

Make Your Numbers Count

Killer Charts in Three Easy Steps



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 **SmartDraw**[®]
Communicate Visually[®]

Making Numbers Come to Life

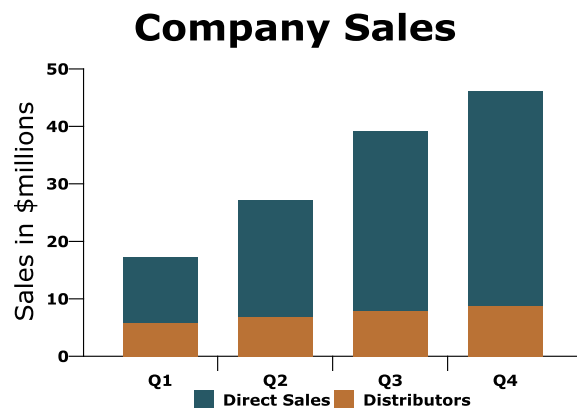
Data! The business world is awash in it: sales figures, cost breakdowns, financial reports, and so on. It's the information we must communicate most often. So it makes sense to communicate it in the most effective way possible: with a chart.

We use charts because presenting numbers visually increases comprehension. Nothing communicates as immediately and powerfully as a visual. In fact, studies show that communicating with visuals is up to **six times** more effective than with words alone.

Let's look at the same data, side-by-side, comparing a traditional table to a chart. At only a quick glance, the chart makes it easy to see that the growth in sales is driven by the direct sales channel. The table is nothing more than a matrix of data.

	Q1	Q2	Q3	Q4
Distributors	6	7	8	9
Direct Sales	11	20	31	37

Smillions



Almost everyone would agree that the chart is clearly the better tool for communicating these data. Unfortunately, most would also agree that creating good charts can be a difficult, time-consuming task. This was once true, but not anymore. That has changed, thanks to SmartDraw.

Killer Charts in Three Easy Steps

This white paper will show you how to use charts to communicate data effectively, so that your audience is both engaged and comprehends your message, in three easy steps:

1. Choosing the right chart
2. Presenting charts one step at a time
3. Quickly creating graphs that are both simple and visually appealing

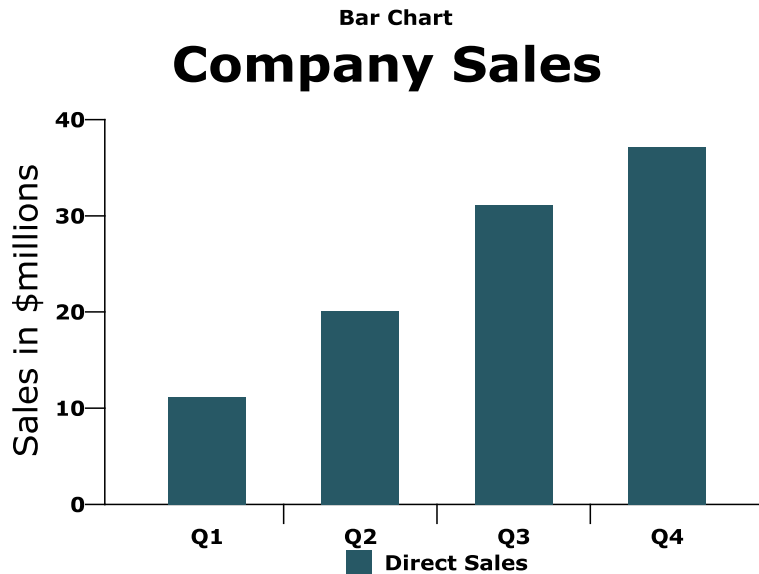
Follow these steps and you'll create killer charts that will both inform and *impress* your audience.

Choosing the Right Chart

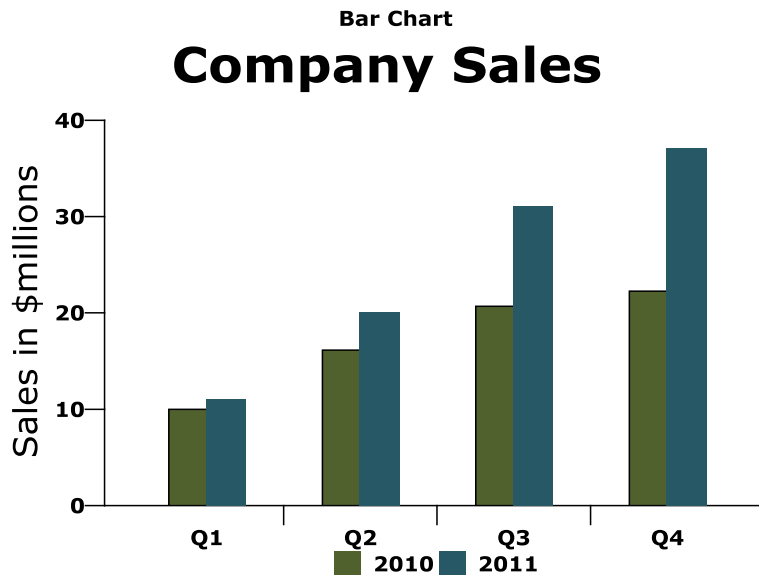
The first step in creating a killer chart is to select the right one.

Bar Charts

The bar chart (or column chart) is perfect for showing a set of data having very few categories. This example shows sales by quarter.

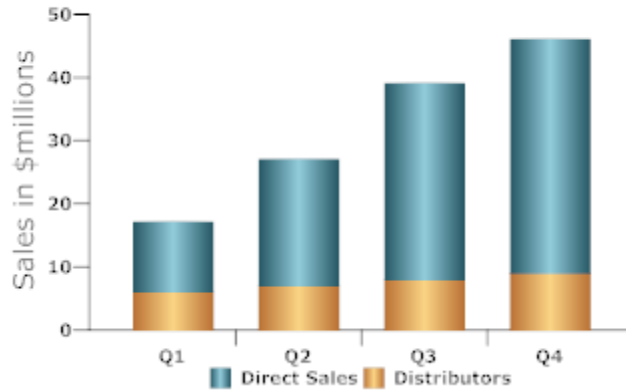


You can also use a bar chart to compare multiple series of data, but not more than two or three or the chart becomes difficult to follow. Here, we compare quarterly sales for two years.



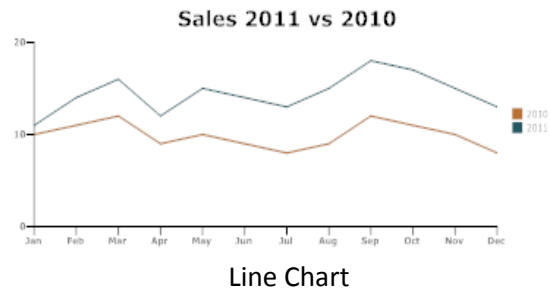
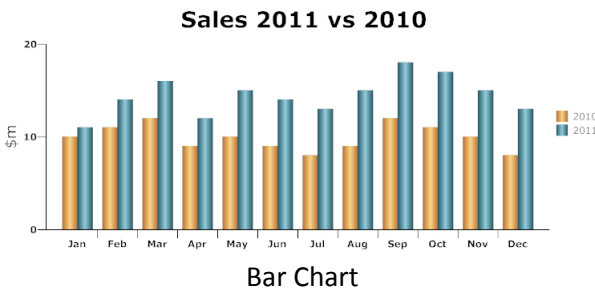
In a stacked bar chart the height of each bar shows the sum of multiple data series. The contribution from each series is represented by a segment with a different color. Each bar is like a “pie chart” showing the proportions contributing to the whole. Stacked bar charts work best with no more than four data sets.

Company Sales



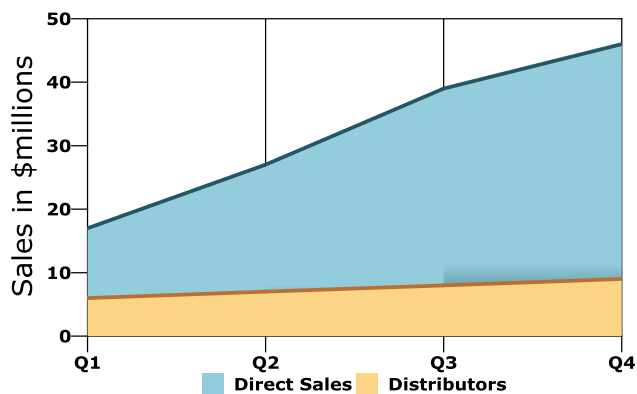
Line Charts

When you have many data points, line charts are more effective than bar charts because the line allows your eyes to more easily follow the trend. The bar chart and line chart below visually display the same set of data, but the trend is easier to see in the line chart.



The stacked area chart is the line-chart equivalent of a stacked bar chart. Each colored area shows the contribution of a series to the total. Again, it is easy to see not only the upward trend in sales, but that virtually all of the gain is attributable to the direct sales component.

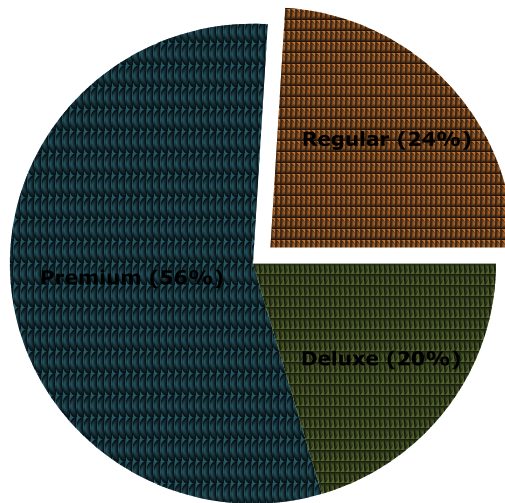
Company Sales



Pie Charts

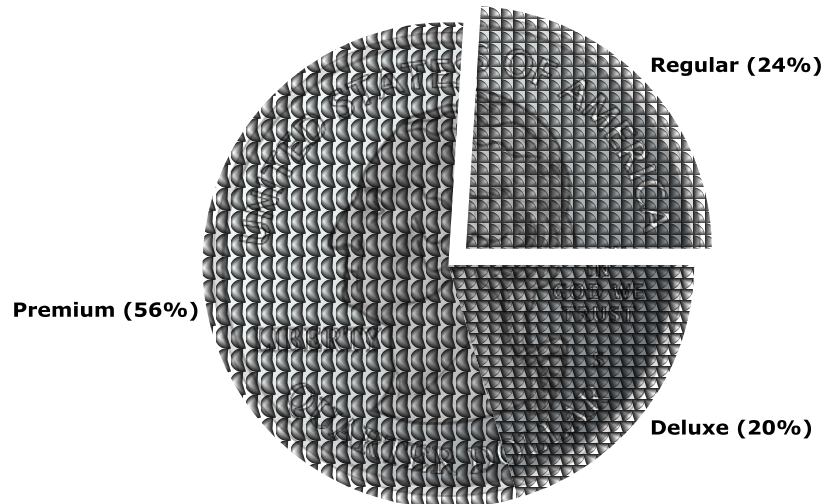
Pie charts are used to show the fraction of a total amount that can be attributed to each category. Only one series is plotted.

Revenue by Product Type



Pie charts can be made more interesting by replacing a simple circle with one filled with an image:

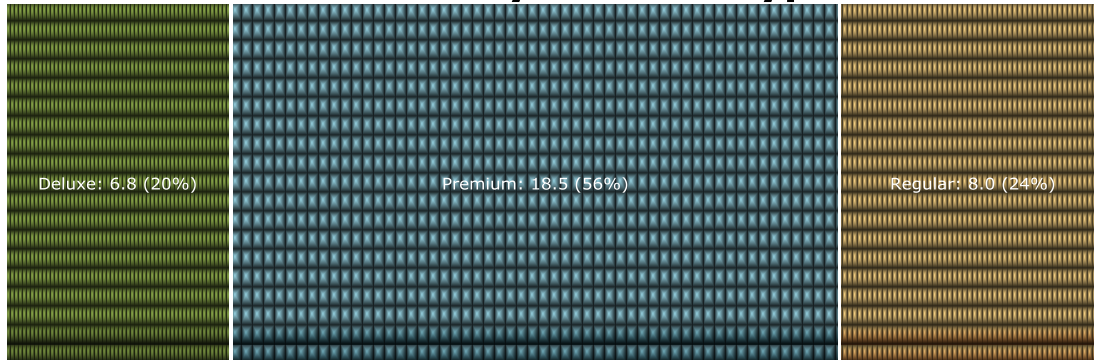
Revenue by Product Type



Relative Value Charts

A relative value chart is like a pie chart but it divides a rectangle instead of dividing a circle.

Revenue by Product Type



Relative value charts can be filled with images too:



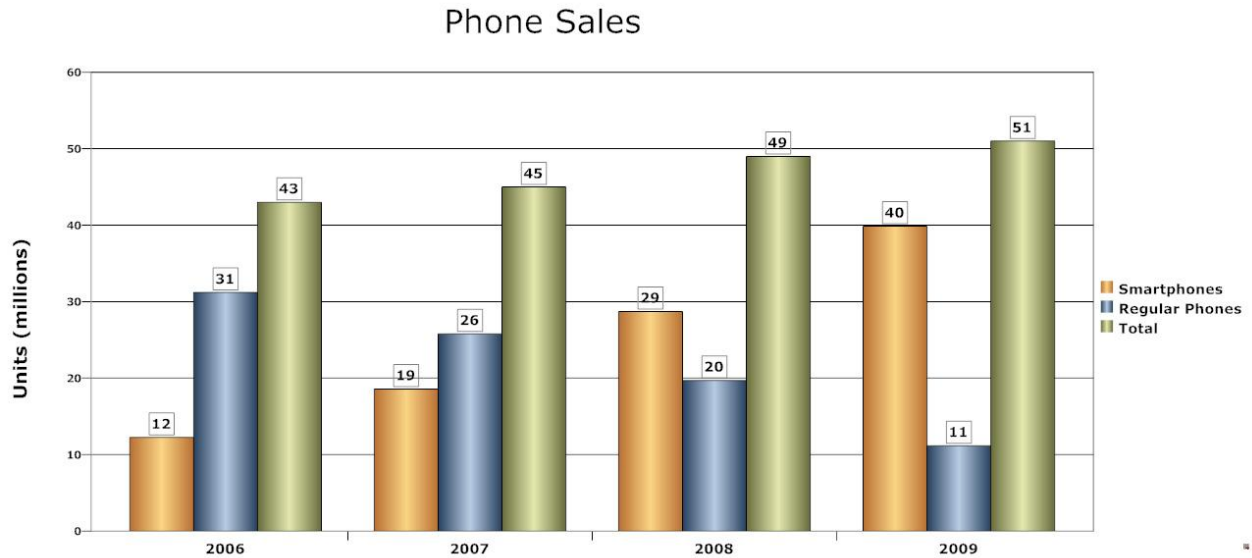
Presenting Charts One Step at a Time

Charts are particularly useful in communicating data in a presentation. The additional control that presentation programs like PowerPoint® offer makes it possible for you reveal your chart in a series of steps, rather than all at once. This is by far the most effective way to present data.

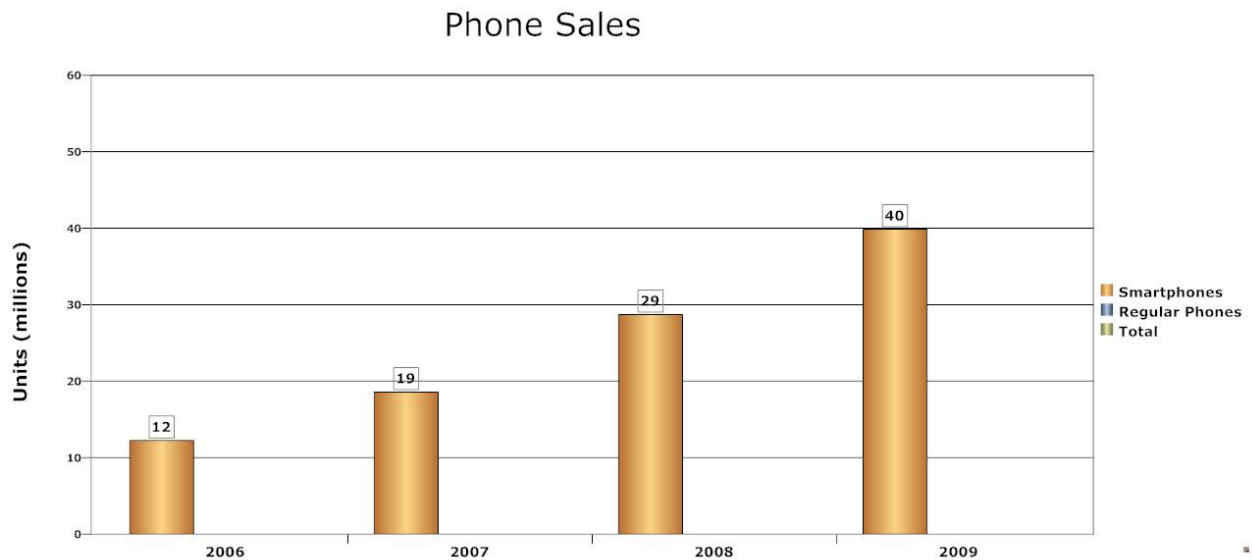
As presentation expert Rick Altman explains in his excellent book, *Why Most PowerPoint® Presentations Suck and How to Make them Better*, showing a visual to your audience all at once can be overwhelming. They will be too busy trying to absorb all the information to focus on the specific point you are trying to make. Rick calls this “drinking from the fire hose.” Instead, it’s better to reveal the visual in a series of steps. Rick calls this “sequencing.”

Let’s look at an example of sequencing.

The following graph shows a lot of data at once. We've just turned the fire hose on our audience and asked them to start drinking!

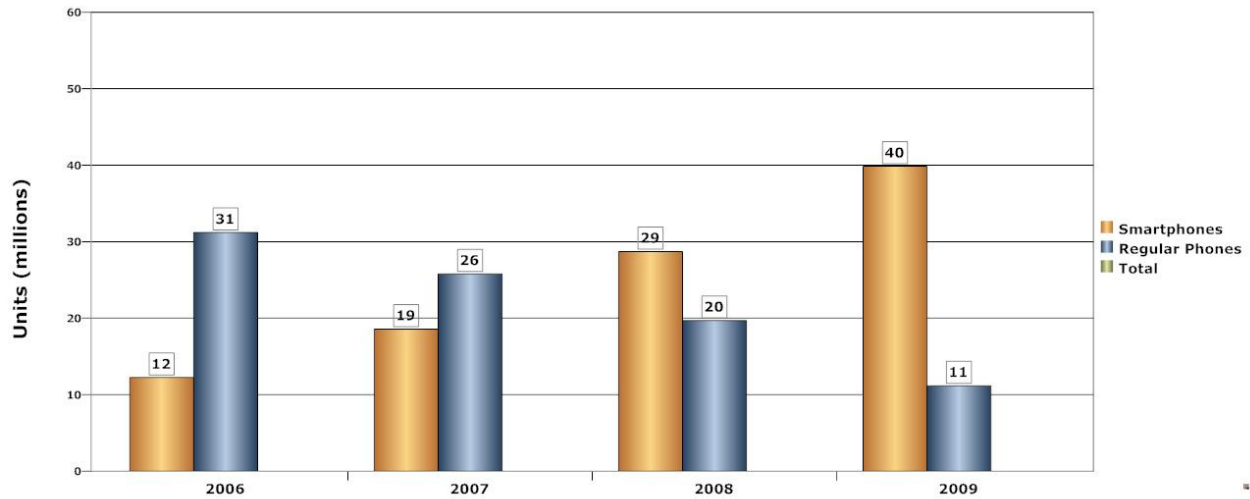


Okay, let's take it a step at a time. Here's how we can present the same information, along with commentary along the way, using sequencing. You will quickly see how much easier it is to absorb the data.



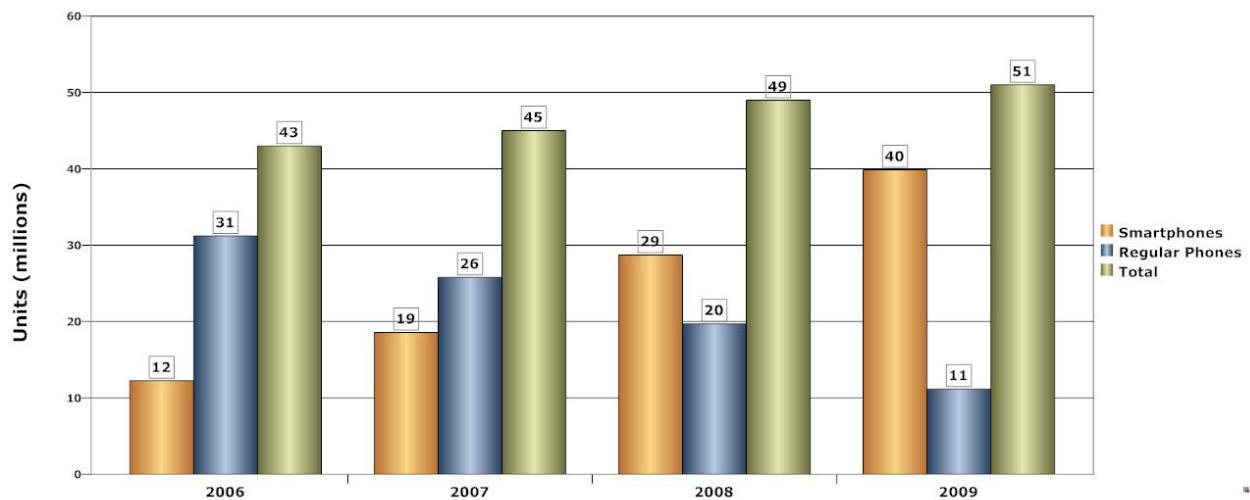
"We have seen a steady growth of smart phone sales over the past four years."

Phone Sales



“But it’s important to note that sales of traditional phones have fallen off just as quickly.”

Phone Sales



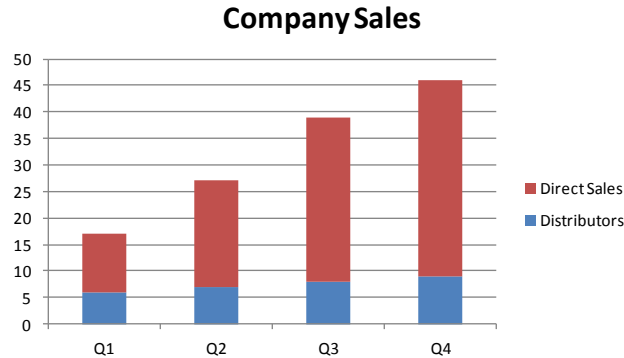
“We see clearly that total sales of all phones have actually grown quite slowly during this period. Smart phone sales have largely replaced regular phone sales.”

Taking the information in steps, your audience can follow the presentation with much greater comprehension than by trying to digest the entire graph at once. Sequencing makes the presentation of this graph more informative, more understandable, and more interesting.

Best of all, you don’t need special expertise... SmartDraw will let you sequence your chart automatically!

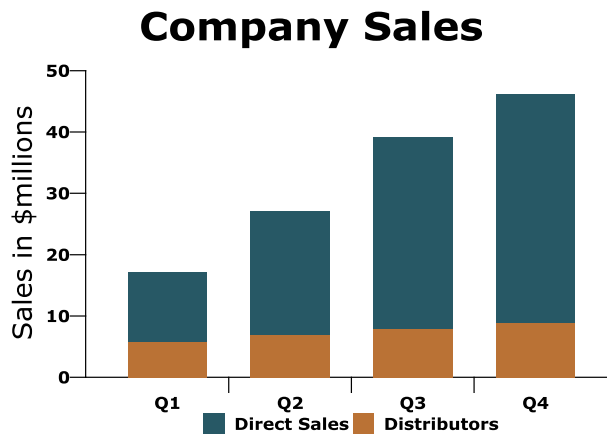
Creating Charts that are both Simple and Visually Appealing

If you use Excel® to create your chart you'll get the same, boring flat look that everyone else gets:



Excel Chart

However, if you use SmartDraw you'll create much more visually appealing charts that stand out from the crowd.



SmartDraw Chart

It is also easier to create a chart with SmartDraw than Excel® because you can directly edit anything on the chart. That's right... the axes, labels, bars, segments and data points... *everything!* No other software makes creating a chart this easy. Furthermore, SmartDraw you can transfer a SmartDraw chart to PowerPoint® with one click. Plus, it is automatically sequenced and ready for presentation!

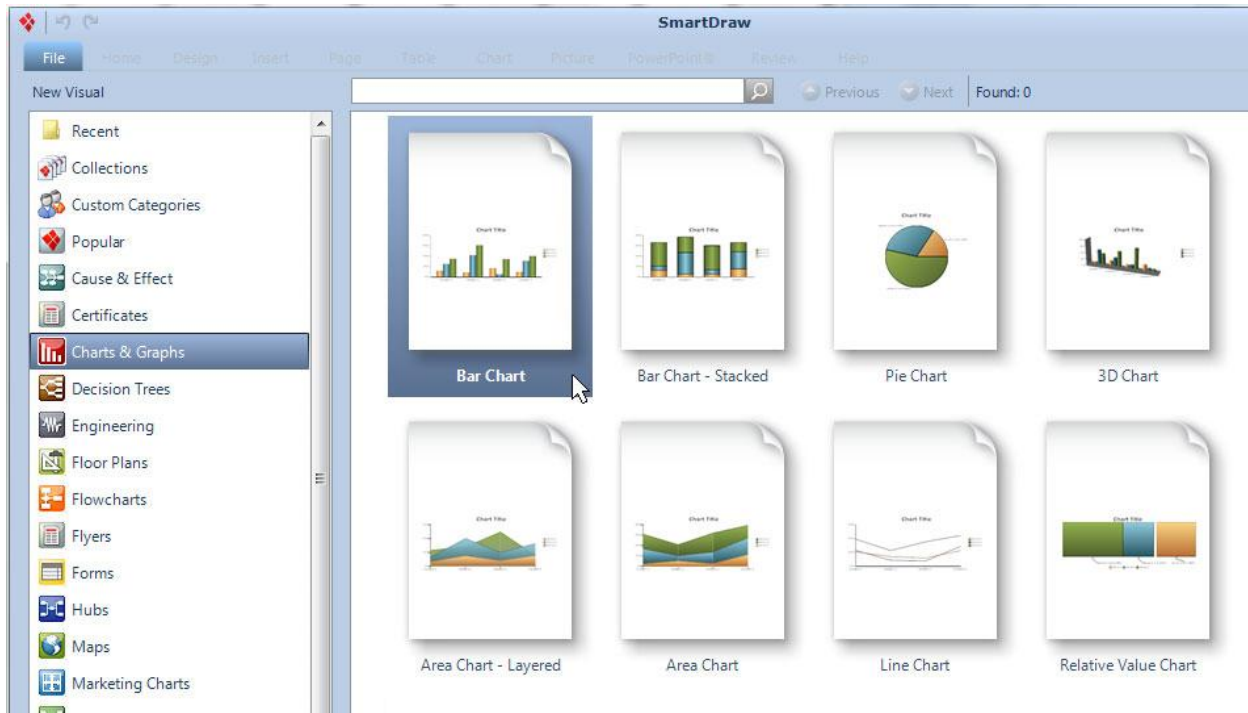
Five Ways SmartDraw Makes It Easy

SmartDraw makes it really easy to make visually appealing charts:

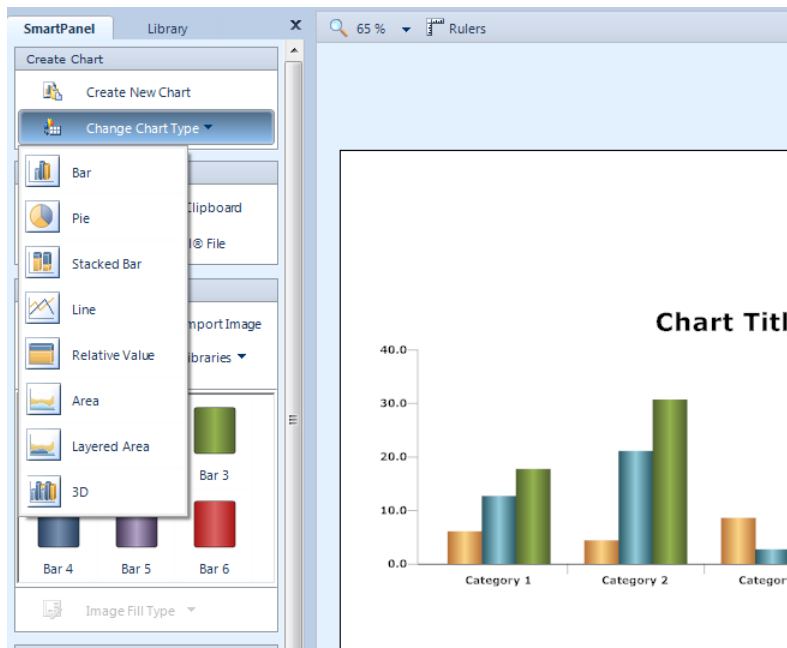
- Choosing the right chart
- Entering data
- Direct editing
- Making image charts
- Automatic sequencing

Choosing the Right Chart with the Right Design

You can pick any format to begin with by opening one of the chart templates.

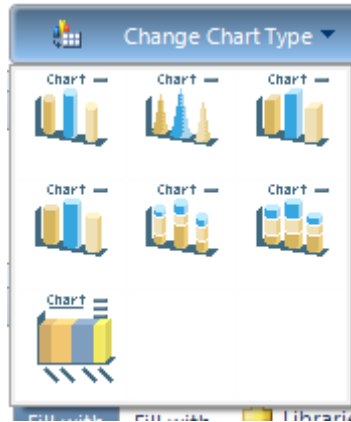


You can also change your mind once the template is open:



You can always flip between any of the chart formats.

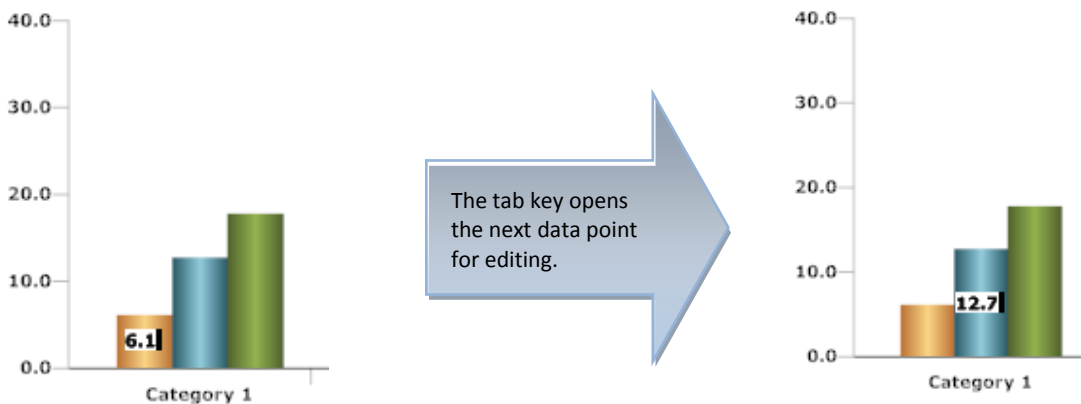
No matter which type of chart you choose the design will be automatically presentation quality. You can also choose different professional-quality layouts for each type from a gallery.



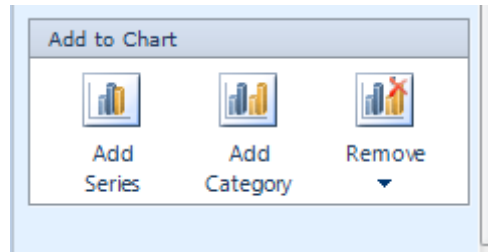
Entering Data

Unlike Excel®, with SmartDraw you don't have to create a data table before you can generate a chart. You can actually type values directly into the bars, segments or data points.

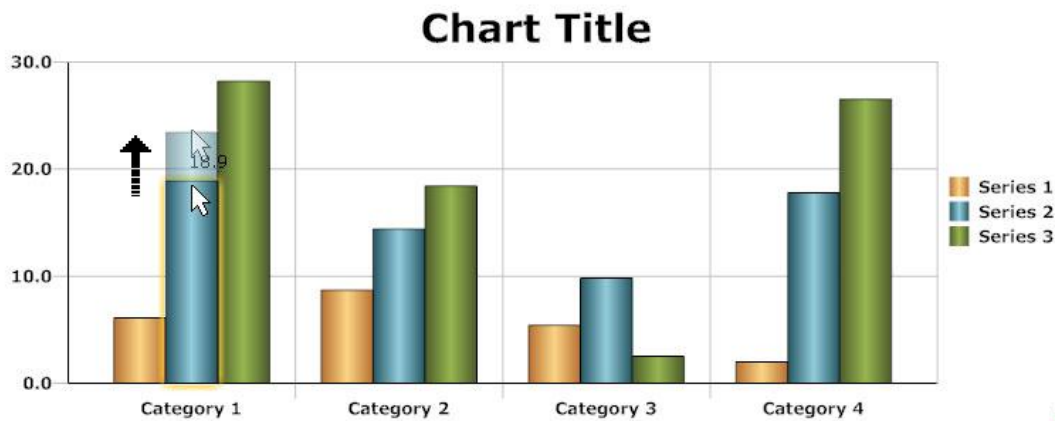
Clicking on a bar (or any other data point) displays its value in an edit field. You can type a new value directly into the field and the value for the data point will be changed to match it.



You can enter a range of values directly into the data points without taking your hand off the keyboard. This is a very convenient way of creating a chart when your data is not already in Excel® or some other tabular format. It's also a convenient way to update a value without re-importing the whole data set. Buttons to the left of the chart allow you to add and remove categories and series:



You can also change the value of a data point by simply dragging on the data point with the mouse.



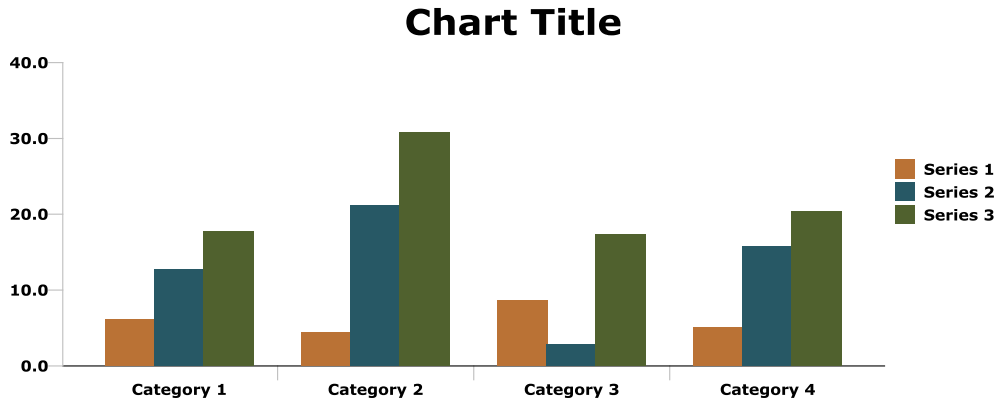
This is very useful if you are trying to show a concept in a chart without specific data.

If you already have a table of data, you can apply it to your chart by simply pasting it into the chart. The bars or points of the chart adopt the values in the table. The columns of the table become categories, and the row become series. If the first row contains text labels, these become the category labels. If the first column contains text labels, these become the names of the series.

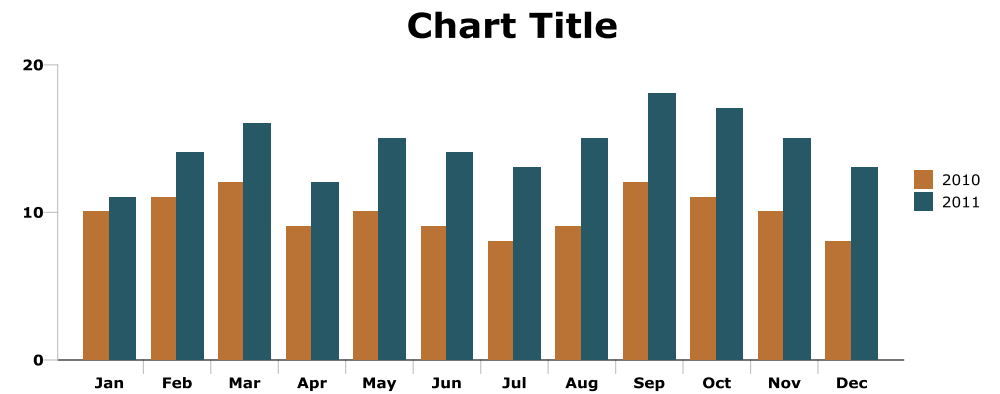
Pasting this table...

	Jan	Feb	Mar	Apr	May	Jun	Jul	Aug	Sep	Oct	Nov	Dec
2010	10	11	12	9	10	9	8	9	12	11	10	8
2011	11	14	16	12	15	14	13	15	18	17	15	13

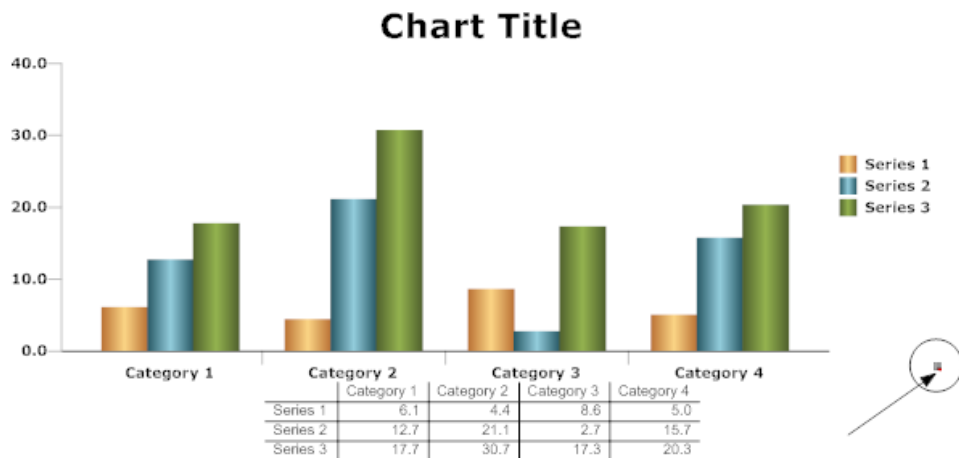
into this chart format...



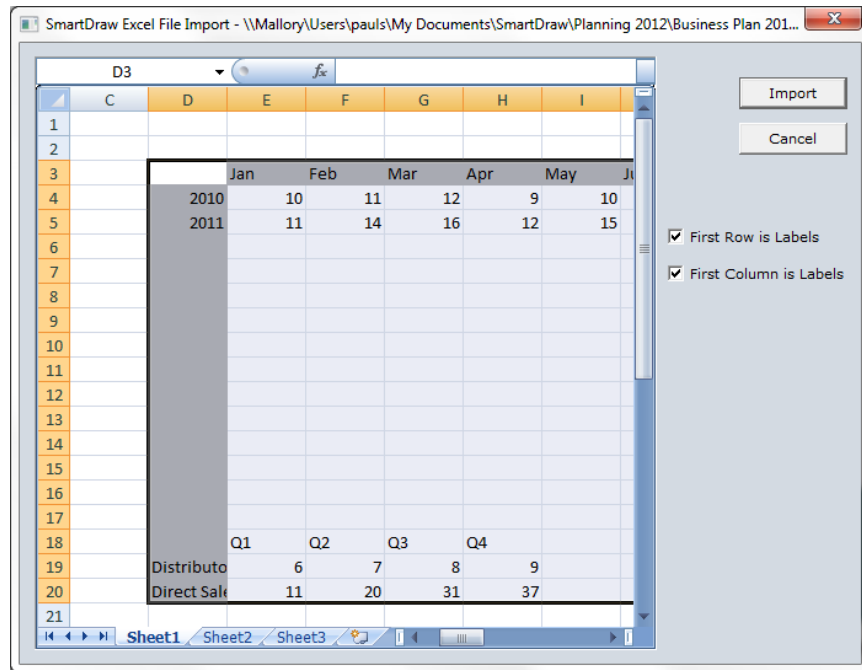
leads to... *this* chart:



You can also update the data in the same chart by re-pasting the updated data table. You can also view and edit the data in the chart directly by clicking on the "+" symbol at the bottom of the chart.

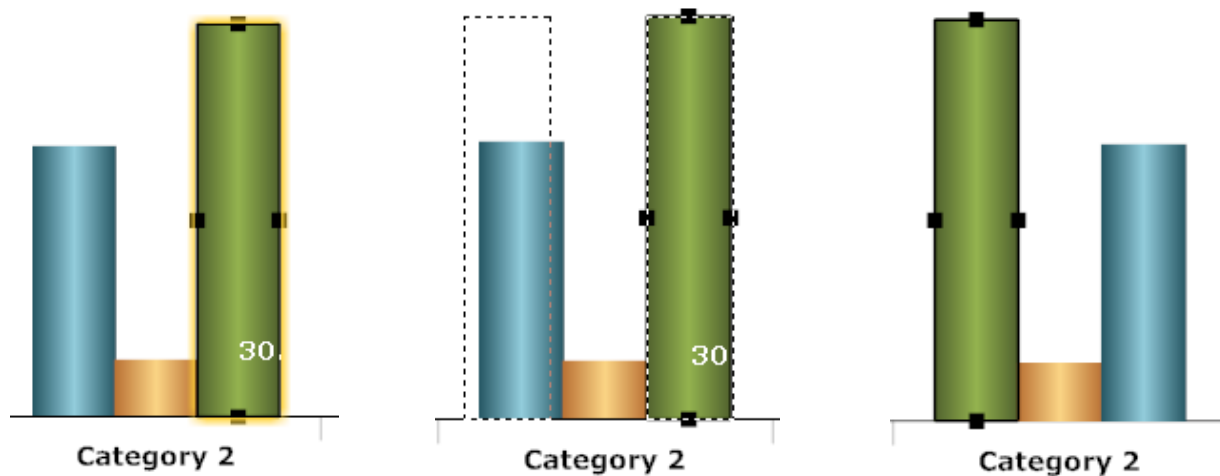


If your data table is in Excel® and you don't want to copy it into SmartDraw, you can also import it with a special wizard designed for this task.



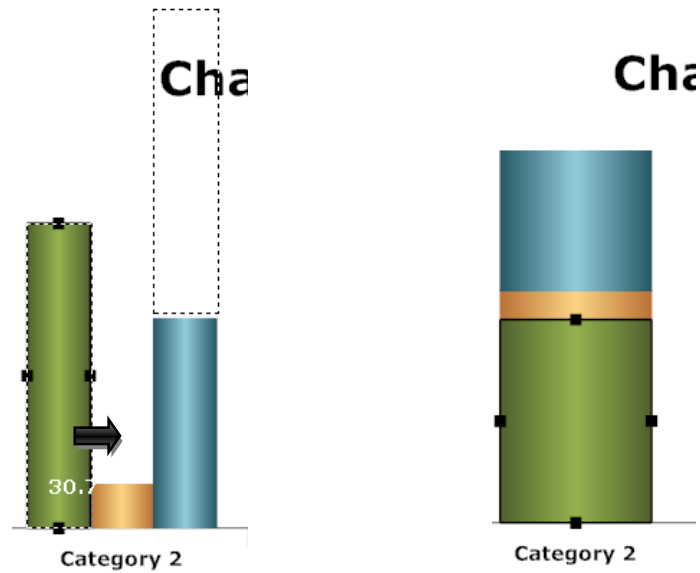
Direct Editing

SmartDraw lets you directly edit elements of a chart. For example, in a bar chart dragging a bar to the left changes the order of the series in a bar chart.

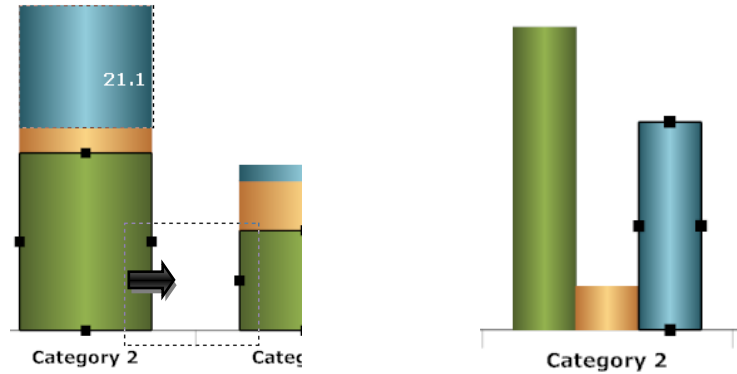


Clicking on the green bar above and dragging it to the left has rearranged the chart.

Dragging one bar on top of another creates a stacked bar chart, as shown here:

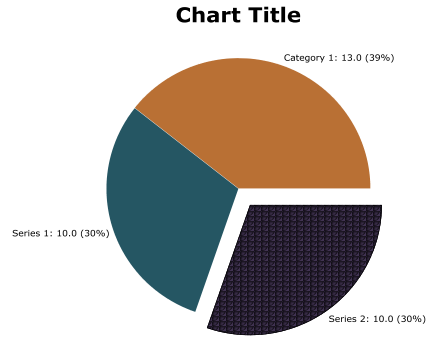
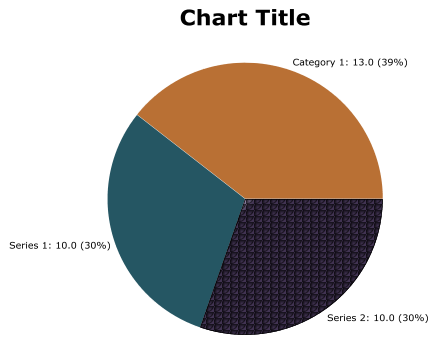


Dragging a segment down to the axis returns the chart to a side-by-side format.



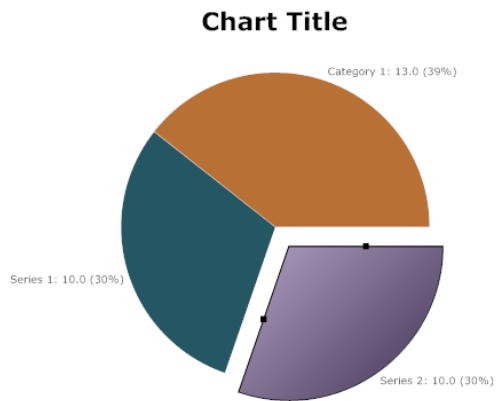
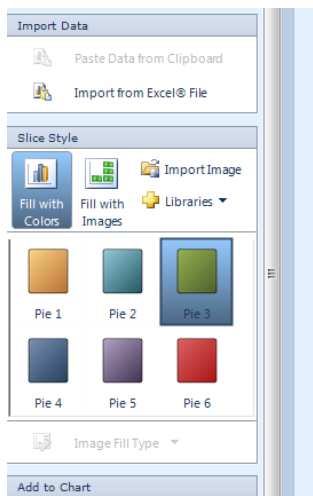
Try doing that in Excel®! (No, don't waste your time – it won't work.)

You can also change the order of segments in a pie chart by dragging them to a new position, and move them in and out of the circle:

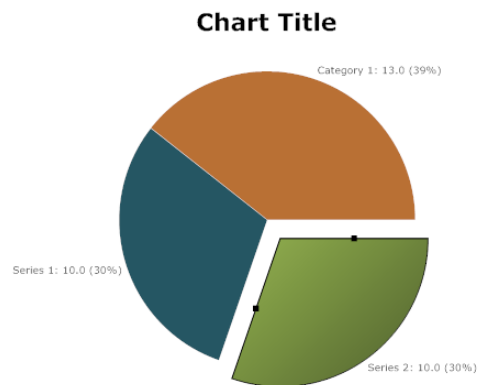
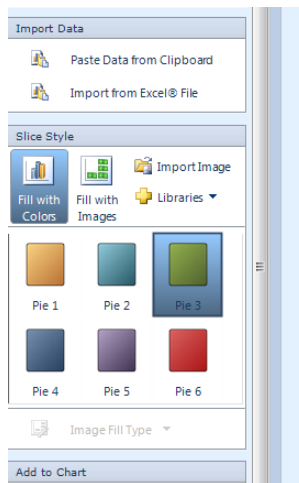


You can change the color of an element by clicking on it to select it and then choosing a new color from any of the color controls.

Change from this...



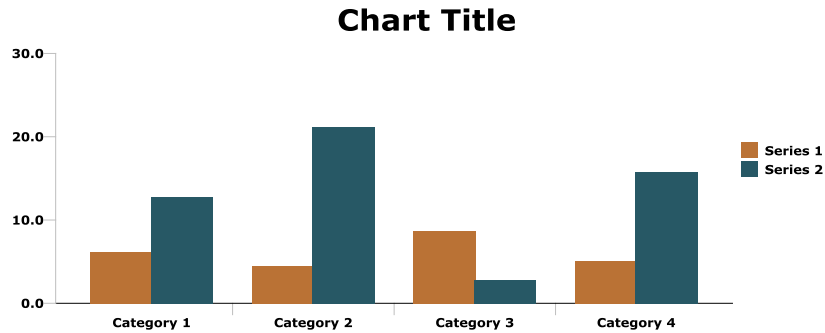
To this!



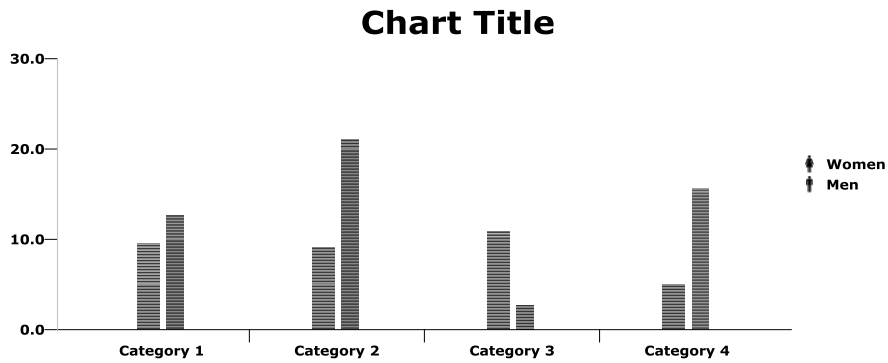
Making Image Charts

With SmartDraw you can fill bars, pie segments and other data points with symbols.

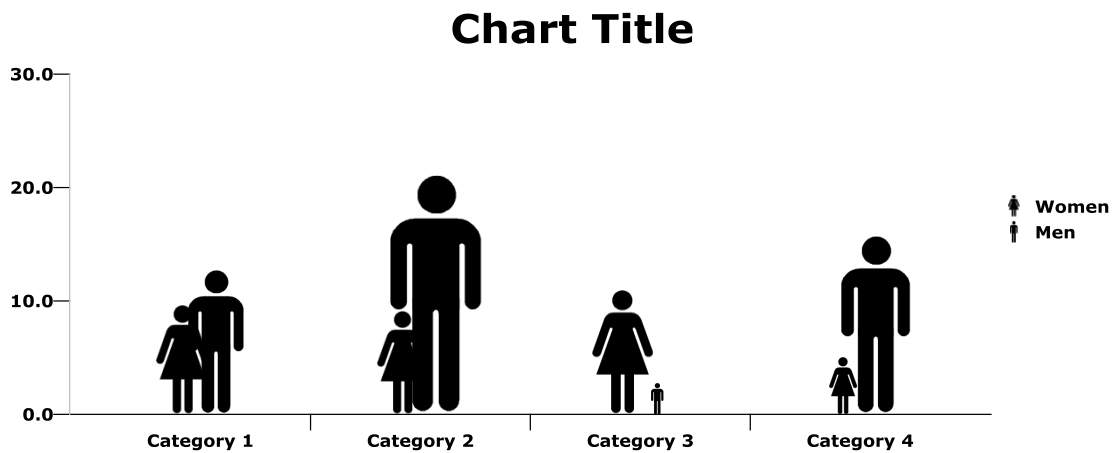
This simple bar chart...



Becomes this...

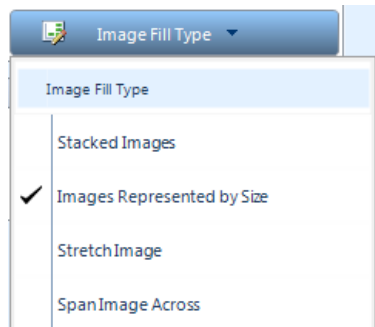


Or, for even more impact, this:

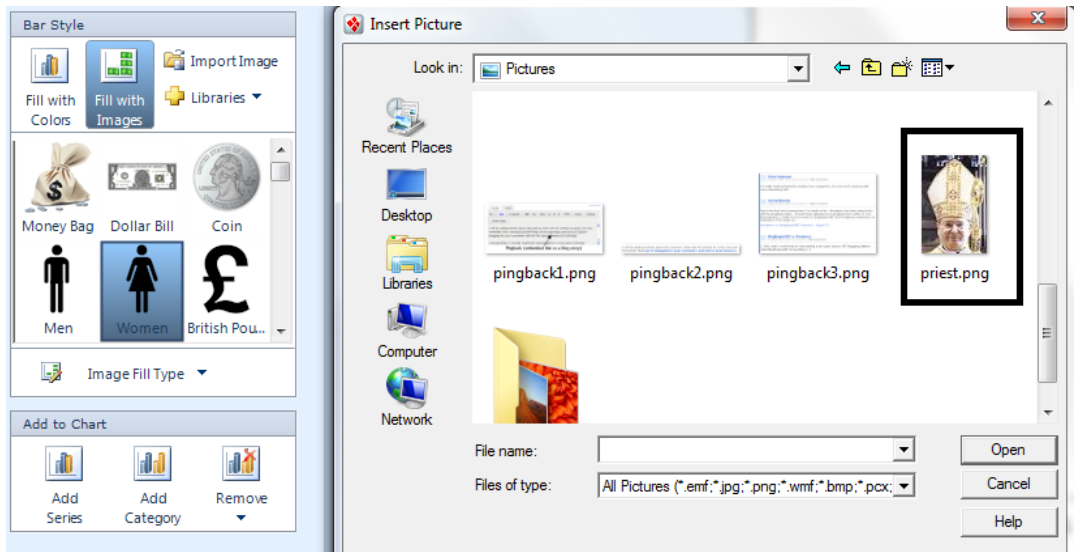


To fill a bar, or data point, of a chart select the series by clicking on a data point, and select the “Fill with Images” button. Then click on the image you want.

The “Image Fill Type” controls the way the image represents the values.

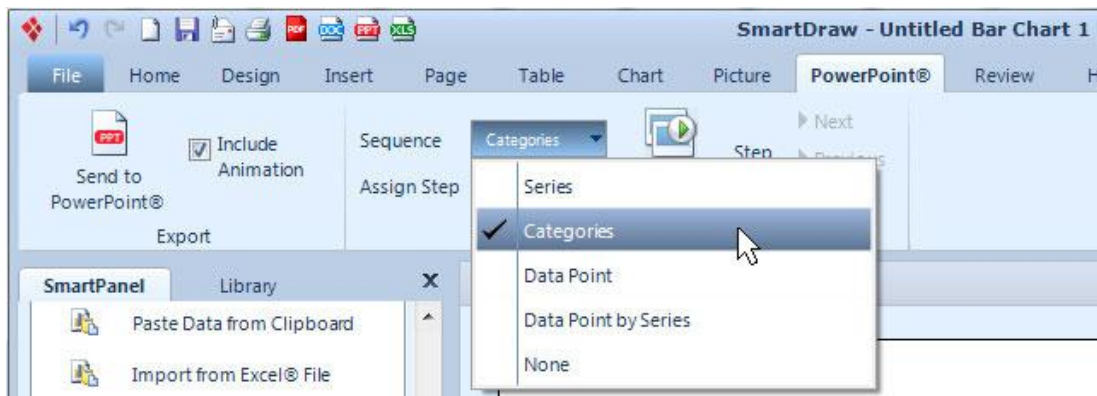


You can also import your own custom image.



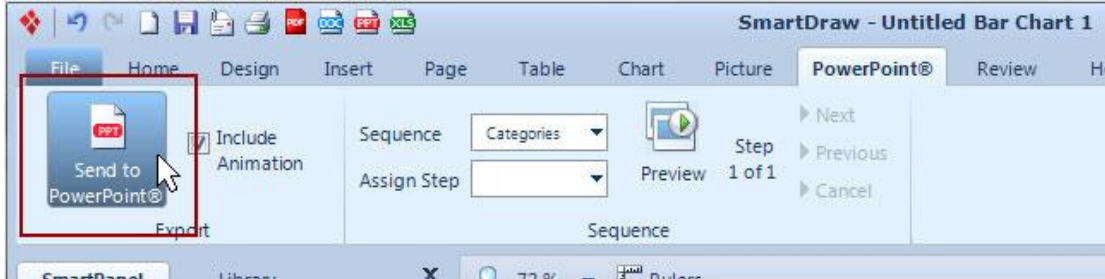
Automatic Sequencing

SmartDraw sequences all graphs automatically. You simply select the preset order that works best for your presentation:



You can easily assign custom sequencing to any SmartDraw visual using the intuitive controls:

A SmartDraw chart can be inserted into an existing PowerPoint® presentation as a new slide with a single click, with all the sequencing information included:



Conclusion



The secret to killer charts is:




- Choosing the right chart
- Presenting charts one step at a time
- Quickly creating graphs that are both simple and visually appealing

SmartDraw makes it simple to do all three. It makes charts that stand out from the boring flat examples generated by Excel® with quick and easy editing tools Excel® doesn't offer.

Impress your boss, and your audience, with killer charts made with SmartDraw.

[Buy and save \\$100 for a limited time.](#)

 Download a copy of SmartDraw for free by <u>clicking here.</u>	 To watch a video showing how easy it is to create charts with SmartDraw, <u>click here.</u>	 If you prefer to contact one of our product specialists, <u>click here</u> or call us at 800-817-4271
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