

Intelligence in Business Intelligence – Part II

In my earlier article on this topic I had stressed the importance of creating 'intelligent' dimensions. In this article I give two more examples of how intelligent dimensions can considerable value to reports. In both the examples I have used MS-Excel Pivot table based examples to show how these additional dimensions can be created.

Is there an underlying problem ?

In Excel 2007 you can use icon sets to visually highlight a problem area. For example in a monthly operations report you could highlight an unfavourable variance with a red traffic signal, favourable variance with a green traffic signal etc. Consider a scenario where in a company there are several SBU's. The monthly operations of the company is being analysed using a Pivot Table. The overall view of the company shows the company wide summary. The overall view of Sales shows 'Green', meaning that the overall sales of the company is better than or equal to the budgeted sales. When there are several SBU in a company and various divisions within each SBU, how does the user know whether any of the sbu's/divisions are actually in the red ? Apart from the overall picture which shows a satisfying green, is there an underlying problem ?

While there is nothing directly available in MS-Excel to indicate underlying problems, there is a very simple solution to do this.

... detail out the solution here

Interactive Waterfall Chart

Waterfall chart is not a 'type' of an excel chart. It is an excellent visual representation of 'walk' scenarios. These chart give a visualization of the causes of difference between a starting position and an ending position, or between a budget number and the actual number. The creator of the graph has to create separate series of starting value, increase value, decrease value etc. in order to plot the waterfall chart. However in a pivot scenario where there can be so many dimensions in which the report can be seen, it would be seemingly impossible to generate such a graph for each combination of pivot dimensions. However a pivot table, vba events, vba code and an excel range can do the required automation. See the following graphs :

