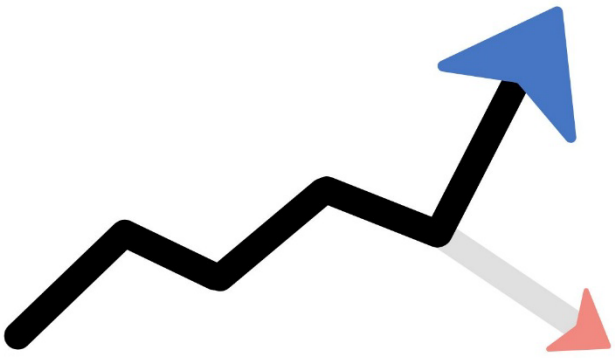
BY YU INAMI -DATADES

DECISION-READY DASHBOARDS

A GUIDE TO IMPROVING CLARITY AND DRIVING DECISIONS



COMPLETELY NEW DASHBOARD FORMAT YOU HAVE EVER SEEN

Decision-Ready Dashboards

A Guide to Improving Clarity and Driving Decisions

Contents

Prologue — Why This Book Exists 4
PART I — Why Dashboards Fail 6
CHAPTER 1 — The Dashboard Problem 6
1.1 Dashboards Evolved Visually, but Not Functionally 7
1.2 The Three Structural Issues Behind Dashboard Failure 7
1.3 What Leaders Actually Need From Dashboards 8
1.4 The Purpose of This Book 9
CHAPTER 2 — Data → Insight → Action 10
2.1 Data Alone Doesn't Change Anything 10
2.2 The Real BI Pipeline: From Fact to Decision 11
2.3 Why the Middle Layer Is Missing 12
2.4 Closing the Gap: What This Book Teaches You to Build 15
CHAPTER 3 — Executives and Developers: Two Audiences, One Dashboard 17
3.1 Developer vs Executive: Why They See the Same Dashboard Differently 17
3.2 The Path Forward: Designing for Dual Audiences 19
3.3 The Rest of the Book Builds on This Alignment 19
PART II — Foundations of Actionable Dashboards 20
CHAPTER 4 — Your North Star Metric 20
4.1 Why NSM Matters 20
4.2 What Makes a Good NSM 21
4.3 NSM → Driver → Driver KPI → Operational KPI 21
4.4 How NSM Organizes All KPIs（The Hierarchy of Success） 22
4.5 Choosing Your North Star Metric（Practical Guide） 23
4.6 Examples of Effective NSMs 23
4.7 The Promise of Having a North Star 23
CHAPTER 5 — KPI Architecture 25
5.1 The KPI Hierarchy (NSM → Drivers → Driver KPIs → Operational KPIs) 25
5.2 Why KPI Architecture Matters 25
5.3 Building Your KPI Architecture (Step-by-Step) 26
5.4 Common Failures in KPI Architecture 27
5.5 Examples of Strong KPI Architecture 27
5.6 How KPI Architecture Connects to TCA 27
CHAPTER 6 — Trigger Layer 29
6.1 What Is a Trigger? 29

6.2 Why Triggers Matter 29
6.3 What Makes a Good Trigger 30
6.4 Types of Triggers 30
6.5 The Trigger Library 31
6.6 How to Design Visual Triggers 31
6.7 Common Trigger Failures 32
6.8 How Triggers Connect to the Cause Layer 33
Chapter 7 — Cause Layer 35
7.1 Purpose of the Cause Layer 35
7.2 Why Most Dashboards Fail Here 35
7.3 The Three Tools of the Cause Layer 36
7.4 How to Design the Cause Layer in a Dashboard 37
7.5 Examples of Cause Layer Patterns 38
7.6 What the Cause Layer is NOT 39
7.7 The Output of the Cause Layer 39
Chapter 8 — Action Layer 41
8.1 Why Most Dashboards Stop Before Action 41
8.2 The Three Elements of the Action Layer 41
8.3 How to Build the Action Layer (For Developers who is wondering how.) 43
8.4 Example Action Layer Patterns 45
8.5 How the Action Layer Scales 46
8.6 Why the Action Layer Changes Everything 46
PART III — The TCA System 47
Chapter 9 — TCA Overview 48
9.1 What TCA Solves 48
9.2 The Three Layers at a Glance 49
9.3 TCA vs Traditional BI 50
9.4 Why TCA Is the Minimal Viable Decision Operating System 50
9.5 What TCA Looks Like in a Real Week 51
9.6 Why TCA Creates Organizational Alignment 52
9.7 How This Book Uses TCA 52
Chapter 10 — Trigger Deep Dive 53
10.1 What a Trigger Actually Is 53
10.2 The 4 Types of Triggers 53
10.3 Trigger Thresholds: How to Detect Meaningful Change 54
10.4 Designing the Trigger View 55

10.5 Trigger Misuses: What to Avoid 56
10.6 Why Trigger Is So Valuable 56
10.7 How Trigger Feeds the Cause Layer 57
Chapter 11 — Cause Deep Dive 58
11.1 What a “Cause Deep Dive” Really Does 58
11.2 The 80% Cause Detection Rule 58
11.3 The Five Mechanisms of KPI Change 58
11.4 The Cause Discovery Sequence 59
11.5 Power BI Implementation: How to Build a Cause Deep Dive 60
11.6 Common Failure Patterns in Cause Deep Dives 61
Chapter 12 — Action Deep Dive 63
12.1 The Objective of the Action Layer 63
12.2 Step 1 — Detect a “Meaningful Deviation” 63
12.3 Step 2 — Convert Deviation into an Action 64
12.4 Step 3 — Evaluate Action Quality 64
12.5 Step 4 — Track Progress and Close the Loop 64
12.6 Step 5 — Build an Action Log 65
12.7 Common Failure Modes in Action Execution 66
12.8 How Teams Should Use the Action Layer Weekly 66
12.9 Example: Turning a Deviation into Action 66
Part IV- Decision Operating System 68
Chapter 13 — Dashboards → Decision Systems 71
13.1 Dashboards Were Never Designed as Decision Systems 71
13.2 Why Organizations Need a Decision Operating System 72
13.3 The Core Components of a Decision System 72
13.4 What a Dashboard-Centered Organization Looks Like 73
13.5 What a Decision System Looks Like 73
13.6 The Shift From Dashboard Thinking to System Thinking 74
Chapter 14 — AI and Decision-Making 75
14.1 What AI Does Exceptionally Well 75
14.2 Where AI Fits Within the TCA System 75
14.3 What AI Must Not Replace 77
14.4 The Sweet Spot: Human + AI Decision Systems 77
14.5 Why Many AI Initiatives Fail 78
Chapter 15 — Why OKR(Objectives and Key Results)s Fail Without a Decision OS 79
15.1 OKRs Are Not a Decision System 79

15.2 The Four Most Common Failure Patterns 80
15.3 What OKRs Need to Succeed: A Weekly Decision Loop 80
15.4 Rewriting OKRs as Weekly Prioritization Tools 81
15.5 Why OKRs Need the TCA Engine 82
15.6 Why Most “OKR Software Tools” Don’t Fix This 82
15.7 The Real Reason OKRs Fail: No Culture of Weekly Accountability 83
Chapter 16 — Culture of Decision-Making 84
16.1 Culture Is the Real Decision Infrastructure 84
16.2 The Four Cultural Pillars of a Decision OS 85
16.3 The Cultural Anti-Patterns That Kill Decision-Making 87
16.4 How Leaders Build a Decision Culture 88
16.5 Scaling the Decision Culture Across Teams 88
16.6 Culture Is What Protects the TCA System 89
PART V — Implementation 90
Chapter 17 — The 90-Day Plan 91
17.1 Why a 90-Day Rollout Works 91
17.2 The Three-Month Roadmap 91
17.3 The Weekly TCA Meeting (Template) 93
17.4 Roles Required for a Successful TCA Rollout 94
17.5 Common Rollout Pitfalls (and Fixes) 94
17.6 What Success Looks Like After 90 Days 95
Chapter 18 — Checklists & Templates 95
18.1 KPI Design Checklist 96
18.2 Trigger Layer Checklist 96
18.3 Cause Layer Checklist 97
18.4 Action Layer Checklist 98
18.5 Monthly TCA Review Template 98
18.6 Weekly TCA Meeting Template 99
18.7 90-Day Rollout Checklist 100
18.8 Templates (Copy/Paste Ready) 100
Epilogue — The Quiet Power of Better Decisions 102
Appendix — Audit Framework & Reference Library 105
A.1 Dashboard Audit Framework (Full Version) 105
A.2 30 Questions to Diagnose a Dashboard 107
A.3 TCA Metrics & Threshold Library 108
A.4 Decision OS Maturity Model 109

A.5 Templates (Copy/Paste Ready) 109
A.6 Glossary 110
A.7 Final Notes 111

Prologue — Why This Book Exists

Every organization experiences the same frustration. Dashboards were supposed to make things clearer.
Yet in many companies, they quietly became the opposite:

- People still rely on old Excel files they built years ago.
- Meetings turn into number-reading sessions instead of decision-making.
- Different teams use different definitions of the same KPI.
- And the first question after opening a dashboard is still:
  “So… what am I supposed to do with this?”

Executives/ users feel that frustration immediately. They want clarity, direction, and confidence—yet dashboards rarely deliver it.

They open a dashboard expecting answers—and instead find another puzzle. Charts look busy, KPIs conflict, and no one can explain *what action should be taken right now*.

But Developers and Analysts feel the same pain from the other side. They receive vague requests, shifting definitions, endless revisions, and are asked to “make it clearer” without being told *what decision the dashboard is supposed to support*.

Both groups are stuck in the same loop:
Users don’t get clarity,
Developers don’t get direction,
and dashboards become a record of the past instead of a tool for action.

This book is written for both sides.
For Users:
it gives a structure to articulate what you truly need— not more charts, but more clarity and fewer decisions left hanging.

For Developers:
it gives a framework to design dashboards that speak— visuals that guide judgment, reveal cause, and drive action without requiring a meeting to interpret them.

Because dashboards are not simply reports. They are a shared decision system—a bridge

between “what’s happening” and “what we must do next.”
When everyone uses the same language of clarity, the loop breaks. Decisions accelerate. Teams align. Actions become consistent. And dashboards finally do the job they were meant to do.

This book will show you how. Not with complexity.
But with a simple, scalable method anyone can apply— whether you lead a team or design the dashboards they depend on.

PART I — Why Dashboards Fail

Audience Guide

Executive / Management

- This part explains *why organizations struggle to act* even when dashboards are available.
- Focus on how this part clarifies decision-making and improves alignment across your teams. Dashboard failure is rarely a tool issue — it is an organizational decision problem.

Developer / Analyst

- Learn why "correct charts" still fail when they do not drive action.
- Chapters 2–3 will become foundational knowledge before you move into design and TCA later.

General User (Business User)

- You will understand *why dashboards often do not feel actionable* in real life.
- No technical background is required; you can skim lightly.

Purpose of This Part

To identify the root causes behind dashboard failure and prepare the reader for
"how to fix them in the next parts."

CHAPTER 1 — The Dashboard Problem

Why so many dashboards look complete but feel useless.
If you've worked with dashboards long enough, you've likely experienced the same uncomfortable moment:
you open a polished, complex-looking report—full of charts, KPIs, and filters—and yet the first question that pops into your mind is:
"So… what am I supposed to do with this?"

This reaction is far more common than most organizations admit. Dashboards have multiplied. Data has multiplied. Visuals have become more colorful, more interactive, more "modern."
And yet, clarity—the thing users actually need—has not kept pace.
Something fundamental is broken.

1.1 Dashboards Evolved Visually, but Not Functionally

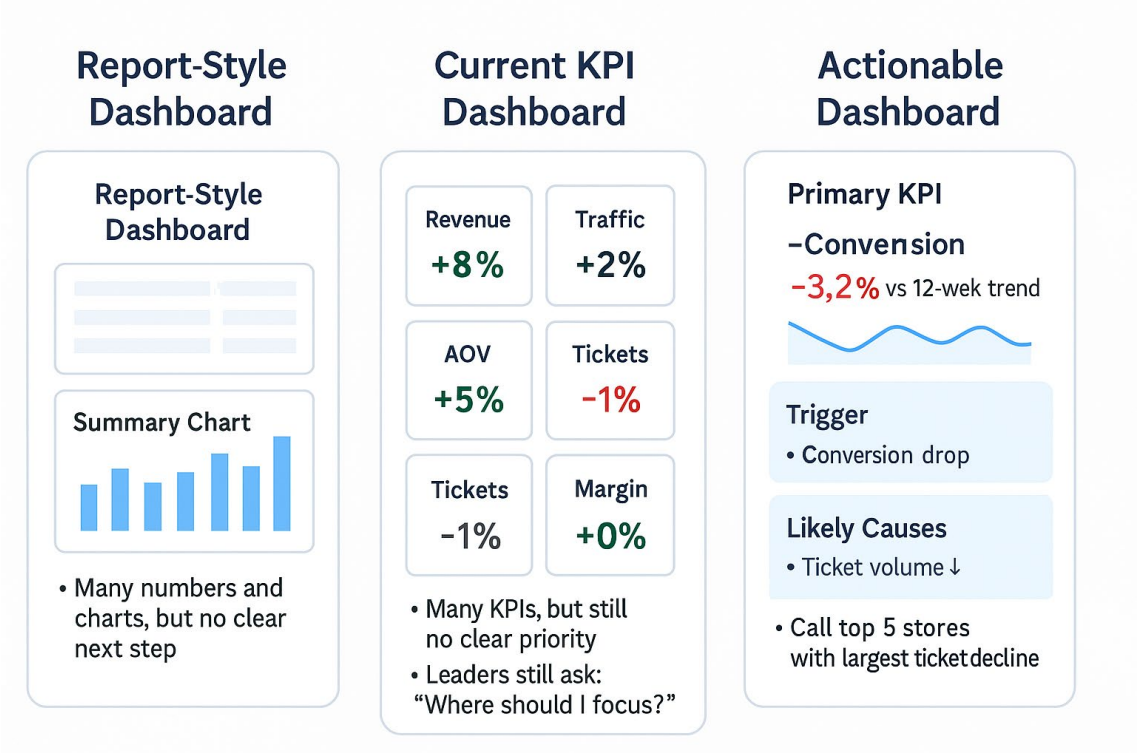


Figure 1-1 -Different types of Dashboards

Most dashboards still behave like upgraded reports. They summarize what happened. They reflect activity. They provide snapshots. But they rarely guide decisions.

Originally, BI dashboards were simply a more attractive form of the Excel tables they replaced. Their purpose was informational, not operational.

Even as organizations demanded "data-driven decision-making," the underlying design philosophy didn't change. Therefore we got more charts, not more clarity.

Dashboards today are excellent at answering one question:

"What happened?"

But this is the least useful question when a user needs to decide what to do next.