**Journey to strengthen data consolidation and linking capabilities in Excel**

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| For Basic to Advanced levels (L1 to L3), I primarily divide the essential **formulas for consolidating and connecting data in three categories:** | | |
|  | **Cluster 1** | * Foundation of Whys and Hows, common errors, inter-sheet and inter-workbook lookups * When to use VLOOKUP with approx. match (slabs) vs. exact match * Using VLOOKUP with MATCH for 2-D lookup * VLOOKUP vs. HLOOKUP vs. INDEX * Using INDEX with 2 MATCH for reverse lookup * Fuzzy Lookup - What if the lookup name spellings are not same. Others – INDIRECT, OFFSET. |
| **Cluster 2** | * Multi-criteria SUMIFS & COUNTIFS for building Dashboards * Adding dynamic operators such as >=, <= etc. for dates & nos. * Hidden trick to calculate ID-based running total & count |
| **Cluster 3** | * How to avoid Complex nested IF statements * Why 2-D lookup & Slabs-based VLOOKUP is better than nested IFs in some cases |
| Aim – The user should be able to judge which cluster to use & what combination of formulas to apply. | | |

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| **Other supporting features and techniques:** | |
|  | * Navigation, Selection |
| * Basics, EDATE, EOMONTH, TEXT |
| * FlashFill\*, Text to Columns, Functions, Advanced Find & Replace |
| * Go To Special, Horizontal Sort, Shortcuts |
| * Dates Grouping, Slicer, Sparklines, Heat Map, Hidden tricks |
| * Grouping, Buttons, Drop Down list, Conditional Formatting |
| * Extract text from a scanned image, Format PDF copied text |
| * Record, Run, Using readymade codes from Google, Basic edits |
| Aim – The user should be able to mix & match multiple tricks to make reports faster. | |