

Answer your readers' biggest questions: focus on "Insights" not "Observations"

Too often, when readers look for Insights, they get Observations instead.

True Insights demonstrate the value of information by telling the reader what the information means. The ideal Insight is clear, relevant to the audience, and actionable. It reveals the Whys supporting the Observation and provides the analysis needed for effective follow up actions.

Observations are still important, because they are the building blocks for Insights. They are not a substitute for Insights.

Comparison of *Observations* and *Insights*

Observations	Insights
Answer the " <i>What happened?</i> " question	Answer the " <i>Why did it happen?</i> " and " <i>What can we do about it?</i> " questions
Represent little added value provided by the writer: an observation is clear to most people looking at the data	Demonstrate significant added value provided by the writer: not everyone could figure this out
Reflect the writer's knowledge, often resembling data dumps	Reflect the writer's understanding or wisdom, resulting from the writer's intellect or experience

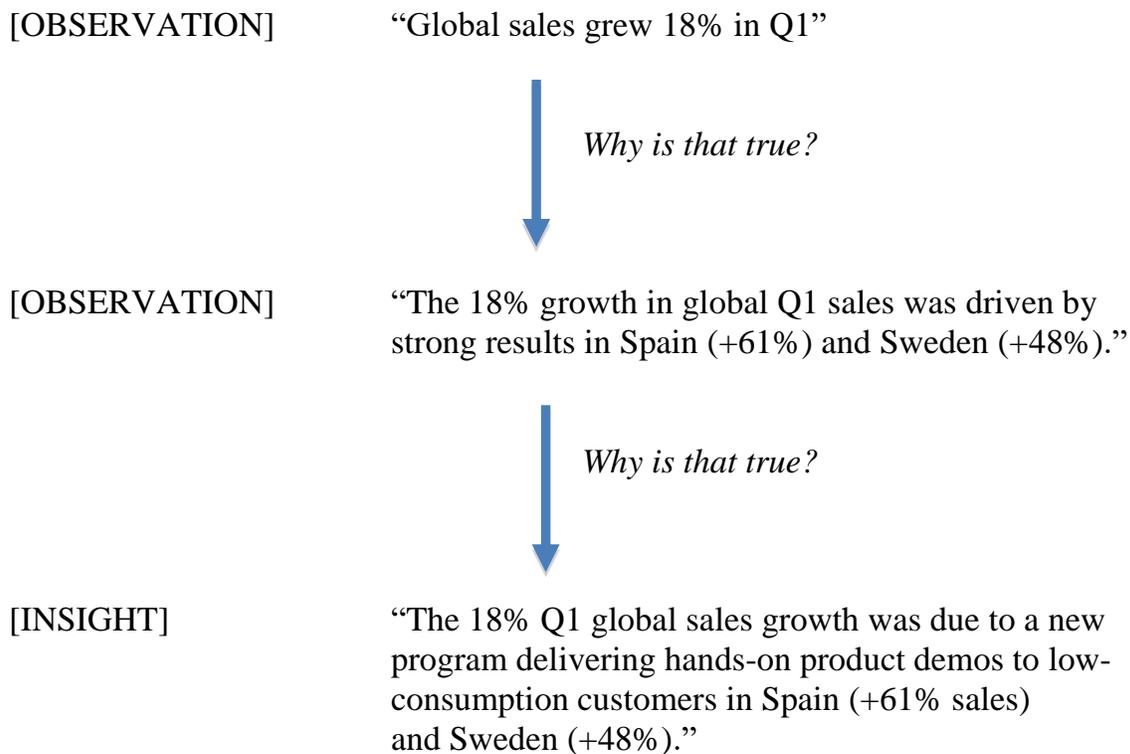
Converting Observations into Insights

Fortunately, converting Observations into Insights is sometimes easy. We simply need to answer one key question about the Observation:

Why is that true?

If our answer is still looks like an Observation, we just answer the question again about the restated Observation. Keep doing this until you get an answer that looks like an Insight, ideally an actionable one.

Example:



Special note: While this process can help uncover Insights, recognize that not every important Observation leads to an Insight. Sometimes the answer to “*Why is that true?*” is “*We really don’t know.*”