

There are a variety chart types. The data analysis you want to perform determines the chart type you will use. Here are some general guide lines to help you choose the right chart.

Pie Chart Type

Pie charts display the contribution of each value to a total. This chart type emphasizes the relationship between the whole and each part of that whole.

Column/Bar Chart Type

Compare values across categories. This is the most commonly used chart. It's the best chart type to use if you need to compare values.

XY (Scatter) Chart Type

Scatter charts compares values of pairs. It is used to display two related sets of data on a chart, particularly if you want to make predictions based on the data. An example would be comparing total hardware assets with updated warranties and those same asserts with expired warranties.

Line Chart Type

Line charts displays trends over time or categories. For example if you wanted to chart the increase of sales for a particular sales force over a three year period, the line chart would be a good choice.

Area Chart Type

Area charts displays the trend of the contribution of each value over time or categories. With this chart it's very important to get the layering right. If you do it incorrectly, smaller sets of data will be obscured by the larger ones.

Doughnut

Doughnut charts displays the contribution of each value to a total but can contain multiple series.

Radar

Radar chart displays changes in values relative to a center point.

Surface

Surface charts shows trends in values across two dimensions in a continuous curve.



Phone: (651) 291-4540
Email: Mike@sptmn.com
Web: sptmn.com

Bubble

Bubble charts compares sets of three values.

Stock

Stock charts displays several series of data in a specific order, which includes open, high, low, close and volume.

Cylinder

Cylinder charts is a bar chart with a cylindrical shape.

Cone

Cone charts is a bar chart with a conical shape.

Once you understand the use of these basic chart types, deciding what chart to use in your next spreadsheet should be easier.

(ElementK and St. Paul Training, LLP 2005)

Bibliography

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Phone: (651) 291-4540
Email: Mike@sptmn.com
Web: sptmn.com