Excel Charts: An Extreme Makeover
Course Outline

This half-day course is designed for people who have already learned the graph design principles taught in the “Show Me the Numbers” workshop and wish to apply them to Microsoft Excel. It identifies those Excel charts that are useful and those that are not, focuses on how to properly design each type of chart for effective communication, and how to customize Excel to make the construction of well designed charts as painless as possible.

1. Charting in Excel – the good and the bad
2. Touring the available charts – the useful and the useless
   a. Standard types
   b. Custom types
3. Learning how to format charts
   a. Components accessed via Format Chart Area
   b. Components accessed via Chart Options
   c. Individual graph components
4. Improving the color palette
5. Improving the formatting defaults
6. Combining multiple data encoding objects axes in a single chart
   a. Combining bars and a line in a single graph
   b. Assigning a data series to a secondary axis
7. Constructing custom graphs
   a. Range column graphs
   b. Box plots
8. Extending functionality with useful workarounds
   a. Labeling lines directly
   b. Constructing small multiples
9. Constructing a custom chart library of your own

This course is primarily hands-on, consisting of exercises designed to help students apply the good design practices that they learned in “Show Me the Numbers” to the charting functionality available in Excel. The end result of the workshop is a library of custom-designed charts that students can take with them to serve as set of properly designed defaults for their Excel business charting needs.