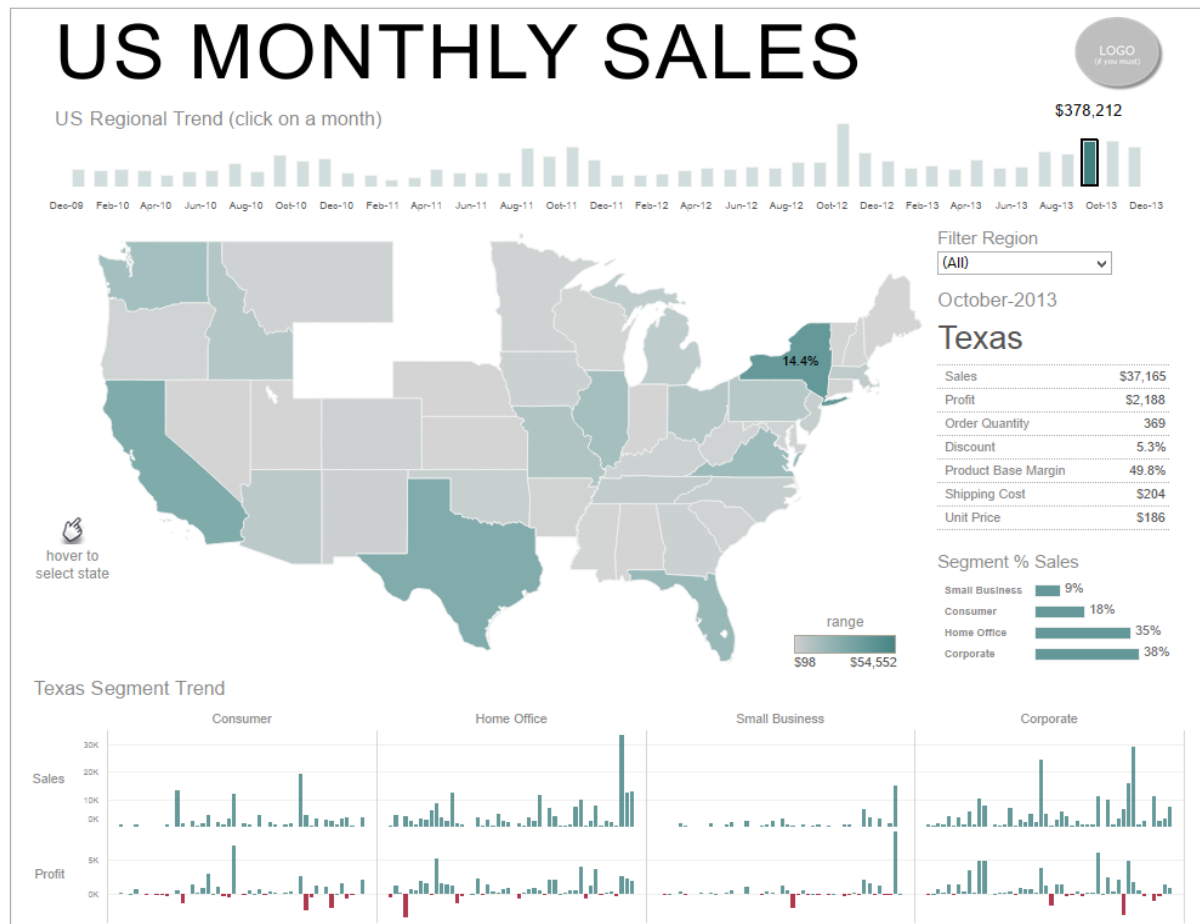


In Class Analysis #3 – Data Visualization/Dashboard Critiques

Excellent Dashboard



US MONTHLY SALES DASHBOARD (Vizcandy blogspot, n.d.)

A good dashboard should be capable of communicating a story about a certain business area, to the end user. The "US MONTHLY SALES" dashboard presented above does an excellent job of achieving the above task, while ensuring simplicity and ease of use. Below are a few reasons why we found this dashboard to be excellent:

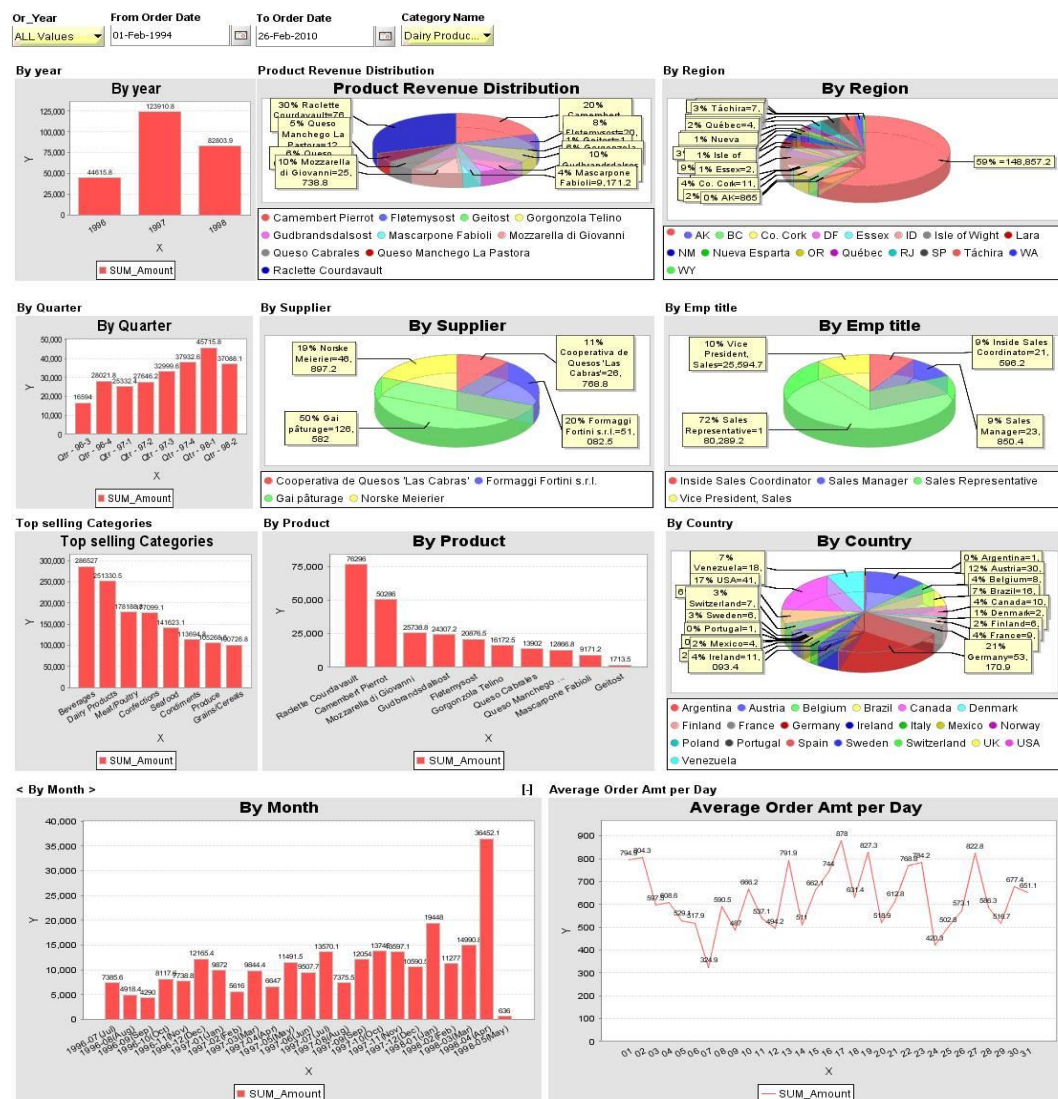
- 1) **Simplicity and clarity:** The simplistic design used in the dashboard is the first thing that stands out during an initial glance. It is able to communicate a vast range of information; at the same time, it avoids any clutter or doesn't make the end user feel like they are being overloaded with information.
- 2) **Effective use of visual components:** The dashboard uses a combination of vertical and horizontal bar charts and a map to communicate the story of monthly sales to a user. The large sizing and placement of the map in the upper left corner allows the user to get an understanding of where to start. Also, by providing the option to hover over a state in order to view the information, the dashboard avoids any data clutter.
- 3) **Smart use of color:** The use of color schemes can greatly aid the functioning of a dashboard. The choice of color in the above dashboard is especially impressive as it aids the viewing experience instead of causing hindrance. The scale provided below the map allows the users

to easily understand how the range of the color palette translates into sales figure. The use of red color to denote losses allows end users to easily notice the areas that need immediate attention.

- 4) Good use of drill-down functionality: The dashboard allows the users to drill down over states or time of the year to get into more specific details. This can be a very useful tool as different users can have different information needs. The combination of drill down along with a filter drop-down placed on the top right, provides users with the option to customize the dashboard quickly according to their unique needs.
- 5) Requires minimal training: The simplistic design also ensures that the end users require minimal training in order to use the dashboard. An overcomplicated dashboard can lead to non-technical users to shy away from using it. However, the easy to use interface requires very little training and business users can be easily on-boarded to start using the dashboard.

Overall, we feel the dashboard succeeds at the task of designing and functional implementation. The visual tools give the users a sense of the data at the first glance, while the use of numbers and summarizing tools such as percentages allow the users to pin-point essential facts in order to aid their decision-making process.

Deficient Dashboard



PRODUCT REVENUE DISTRIBUTION (How to build Excel Dashboards - 11, n.d.)

An inefficiently designed dashboard faces user acceptance issues as it does not bring value to the users. We believe that the above dashboard titled “Product Revenue Distribution” is an example of a deficient dashboard for the following reasons:

- 1) Information Overload: The dashboard has many charts along with overlapping information on the distributions within few pie-charts that makes it harder for the user to understand the story the data is providing. Information overload can be prevented by displaying a limited number of charts in the dashboard, with drill down capabilities. Validating the dashboard design with a usability specialist is an important step. The absence of which has led to poor design as seen in the dashboard.
- 2) Lack of Transparency: This dashboard cannot be termed as extremely easy to use and therefore, may require some training for the user to understand it and make use of the information that it provides.
- 3) Lack of Clarity: The dashboard makes use of different languages for different visualizations. This causes the problem of lack of clarity for the users of the dashboard.
- 4) Confused Color-Coding Scheme: The use of color has not been done intelligently as the same color represents different things for different characteristics within the dashboard. This can lead to confusion and makes the overall design of the dashboard complicated for the users. The multitude of colors in the “By Country” pie chart adds to the confusion.
- 5) Lack of Rank Alerts/Exceptions in the Dashboard: The “By Month” or “By Quarter” chart provide only descriptive information without facilitating the user to compare the result with any previous data. Providing an established measure in the chart and highlighting the odd cases such as underperforming categories adds to decision making capabilities.

This dashboard is not comprehensive as it does not anticipate the possible questions that the user may have after observing the initial report. The dashboard has limited drill down capabilities which will restrict the user’s need to slice and dice the information provided. Additionally, the dashboard does not indicate the time of the last data refresh, which is an important aspect of a good revenue dashboard.

References

How to build Excel Dashboards - 11. (n.d.). Retrieved from InforCaptor:

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