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 and subtypes. 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 that are available in Microsoft Excel 2007.

Chart Types

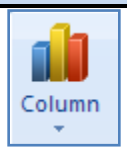
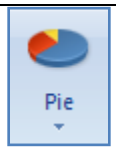
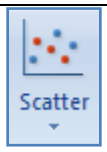
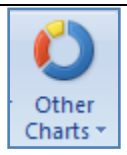
Chart Type		Description
Column		This type of chart is useful for showing data changes over a period of time. It is also useful for illustrating comparisons among items. Data that is arranged in columns or rows on a worksheet can be plotted in a column chart. Categories are typically organized along the horizontal axis and values along the vertical axis.
Line		This type of chart is used to display continuous data over a period of time. It is useful for showing trends in data at equal intervals. Category data is distributed evenly along the horizontal axis and the vertical axis. Data that is arranged in columns and rows in a worksheet can be plotted.
Pie		Pie charts are used to compare the size of items to the whole. Items in this type of chart area are displayed as a percentage of the whole. Consider using this type of chart when you only have one data series to plot, almost none of the values being plotted are zero, none of the values are negative, there aren't more than seven categories, and the categories represent parts of the whole pie.

Chart Type		Description
Bar		These charts are used to illustrate comparisons among individual items. This type of chart should be used when the axis labels are long or when the values shown are durations. Data that is arranged in columns or rows in a worksheet can be plotted in a bar chart.
Area		Area charts are used to emphasize the magnitude of change over time. They can be used to draw attention to the total value across a trend. These charts can also be used to show the relationship of parts to a whole.
XY Scatter		This type of chart is used to show the relationships of numeric values in several data series. It is also used to plot two groups of numbers as one series of XY coordinates. These charts have two value axes, showing one set of numerical data along the horizontal axis and another along the vertical axis. Scatter charts are used to display and compare numeric values, such as scientific, statistical, and engineering data.
Other Charts		In addition, there are other chart types that may be used. These include stock charts, doughnut charts, radar charts, surface charts, and bubble charts. Click the other charts button for a gallery of these charts and their subtypes.

Each of the charts listed above has many different subtypes such as 3-D. For additional information about each of these charts, check out **Microsoft Office Excel Help** by clicking the **question mark** in the upper right side of the window (see illustration at right). In the search box, input **Chart Types** and then click the **Search** button.