Shine a Light on Your Work

Lessons Learned in Crafting Effective Evaluation Reports

Learnings from Clear Outcomes' first two years

SERVE DESSERT FIRST

NOT. EVERYONE. LOVES. DATA.

Your audience may not have the time or the desire to dig into a main course of data tables, complex graphs, and methodology discussions. Flip your report to focus the reader on the key findings (dessert)!

- **Feature Findings & Recommendations First**

- **Summarize, Illustrate, & Condense** into highly visual 1-2 page briefs with sharable elements

- **Annexes are Unlimited:** Data tables, detailed discussions, methodology, research, and supplementary materials belong here

- **Get Inspired** by the Kaufman Foundation and Evergreen Data's Evaluation Reporting Guide, the Depict Data Studio report mini course, and Urban Institute's research communication pyramid
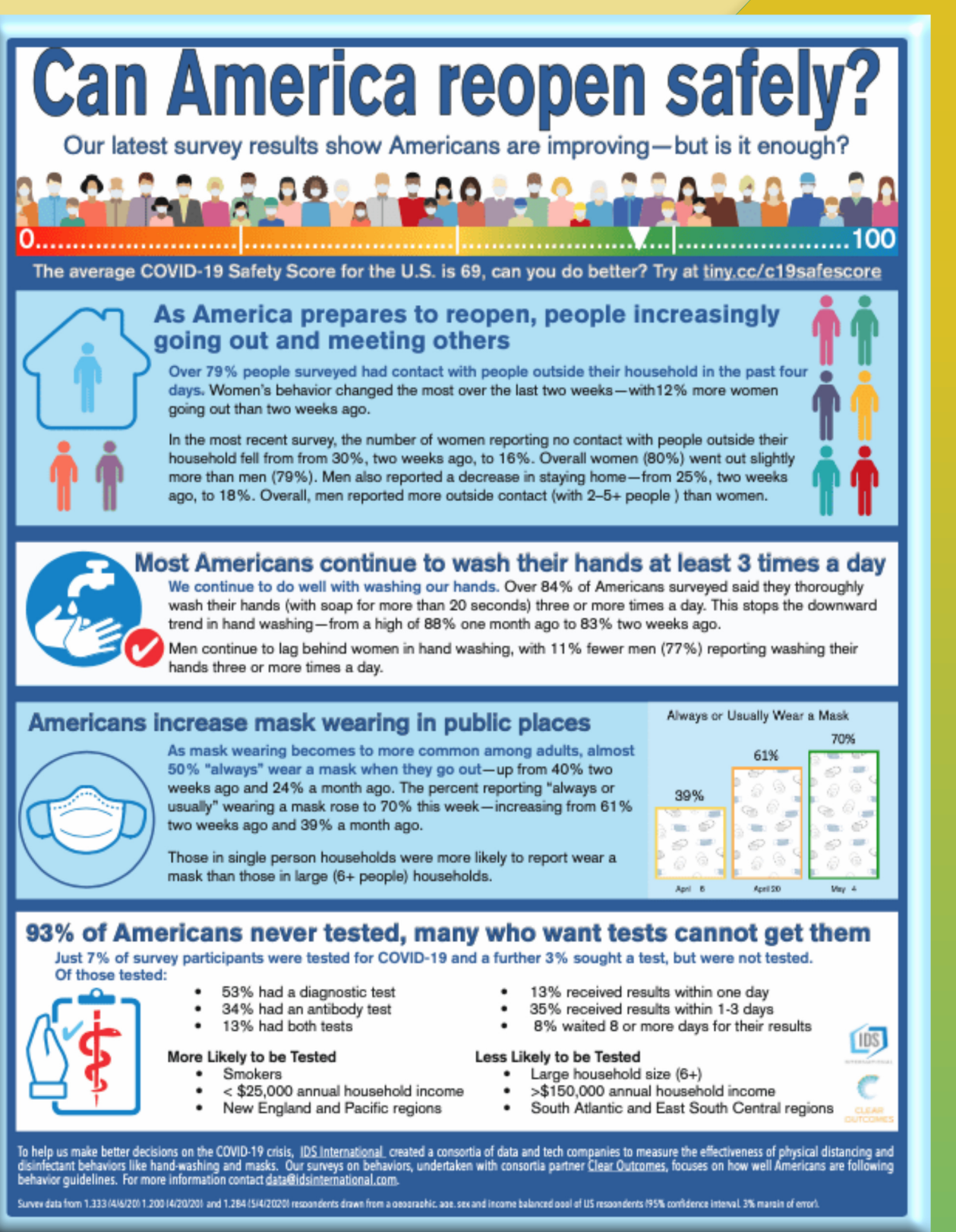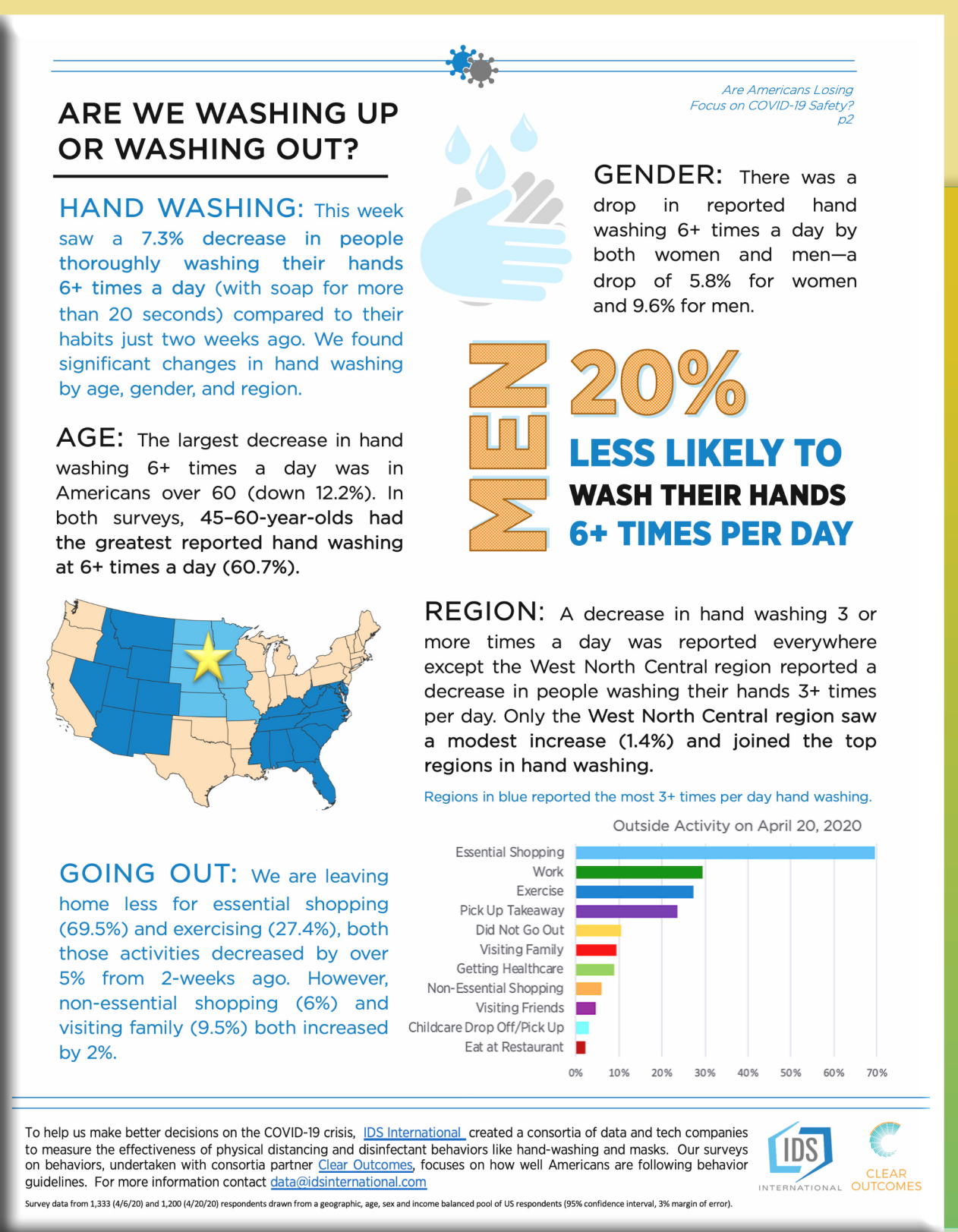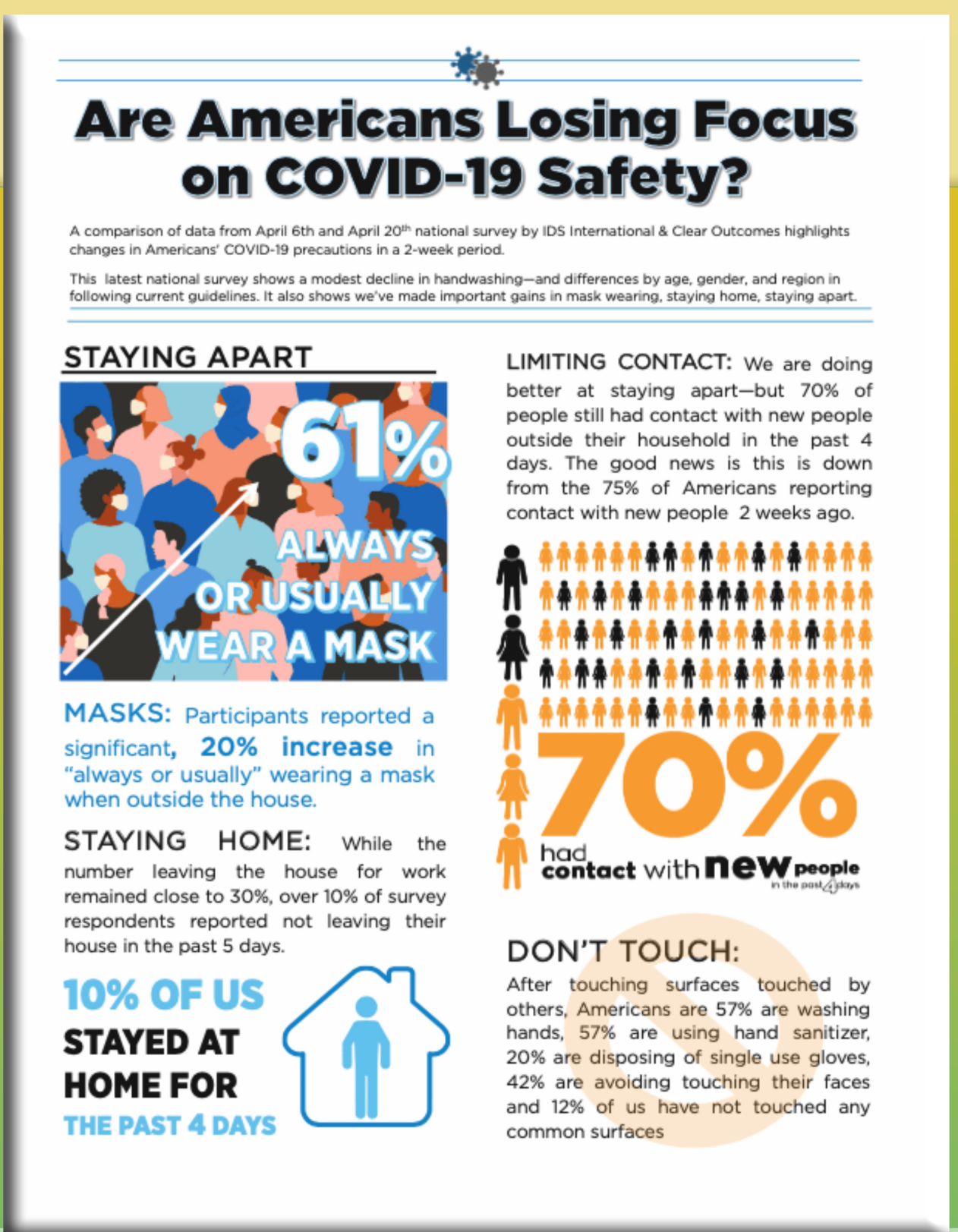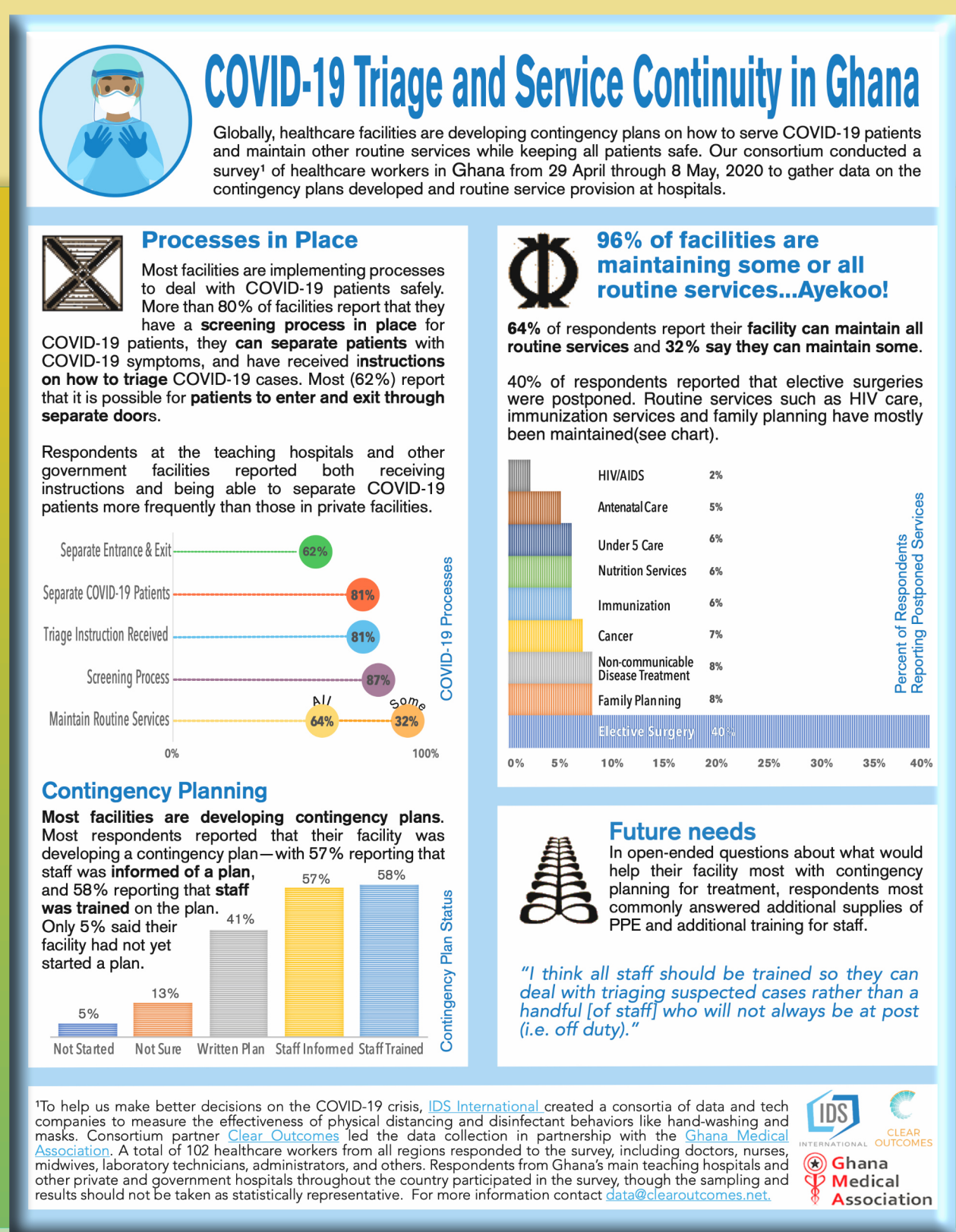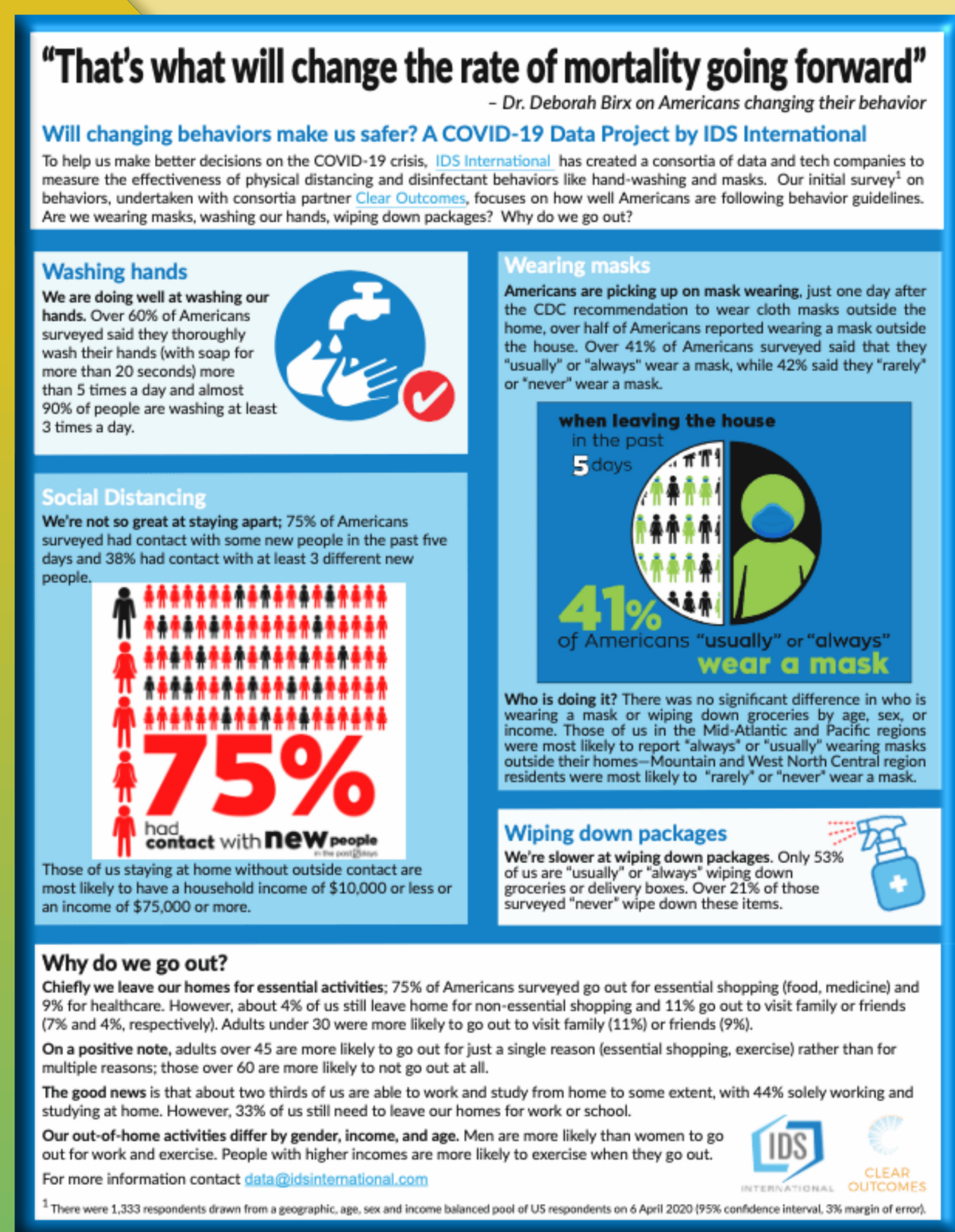
REMOTE TEAMS 24/7

REMOTE WORK BEFORE COVID-19

From day one, Clear Outcomes' focus on hiring local experts and developing diverse teams created a flexible and responsive culture. With team members distributed around the globe, **time-sensitive research and analysis can be shared across time zones**–keeping crucial work moving forward around the clock. To create remote teams that produce high-quality research on tight schedules, we:

- **Prioritize Leadership:** Clear Outcomes' core team of experienced (and unflappable) international experts guide the process and keep teams on track

- **Build Professional Relationships & Camaraderie :** through online meetings, one-to-one shared screen work sessions, calls, and round-robin writing/ editing sprints. Increased communication helps teams quickly gel and develop trust

FAVORITE *FAVOURITES*

CROSS CULTURAL WRITING & EDITING

- **Style Counts:** Confirm your client's preferred spelling (country) and style guide at the outset

- **You Need an Editor** to harmonize language and style between writers and across cultures and countries

- **Streamline the Path from Research to Report:** The combination of a custom report structure & layout with a Findings, Conclusions, and Recommendations (FCR) Matrix helps focus the team writing process

- **Play Well with Others:** Online collaborative writing and editing boosts productivity–but can foul up final formatting. Moving a complex report from Google Docs to Word can result in glitchy tables & lost cross-references. Pro Tip: Download as a text file and avoid editing a complex Word file in Docs.

Not Everyone Speaks Data
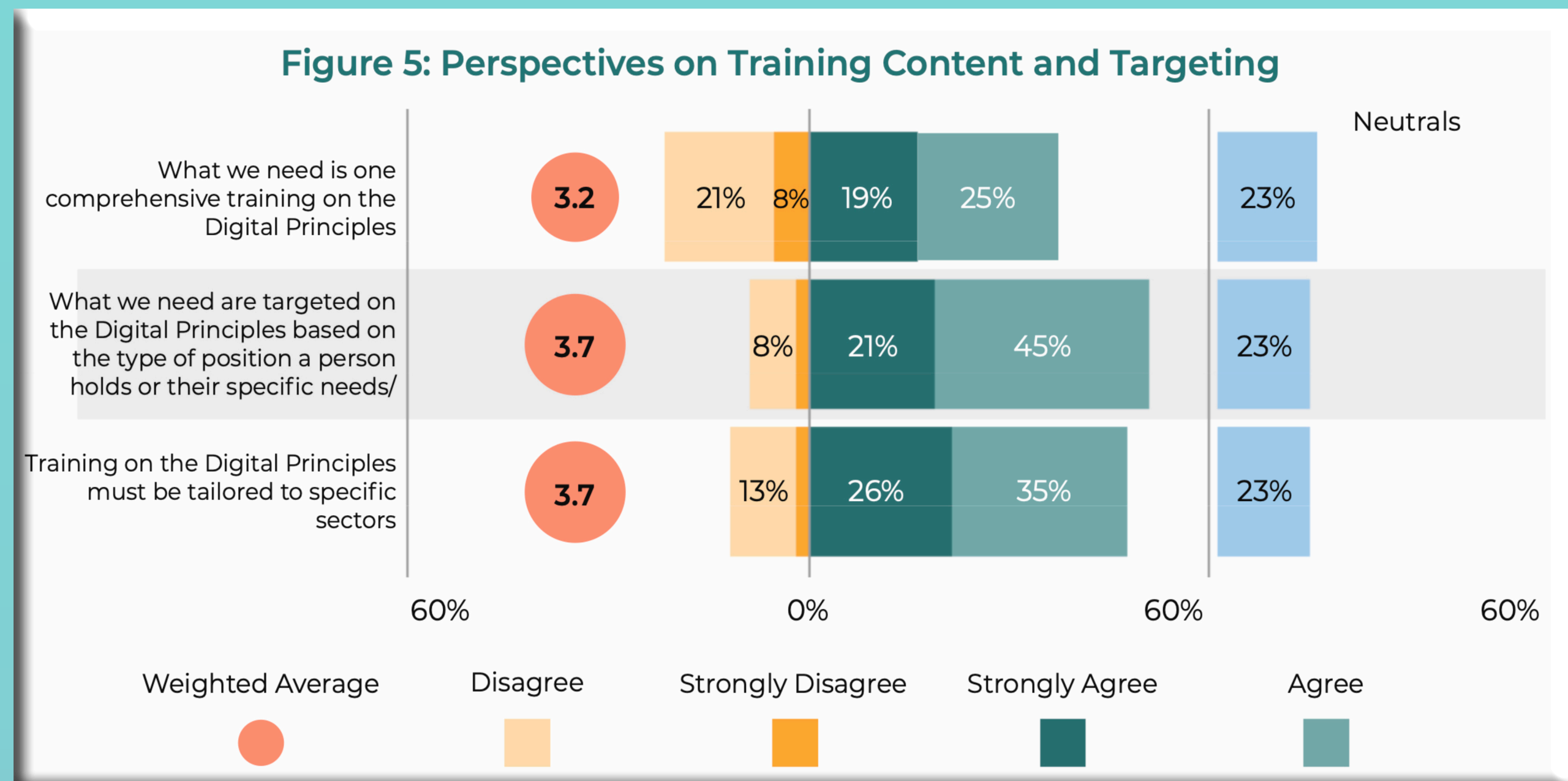
5 LESSONS LEARNED IN DATA VISUALIZATION

What is the use of an evaluation report that isn't read or shared with your client's agency and stakeholders? Data visualizations, graphic design, & summary sheets are tools to create compelling, sharable stories from your results

1. Iteration & Feedback are Part of Design: Data visualization benefits from feedback and suggestions from the users/audience. A rough idea evolves through conversations to elicit user insights (e.g., what works, what's not clear). Sincerely responding to feedback results in a more refined design
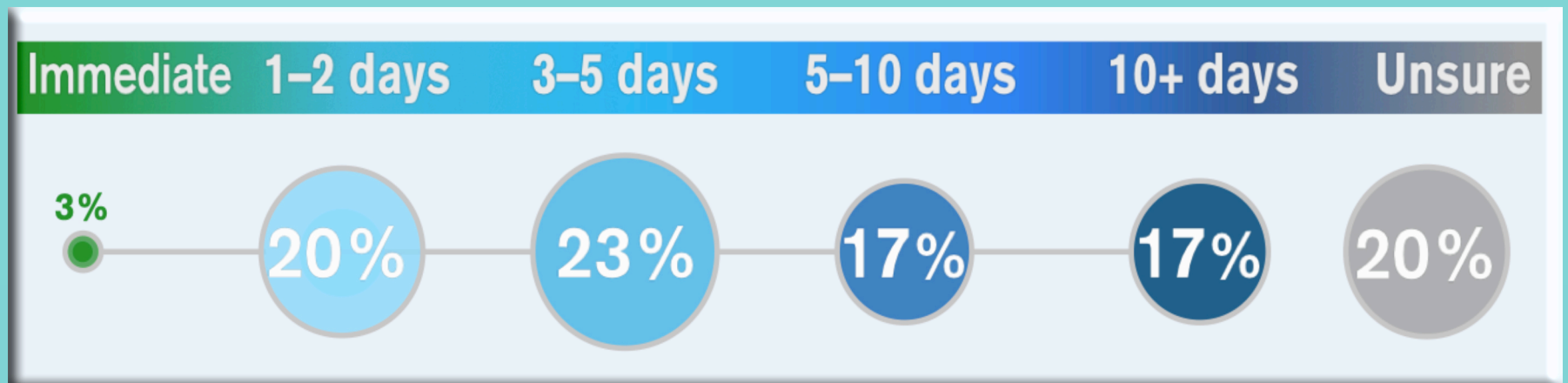
2. Check & Double Check & Check Again: Errors happen, the challenge is to identify them early. Data labels, footnotes, titles and source annotations are common places where errors occur

3. Don't Fear, Do Explain: While popular charts (bar & line) are interpreted almost instinctively by users, the less familiar charts can be powerful tools. Data labels & titles can provide clear guidance that increases the ability of users to digest the data and insights

Figure 5: Perspectives on Training Content and Targeting

4. Be Wary of Circles: People love circles. They are attractive; circles look like faces and remind us of ourselves. However, evidence shows we tend to underestimate the area of two-dimensional marks, like circles, compared to one-dimensional marks such as bars or lines.

5. Watch out for Bar Charts with Non-Zero Baselines: Bar charts use the length of the bar to encode the data values. If the baseline is not zero, the lengths are not validly comparable. These charts are distorting the data–often to intentionally create a larger difference among the bars than is actual

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