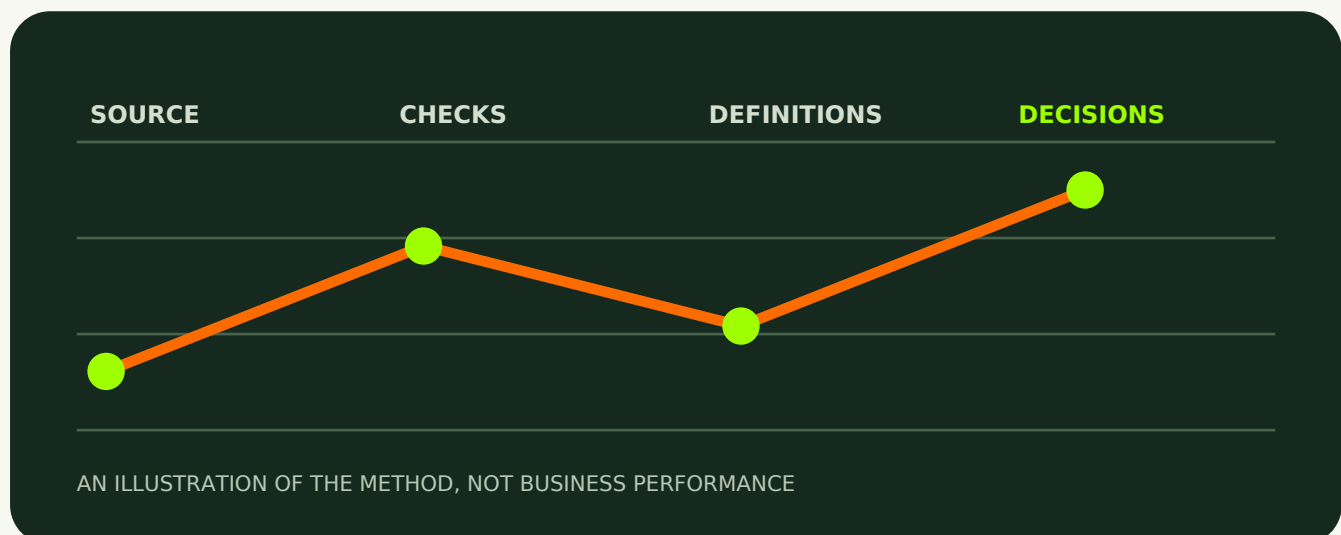


Before you build a dashboard.

A practical guide to clean, reliable business data.



THE SPOKESDUDE

THE SPOKESDUDE NETWORK

Version 1.0 / October 2026

START HERE

A useful report begins before the chart

You have a spreadsheet, a deadline and a question from the owner: "Can we trust these numbers?" A new chart will not answer that question. You need to know what each row represents, where the values came from and which corrections have been made.

This book gives you a small, repeatable method for getting there. It is written for business owners, administrators and managers who already work with spreadsheets. You do not need to write code, buy a dashboard tool or know advanced statistics.

The method is practical: define the decision, preserve the source, inspect the data, record corrections, reconcile the result and explain what remains uncertain. You will work through a fictional order register and see why a tidy-looking sheet can still produce a misleading total.

What you receive

This is a standalone PDF e-book. The examples, checklists and exercise answers are inside these pages. No spreadsheet, software licence, live connection, consulting time or automated cleaning tool is included. You can read the book in a PDF reader and practise in your own spreadsheet application.

How to use it

Read chapters 1 and 2 before changing a file. Use chapters 3 to 5 as a desk reference. Follow the complete worked example in chapter 6, then adapt the routine in chapter 7 to one real reporting task.

OUTCOME

By the end, you should be able to explain why a dataset is suitable for a particular report, what you changed and which limitations the reader needs to know.

Inspect before you correct

First learn what is in the file. Record its data-row count, column names and date range. Look at a few records from the beginning, middle and end, then check the fields that control inclusion or totals across the full dataset.

Ask six practical questions

Are required fields present? Does each record have the expected identity? Are repeated labels used consistently? Is the information recent enough for the decision? Do values meet the permitted format or range? Where can you verify that a value reflects the real event?

These questions connect to established data-quality dimensions: completeness, uniqueness, consistency, timeliness, validity and accuracy. They are related checks, not interchangeable scores. A correctly formatted date can still describe the wrong event. A fully populated sheet can still contain invented values. [1]

Make the issue list specific

Write "Two order IDs are repeated" rather than "Duplicates exist." Write "Three records have no status" rather than "Data is incomplete." Include record references, the likely effect on the report and the person who can resolve the issue.

Prioritise fields that determine who is counted, which period applies and how amounts are combined. A rare error affecting a large amount may deserve more attention than a common spelling difference in an optional comment.

A LIMIT TO REMEMBER

A sample can reveal a problem but cannot prove that every other row is correct. Run systematic checks across relevant fields before releasing the result, and use source verification where accuracy matters.

Build the reporting subset

Applying the verified rules leaves four completed orders for September. Each appears once, uses the approved status and belongs to the agreed order-date period. This is the subset used for the provisional management measure.

Order ID	Order date	Standard status	ZAR
C-101	2026-09-02	Completed	1,200
C-102	2026-09-05	Completed	800
C-104	2026-09-12	Completed	1,500
C-107	2026-09-28	Completed	100
TOTAL	4 orders	Provisional	3,600

Check the arithmetic yourself

Add $1,200 + 800 + 1,500 + 100 = 3,600$. Count four distinct order IDs. Compare those identifiers with the source references: R1, R2, R4 and R8. The amount and count describe the same population.

The remaining unique orders still matter. C-103 is cancelled, C-105 belongs to October and C-106 has an unresolved status. Keep their classifications available for review instead of hiding them in a deleted-row history.

Carry the limitation with the number

The report should say "ZAR 3,600 across four verified completed orders; provisional because C-106 is unresolved." Do not shorten that to "September revenue: ZAR 3,600." The shorter label changes the meaning and loses the limitation.

ILLUSTRATED EXTRACT

The tables in this chapter are original spreadsheet-style teaching extracts. They show the data and decisions you should be able to inspect in any suitable application; they are not a software tutorial or a supplied workbook.