

Troubleshooting Charts in Excel

The Problem Illustrated

Starting with this data in a sheet of an Excel workbook:

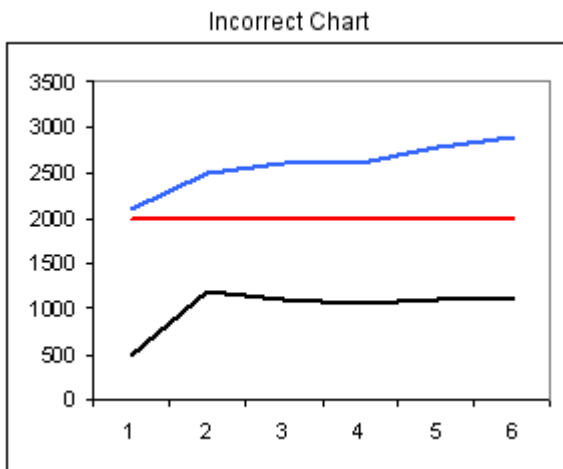
Year	Coupons Distributed	Product Sold
1999	2,000	500
2000	2,500	1,200
2001	2,600	1,100
2002	2,600	1,050
2003	2,800	1,100
2004	2,900	1,120

When plotted in Microsoft Excel:

- The x-axis should show the year for each value.
- There should be two lines or data series on a chart: one for 'coupons distributed' and one for 'product sold.'

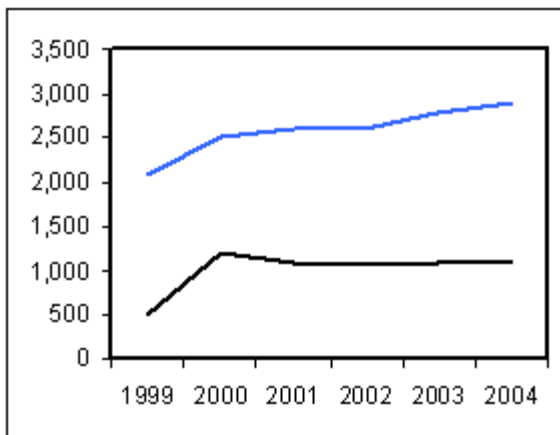
However, the chart comes out wrong:

- The x-axis shows generic numbers, 1 - 6, rather than years.
- The dates should not be plotted as a line within the chart, i.e. the red middle line does not belong.



The proper chart follows. It has only two data series and the x-axis is correctly labeled with years.

Correct Chart



The Solution

Remove the word 'Year' from the top of the first column:

	Coupons Distributed	Product Sold
1999	2,000	500
2000	2,500	1,200
2001	2,600	1,100
2002	2,600	1,050
2003	2,800	1,100
2004	2,900	1,120

Note the empty cell in the upper left corner of the data and headings. That's correct. Do not type in that cell.

Note the headings over the second and third columns. That's correct. You do need those headings.

To create the chart, start highlighting in the empty cell so that you catch it, all headings, and all data.

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