

## Excel #3: Creating Charts

Note, this process has improved with Office 2007.

The most important step is to select your data first. You can always change the data ranges or add more series later. It is particularly important with Office 2007.

Select the three columns for the sales data (Region, Sales, and Forecast), for all of the data rows. Include the headings, but do not include the separator line or totals.

Click the Chart icon .

Choose your chart type. Note that many useful options are hidden in the Custom types tab.

This step is actually one of the most critical. You can change the chart type later, but you need to understand the primary purpose of the chart and choose the appropriate type to convey the desired information.

In this case, choose the Column type.

Click the Next button to see the Source Data.

In this case, with text labels, the series data works well.

Click the Next button.

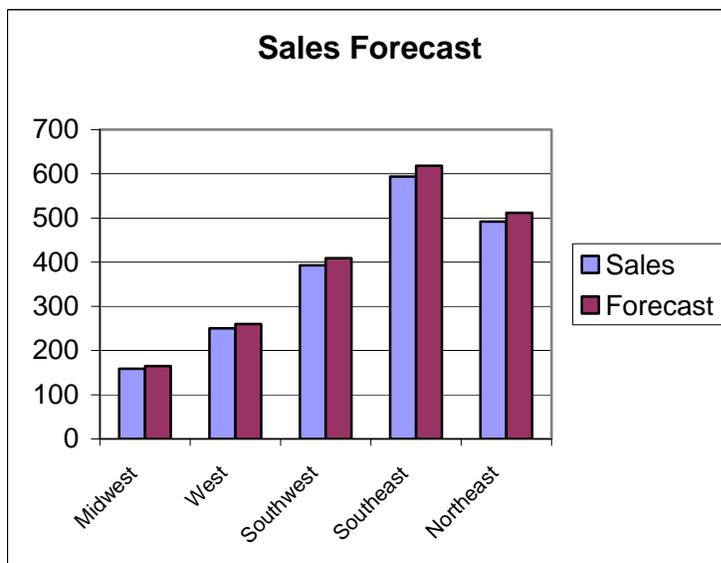
Fill in the options—particularly the title.

Click the Next and Finish buttons to place the chart in the worksheet.

Clean up the chart—especially, remove the gray background—it does not print well.

Double-click or right-click various items to set their properties.

For example, reduce the fonts to make the axis values fit better.



The data in this example usually work well—because the headings and the labels are text. If you have numeric values for the x-axis or for the headings (such as the year), Excel 2003 generally handles it wrong and creates an additional series.

Create a new worksheet.

Enter data for a store that sells soft goods (clothing), hard goods, and movies.

Year	Soft Goods	Hard Good	Movies
2001	345	561	151
2002	431	627	255
2003	572	782	390
2004	634	833	488
2005	701	933	601
2006	753	960	657

Select the data for the entire table.

Click the Chart icon to create a new chart.

Select the Column chart and the Stacked Column sub-type.

Click the Next button to see the Source Data.

There is an error that could be fixed at this stage. However, it is sometimes difficult to see and you might finish the Chart wizard before spotting the error.

So, click the Finish button and let the wizard create the chart.

What is the major error?

Answer: The Year column was treated as another data series and the year values were added to the sales data. It should be handled as entries for the x-axis.

Right-click the margins of the chart object and choose the Source Data option.

(If you do not see that option, click somewhere on the chart where there are no other objects.)

Click the Series tab to see the list of Series and their ranges.

Select the Year entry in the Series list.

Use the mouse to select the range listed in the Values box.

Press Ctrl+C to copy that range.

Click the Remove button to take Year out of the Series list.

Place the cursor in the box for the Category (X) axis labels box.

Press Ctrl+V to paste the range you copied from the year column.

Alternatively, click the selection box next to the x-axis entry box.

Select the Year values on the spreadsheet, without the Year heading and press

Enter.

Click OK to close the Source Data window.

Right-click the chart and choose the Chart Options entry.

Select the Titles tab and enter a title for the chart.

Format the various objects to improve the appearance.