

## PLAN A CHART

### Plan 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.

### Choose 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 and 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.

### Chart Types

Chart Type	Description
<b>Column</b>	 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.
<b>Line</b>	 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.
<b>Pie or Doughnut</b>	 These chart types are used to display the contribution of each item to the total. Data for the chart can be selected either before or after the chart is created.
<b>Bar</b>	 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.

Chart Type	Description
<b>Area</b> 	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.
<b>Scatter (XY) or Bubble Chart</b> 	These chart types are used to compare pairs of values. To insert these two chart types, click this button. Data for the chart can be selected either before or after the chart is created.
<b>Stock, Surface, or Radar</b> 	This button is used to view a gallery of different types of stock, surface, or radar charts.
<b>Combo Chart</b> 	This chart type is used to highlight different types of information. It can be used when range of data in the chart varies widely or when a wide range of mixed data is used.

**NOTE:** Each of the charts listed above has many different subtypes such as 3-D. For additional information about each of these charts, input Excel Chart Type in the **Tell me what you want to do** box on the **Excel Window**. A list of options will display. Select the **Get Help on Excel Chart Type** option, to bring up a list of **Chart Type** options.

