
Better Spreadsheet Design

A one-day programme

The training focuses on the methodology of spreadsheet design and ensures anyone familiar with the particular spreadsheet software can fully understand them. We show how to document and audit spreadsheets and outline how your organisation can develop a spreadsheet library that is safe and secure. Also included are *'Tips and Tricks'* for efficient spreadsheet design together with methods that allow good change control. Not only does the implementation of our recommendations speed the production of spreadsheets, it makes them simple to audit and fully document, thereby minimising the risks of errors and ensuring that standards of quality are consistent throughout your organisation.

Key elements of spreadsheet design

Have you heard the story about the construction manager from Miami who failed to revise his spreadsheet formulas after inserting a row containing an expense figure of \$254,000 for a construction bid? The resulting erroneous calculations resulted in the company submitting a construction bid that lost them a great deal of money. Well, it is true!

Managers and executives have been using spreadsheets to aid their decision-making since 1979. In the past, the vast majority of these spreadsheets were for the use of one person, the spreadsheet author, but no more. Managers and executives make critical business decisions based on spreadsheets that individuals produce.

Several people in the organisation need to understand a particular spreadsheet. Whereas at present people probably spend valuable time trying to interpret the various design foibles of the different authors. This becomes even more important when the author no longer works for the organisation. Couple these difficulties of interpretation with the results of a Coopers & Lybrand survey that showed 93% of spreadsheets they audited had errors, and 43% had critical errors, then most organisations have a disaster waiting to happen.

The programme enables participants to:

- Design spreadsheets with no mistakes
- Create spreadsheets that other people can understand easily
- Improve the layouts of their spreadsheets
- Use the most simple methods available

Learning outcomes

You will be able to design spreadsheets that are simple to understand and that have an integral part of the design explanations of exactly what functions the spreadsheet is performing. In addition, because all the formulas are defined, other people will be able to understand and work with your spreadsheets with reference to you, making the organisation's spreadsheets more secure.

Programme Agenda

Spreadsheet design

- The principles and criteria
- Layout techniques
- Consistency of design
- Using Templates
- The value of using named ranges
- Speeding up your work
- Communicating the results

Formulae

- Keeping formulae simple
- Editing formulae
- Using string formulae
- Error trapping techniques

File linking and Management

- Three dimensional worksheets or file linking:
- Combining files
- Using file protection
- Utilities spreadsheets

Macros

- Should you use macros?
- Writing structured macros
- Locating and documenting macros
- General purpose macros

Test and Document

- Tips and techniques for testing
- Evaluating the results
- The importance of documentation
- The types and principles of documentation

The typical delegates are:

The target audience are people who currently create spreadsheets. They must have a good working knowledge of the spreadsheet package and a need to design efficient and reliable worksheets. It will also assist people in defining their spreadsheet needs.