

Planning a Chart

Before creating a chart, it is important to plan the information that the chart is to show and how it is to look. Use the following guidelines when planning a chart.

- ★ Determine the purpose of the chart.
- ★ Identify the data relationships that are to be communicated visually.
- ★ Determine the results that are to be seen.
- ★ Decide which chart type is most appropriate to use.
- ★ Identify the worksheet data that the chart is to illustrate.
- ★ Sketch the chart and then use the sketch to decide where the chart elements should be placed.

Choosing the Right Type of Chart

When creating a chart in Excel, it is possible to choose from a variety of chart types. Each type interprets data in a different way. For example, a pie chart is great for comparing parts of a whole. A column chart is better for showing how different sales regions performed throughout a year. Each chart type is best suited for conveying a different type of information. When creating a chart, learn to think like the audience who will be viewing it. When viewing a new chart, imagine that it is being seen for the first time. Think about what could be done to improve the looks of the chart.

When a chart is generated, it is important to evaluate whether the chart type suits the data being plotted. It is also important to consider whether the formatting choices clarify or overshadow the information. The table below describes the different chart types.

Chart Types















Chart Type		Description
Column		This chart type is used to compare items that emphasize change over time. The values are charted in a vertical format. This is the Excel default chart format. This chart is sometimes referred to as a bar chart in other spreadsheet programs.
Bar		This chart type is similar to a Column chart, but the values are plotted horizontally rather than vertically. The horizontal plotting puts more emphasis on comparison, rather than time. In other words, this type compares distinct objects over time using a horizontal format. Subtypes of this chart include a stacked bar chart (values are stacked on each other), 3D, and 100% stacked (the percentage of each value is stacked). This chart is sometimes referred to as a rotated bar chart in other spreadsheet programs.
Line		This chart type is used to show trends or emphasize change over time.
Pie		This chart type compares sizes of pieces as part of a whole. It is only possible to chart one data series in a pie chart. It can have slices pulled away from the pie, which is known as “exploding”.
XY Scatter		This chart type compares trends over uneven time or measurement intervals. This type of chart is used in scientific and engineering disciplines for trend spotting and extrapolation.
Area		This chart is used to show change in volume or magnitude over time. This chart type is similar to a line chart, but an area chart emphasizes the amount of change.

Chart Type	Description
Doughnut	 This chart is similar to a pie chart. It shows the relationship of the parts to the whole. In this type of chart, it is possible to chart more than one data series.
Radar	 This chart is used to show changes relative to a center point. The plotting shows which data series covers the most area.
Surface	 This chart type is useful for finding relationships that may otherwise be difficult to see, such as the best combination between two sets of data.
Bubble	 This chart is a type of XY scatter chart. The difference is that the size of the data marker indicates the value.
Stock	 Often called a high-low-close chart, this chart is used for charting stock prices or scientific data.
Cylinder	 This is another style of column or bar chart, but a cylinder is used to plot the data series.
Cone	 This is another style of a column or bar chart, but a cone is used to plot the data series.
Pyramid	 This is another style of a column or bar chart that uses a pyramid to plot the data series.