

Winning Edge #12 – Persuade with One Page – Part 2

This is Trevor Bragdon with Commonwealth Partners' *The Winning Edge*: Tips to help conservatives persuade and win.



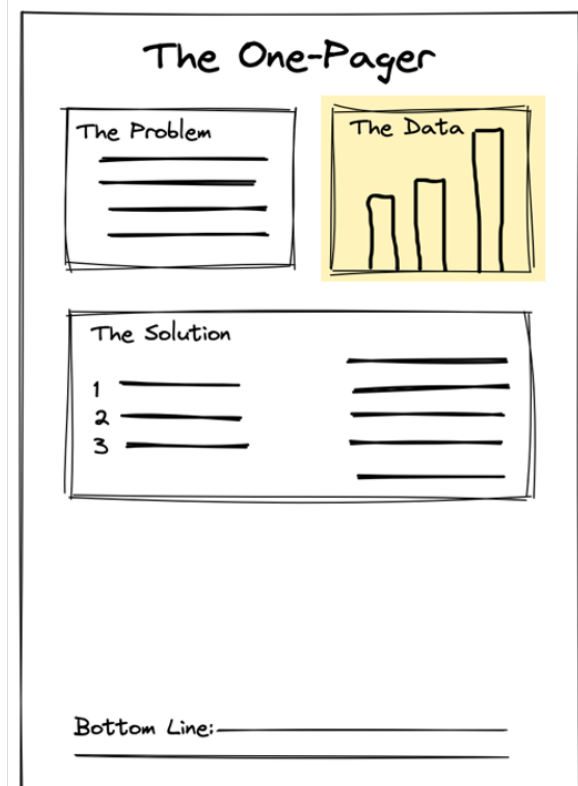
In the last episode, we talked about how to persuade with a one-pager and the first three questions you need to answer. What's the Bottom Line? What's the Problem? And, What's the Solution? If you answer those questions, you have a great persuasive start. But your readers also want some facts to back it up and a story to make it memorable. This is where the last three questions come in.

- What's the Data?
- What's the Story?
- What's the Visual?

Let's dive in and look at the data first.

#4 – What's the Data?

To persuade decision-makers, you need both emotion and facts. As the saying goes, "We buy with emotion and justify with facts." People tend to warm up to a solution slowly, especially when the problem is complex. They need time to think about the solution and usually discuss it with trusted colleagues. But here's the problem: you are rarely invited to this second conversation. By presenting clear data on the one-pager, you are arming decision-makers with the facts to explain how they felt persuaded by you.



Two Steps for Persuasive Data

First, decide on the emotion you want to create with the data on the one-pager: urgency, satisfaction, safety, etc. Do you want to show data that highlights the problem or supports the solution? Most of the time, you will want data supporting your solution, because if the decision-makers are spending time looking at the data, they probably already agree with the problem.

Second, decide how you want to present your data. You can pick a single data point, a chart, a graph, etc. Graphs may be the most efficient, as they communicate lots of persuasive material quickly. Remember, you want decision-makers to understand key takeaways in a matter of seconds.

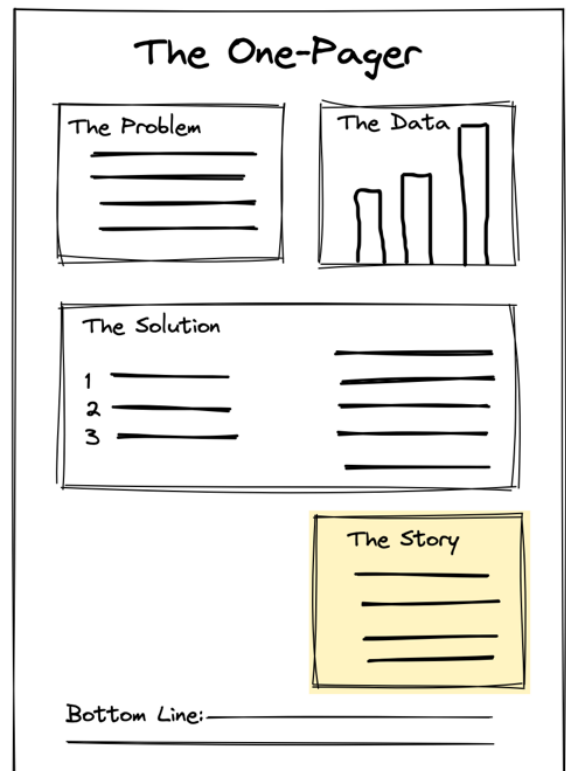
#5 – What’s the Story?

Humans remember stories longer than facts, so adding a story to your one-pager makes it memorable. Picking the story that reinforces the appropriate emotional response is the trick.

Consider what specific emotional response you want the story to target:

- Create *urgency* about the Problem
- Show the *success* of the Solution
- Reinforce the *safety* of the Solution

Once you’ve decided what emotion to create, pick the type of story you need: case study, testimonial, “how it works,” etc. Whichever type you choose, the key is to provide a concise narrative that evokes emotion.



#6 – What’s the Visual?

While you may have a graph or chart for the data, think of a visual as a picture or illustration—something to pull the reader in. Visuals are used to create curiosity or highlight the problem you are trying to solve. You can often pair your visual with your story, allowing the decision-makers’ eyes to latch on to the visual and draw them in further to read the story.

White space can also serve as a visual. Leave room for notes in case decision-makers take notes while you move through your presentation.

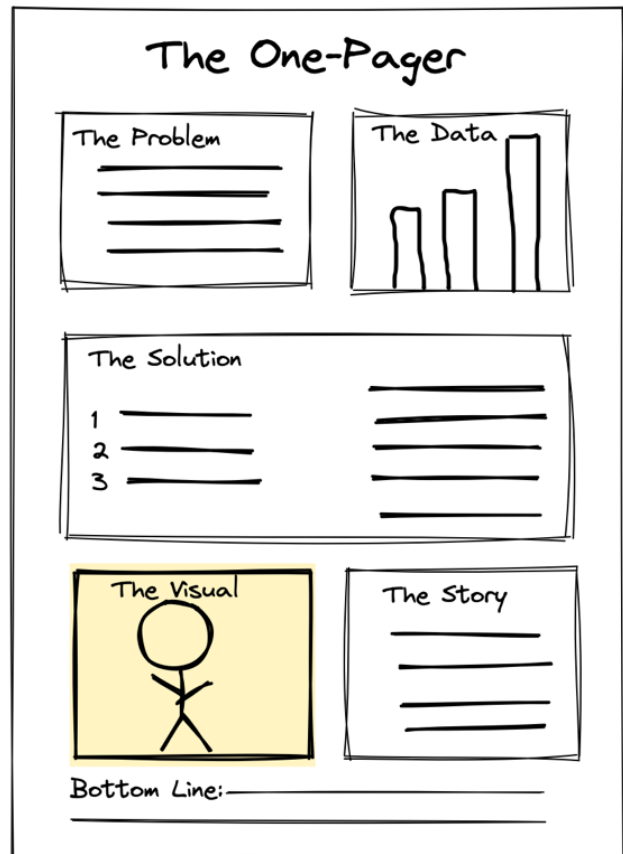
Write the First Draft

Once you’ve brainstormed and answered these six questions, you will have all the pieces of the puzzle.

The next step is to create a draft. Don’t worry about making this perfect. Put some ideas down and revise it until the document contains no more than 250 words. The sweet spot is 150–200 words, enough so the piece avoids a marketing aura while remaining simple to read.

You’ll also want to create a six- to eight-word headline for your one-pager.

Go for clarity more than cleverness. You want the decision-makers to understand what they are looking at and see why this one-pager is essential. It’s good practice to draft about two dozen headlines. This takes a few minutes, but you may find that the best headline comes after you’ve written a dozen not-so-good ones.



The Pick-Up Test

Once you have designed a version of your one-pager, print it, put it down, and walk away. Wait a few minutes, then return and glance at it again, but don't pick it up. Ask yourself these questions:

Do you want to pick it up and read it? Does it pique your curiosity? Do you want to move closer to read the headline? If you don't find the design interesting, neither will your decision-makers.

If your one-pager fails the pick-up test, articulate why it's not interesting to your designer, or, if you're making it yourself, think about why it's not compelling. Then, revise it until it passes this crucial test.

Wrap-Up

The next time you have an important meeting or high-stakes presentation, remember that *the person with a piece of paper usually wins*. Take the time to answer all the six questions:

1. What's the Bottom Line?
2. What's the Problem?
3. What's the Solution?
4. What's the Data?
5. What's the Story?
6. What's the Visual?

If you do this, you'll have a persuasive one-pager and a winning edge.