.*



Susan



# Your Brain on Story

-The perfect love story  
(Hallmark Channel)

-The perfect football game

oxytocin

helps us **feel** empathy  
and **take action**

cortisol

helps us **focus**



*Characters.*  
*Tension.*  
*Drama.*

Susan

# Your Turn: (Take-Away Sheet) 1-Minute Brainstorm

Think about your facility's quality program.....

- How might better storytelling take the program to a new level?

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*Engage  
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Step 1  
Why Stories?

Step 2  
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Step 3  
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# The Story You Need to Hear: Your Future Quality Story

“Storytelling Transforms the Teller”

(Ron Howard)

Let's discard stories that aren't useful.

Replace with new stories.



Doug

# Which Came First?

Did your actions lead to your story? Or did the story lead to your actions?



Reggie Dwight → “Elton John”  
Thomas Mapother → “Tom Cruise”  
Caryn Johnson → “Whoopi Goldberg”

The fun part: changing just a few actions changes the story!

# Storytelling Template

Once upon a time.....

And every day....

Until one day...

Because that...

Because of this...

Until finally...

And ever since that day...

# Your Turn: Change Your Quality Program Story

Once upon a time.....

And every day....

Until one day...

Because that...

Because of this...

Until finally...

And ever since that day...



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GO

Doug



# Heartbeats Behind the Headlines



Doug

# How to Tell Stories With Data

A couple of reminders...

1. Make your job description “Chief Storyteller”.
2. You’re qualified - you already speak rural.

Choice:

Tell a story about the data itself.

Tell a parallel story to pull out points.

# Step-by-Step: Tell Stories with Data

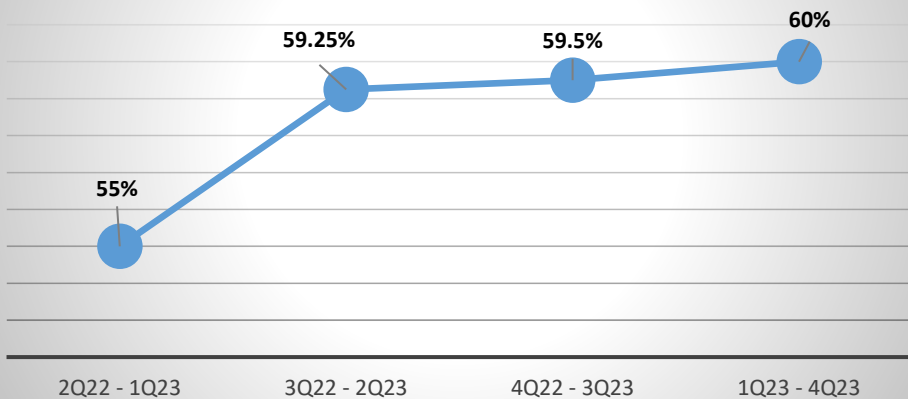
1. Review the data
2. Select one theme you want to highlight:

Tiny improvements are still progress	Doing ok, but we're stuck
Woo woo - let's celebrate	This will open our eyes
We must change this quickly	(Fill in the blank)

3. Discover a story to demonstrate the theme  
(Sources: your life, family, friends, patients, movie, book, sports)
4. Share a Call to Action  
(What you want people to do)
5. Follow-up next time on the Call to Action

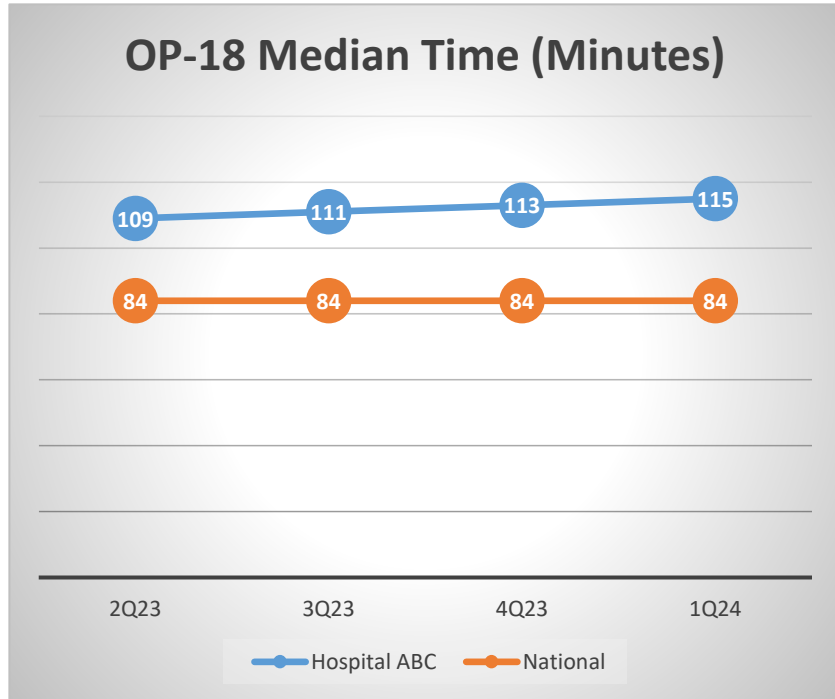
# Example:

**Composite 7 Care Transitions  
(Strongly Agree)**



- 1. Review the data**
- 2. Select one theme to highlight:**  
*Small progress is still progress*
- 3. Discover a story to demonstrate the theme.**
- 4. Share a Call to Action**  
*Goal is .50 next month*
- 5. Follow-up next time on the Call to Action**

# Example:



## Review the data

### Select one theme to highlight

*We must focus on this. Now.*

### Discover a story to demonstrate the theme

*This means everything to us.*

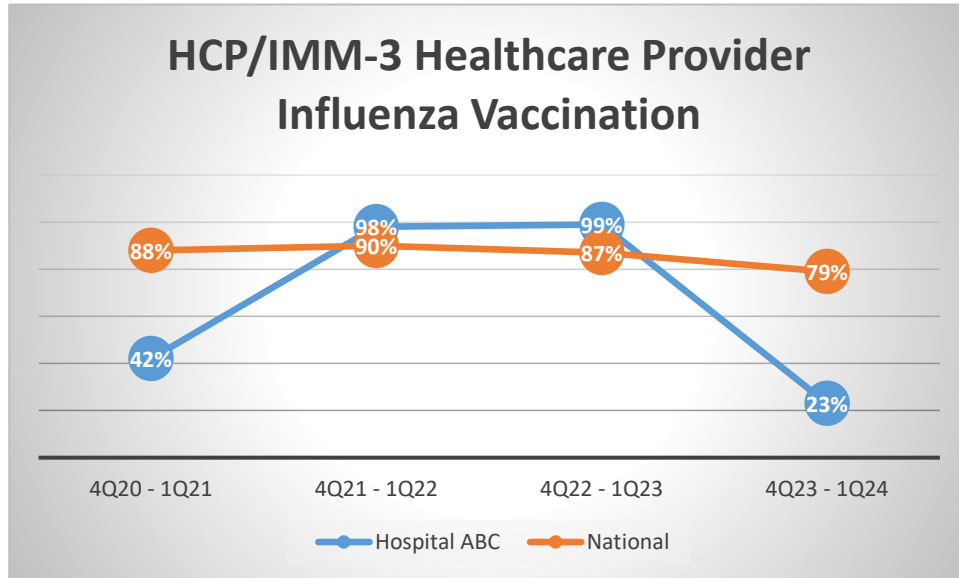
### Share a Call to Action

*Who owns this for next month?*

### Follow-up next time on the Call to Action

Doug

# Example:



- **Review the data**

- **Select one theme to highlight**

*Something changed. Why? Now What?*

- **Discover a story to demonstrate the theme**

- **Share a Call to Action**

Let's make sure we hardwire the change

- **Follow-up next time on the Call to Action**

# Example:



1. **Review the data**
2. **Select one theme to highlight**  
*Woo woo! Celebrate!*
1. **Discover a story to demonstrate the theme**
2. **Share a Call to Action**  
*How can we help you continue the improvements?*
1. **Follow-up next time on the Call to Action**

# Your Turn: Tell a Story With Your Data

1. Review the data.
2. Select one theme to highlight.
3. Discover a story to demonstrate the theme.
4. Share a Call to Action.
5. Follow-up next time on the Call to Action.

Please be prepared to share...



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GO

Susan

# Thank you very much for time!



Follow us for ideas to make your Board life easier!

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