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Bar Graphs and Presentations

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<p>Let's make business reporting simple again. In the age of information, many of us are experiencing information overload. There is such a thing as gathering and presenting too much data, and the business world struggles to present information in a rich, powerful, and stimulating manner without crossing the information overload threshold. Remember when you were young and just conquering the skill of reading. Sure reading was fun, and our minds processed a lot of information from the words that we read, but didn't the illustrations in the books have a more lasting affect? The old saying reminds us a picture is worth a thousands words. We can use words to describe a situation, but a picture really encapsulates the ideas we are trying to get across.

<p>We can apply this lesson to the business world. When presenting information to a conference room full of business professionals we are eager to first obtain, and then retain their attention. This can be achieved through pictures. Now, I am not suggesting that you take your doodling and add it to your presentation, but what I am sbar graphs and bar charts in your presentation. Business graphs are an essential tool to good presentations.

<p>Various types of business graphs, such as bar charts and bar graphs can offer a simple, but meaningful representation of the information you are trying to relay to your audience. Bar graphs can leave a more lasting impression in the minds of your audience members than a slide offering a comparison of quantified data. For instance, when you see a bar chart, what jumps out at you first? For most people the tallest bar is the bar that is noticed first. You might also notice the shortest bar rather quickly as it stands out as well. In all likelihood, as a presenter you are hoping the eyes of your audience members will gravitate to the extreme ends of the spectrum, either the tall bar or the short bar on the bar chart. Now that you have captured the audiences' attention and

directed it towards the information you wanted to discuss, you are free to continue with your presentation.

<p>Or perhaps you want to use your bar graphs in another manner. Rather than emphasize really high sales or really low variable costs, you wish to show an increasing sales trend. In this scenario, your bar chart would represent your monthly sales across a certain time period. Upon presenting the bar chart, it would be clear to the audience that sales had increased substantially each month from January to August. Again, by using bar graphs you have painlessly grabbed the attention of the audience, directed it toward the topic you wanted to discuss and now you can make the points that are important to you.

<p>When using business graphs in your presentation be sure to keep a few things in mind. Label the bar chart clearly so the audience doesn't spend all its time trying to figure out what the bars represent. Make your bar charts vibrant – use strong colors to make bars of interest standout and soft subdued colors to make the other bars less conspicuous. Keep the information represented by the bar graphs as relevant as possible. Just because you have a beautiful bar chart doesn't mean it should be used in your presentation. If you have created bar charts that will enhance your presentation then incorporate them into the presentation, otherwise leave them alone. Most importantly, be creative with your visualizations and have fun. Your audience will enjoy your presentation more and come away having learned everything you hoped they would thanks to your great business graphs.