+ BUSINESS INFORMATION DESIGN
+ **DESIGNING REPORTS AND PRESENTATIONS**
+ **'SUCCESS' AND HI-CHART RULES**

INTALIGN
driving insight into action

CONTENTS

Title page: In the emblem on the left is *Lo*, the chart demon, and on the right is *Hi*, the chart angel symbolising examples with room for improvement and recommended practices respectively. *Lo-charts* and *Hi-charts* are found in both management reports and presentations (The numbers in the text correspond to the numbers in the HI-CHART RULES poster, see posters.hichert.com).

Dear Readers –

Analysing and presenting business data – skills which are critical to effective decision support – are sadly lacking. In this fast-paced information age, we are overwhelmed by data, not because there is too much, but because we don't know how to tame it. Computers speed the process of information handling, but they don't tell us what the information means or how to communicate its meaning to decision makers. These skills are not intuitive; they rely on principles and practices that, though simple, must be learned.

You can have the most sophisticated data gathering and warehousing infrastructure available, but if you don't know how to make sense of your data and then communicate what you've discovered to others, this investment is wasted.

Most businesses lose precious time struggling to understand their data, often misinterpreting it and then mis-communicating it to others, resulting in costly decisions. This is a travesty, because this problem can be easily overcome with the right tools and simple set of practical skills.

INTALIGN is proud to offer services and workshops developed in conjunction with one of the foremost specialists in business information design: Professor Rolf Hichert for the first time in Australia.

This brochure includes an overview of the basic principles of business information design (the SUCCESS rules) and how they can be applied to improve presentations, reports an d management information systems.

I would like to invite you to visit our web site and try out the on-line samples offered, have a browse through the related blog, or contact us on how we can assist you with your information design needs.

Finally, I hope that you will find valuable tips in this brochure to convey your messages more effectively and wish you continued SUCCESS achieving the objectives of your business presentations and reports!

Martin Kratky
Co-Founder INTALIGN

Dear Readers –

Management reports and presentations are – in addition to one-on-one talks – an important medium for conveying information to management.

When, on the one hand, numerous people responsible for creating reports complain that their reports aren't getting the level of attention they expect and on the other hand, many of those who receive reports say that they don't even bother to read them, then this should be a cause for concern.

The same thing can be said for business presentations which unfortunately today are basically the equivalent of: 'I'll show you my Power-Points..' In this 'PowerPoint culture,' the audience is usually relieved when speakers come to the end of their presentation – there will rarely be an encore. In this culture, the audience is not grateful for what they have learned; rather the speaker concludes with "Thank you for your attention".

In my opinion, the following approach will serve to improve this unfortunate situation:

+Answers: persons preparing reports and speakers should be aware of the questions that their readers or audience have: "If executives would say what they want to know, then we would certainly tell them." is a statement heard very often. Reports and presentations should be the answer to the questions that the audience has. –
You will rarely be successful if you are unaware of their questions.

+Messages: reports consist primarily of text. They should not be mere copies of PowerPoint slides. Reports should illustrate, explain and if possible even make recommendations pertaining to a certain situation. Presentations are then successful when speakers have achieved the goal of their presentation – namely, that the desired steps are taken *after* the presentation.

+Rules: reports and presentations should bear the SUCCESS Rules in mind, including uniform *notation*, a *information density* and *clear messages*. The following excerpts are taken from the overall concept of these HI-CHART RULES.

I wish you continued SUCCESS with your reports and presentations!

Rolf Hichert

MANAGEMENT REPORTS

063 Management reports are written by specialists and are a summary of mostly quantitative data in a standardised form. Typically management reports are published on a monthly basis, as regular management reports, business cases or status reports on projects.

127, 128 **Structure:** a transparent structure of a management report is the key to comprehension. If a report is hard to understand, then it is more often due to its confusing structure than to the often-heard criticism of it being too long or convoluted.

066, 086 **Page types:** in a transparent report structure, predefined page types are set up, in which the report elements below are arranged in standardised form. In addition to the actual report pages, there are other page types, such as title page, table of contents and management summary.

021, 116 **Report objects:** the most important objects in management reports are texts, charts and tables – as well as other objects, such as enhancements and pictures in the form of maps, photos and graphics. In addition to systematized organizational objects – these are primarily chapter headings, bullet points, page numbers, grids and symbols.

So-called "reports" which actually don't report anything (make no statement, explain nothing, recommend nothing) are better referred to as *statistics* or *data preparation/sheets*.
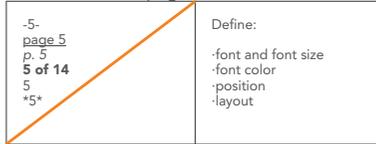
PRESENTATIONS

A form of communication where prepared information is presented orally, usually to a larger audience supported by visual display media (e.g. charts) – perhaps occasionally interrupted by interposed questions. "Meetings" are not presentations in this sense. A typical presentation might examine the current status of a project, the analysis of the financial plan or the monthly business situation.

Introduction: the introduction of a presentation includes points, like the initial situation, the presentation of a problem and the pertinent question to be addressed. The introduction serves to clarify the meaning of the message to be imparted to the audience.

089, 090 **Storyline:** decisive for a presentation's success is well-founded content, which serves to answer the questions of interest to the audience. Here, the *Pyramid Principle* from Barbara Minto is a great help to either prove or to at least make the message plausible.

094 **Next steps:** One should always keep in mind that the key objective for any presentation is that, following the presentation, the actions proposed by the presenter are considered and taken. Accordingly, it is crucial that those intentions are clearly communicated to the audience, in other words the "message arrives as intended". The driving principle behind the SUCCESS rules.

091, 092, 093 **Slides:** "A picture is worth a thousand words" is a well-known saying, but goes unfortunately unheeded by many speakers. On the contrary, they require many words to explain their pictures. Picture should, however, illustrate things which either cannot be described or are very difficult to express. Slides containing text as well as the popular PowerPoint bullet lists should not be tossed onto the projector screen – they belong in the handouts or as a well-prepared long text.

063 Use tabs in paper reports

127 Build well-structured content

128 Build mutually exclusive structures

·Norway
·Sweden
·Scandinavia
·Denmark
·Finland
·Northern Denmark

·Norway
·Sweden
·Denmark
·Finland

**066 Use print space efficiently**

086 Avoid more than 15 words per line

Comments

Comments

021 Use consistent notation in tables and charts

116 Use uniform page number notation

-5-
page 5
p. 5
5 of 14
5
5

Define:
·font and font size
·font color
·position
·layout

089 Avoid bullet slides

It is NOT true that these lists enhance your presentation

Explain the arguments, use a whiteboard or flipchart or use long text in your handout

We *read* or listen to texts. We *look* at pictures.

090 Use B-key between slides

close Power-Point

094 Do not say 'thank you' at the end

'Thank you for your attention.'

'To wrap it up: This again is my message…'

(…and then the *audience* says thank you!)

091 Avoid transition effects

Avoid any ppt gimmicks or other 'transition effects' – the only function to be used is 'appear' in order to add additional information.

092 Avoid any 'special effects'

This is the m e s s a g e

This is the message.

093 Do not use text slides

Comments

Texts belong in handouts and not on the projector screen.

RULES FOR REPORTS AND PRESENTATIONS: 'SUCCESS'

Successful business communication is based on consistent rules. Individual creativity in verbal expression or visual design is typically counter-productive. Instead, it is a matter of consistent standardization and reducing to what is essential; in particular keeping the SUCCESS Rules in mind:

SAY IT.
Name the Message

UNIFY IT.
Standardise Content

CONDENSE IT.
Concentrate Information

CHECK IT.
Demand Quality

EXPLAIN IT.
Convey Explanations

SIMPLIFY IT.
Avoid Noise and Redundancy

STRUCTURE IT.
Clarify Structures

SAY IT: NAME THE MESSAGE

In addition to the actual message, we will also address the issues of title concept and highlighting here.

053, 055 **Message:** the message is the focus of management reports and presentations; if it is missing then nothing will be reported.

030 **Title:** a uniform concept for the title of charts, tables and texts facilitates comprehension. Titles should include the dimensions contained, such as organizational units, measures, as well as periods of time and data categories.

Highlighting: the message – for example of a slide – should be clarified using appropriate highlighting (arrow, underlining, and so on) and thus be easier for the audience to "grasp/take on/comprehend", see *'Other Objects'*.

UNIFY IT: STANDARDISE CONTENT

With the design of business reports and presentations, the same content should be displayed in the the same manner and vice versa – what looks the same should represent the same thing.

The rules of *corporate design* should only be applied when they facilitate comprehension. All decorative and non-informational design elements should be left out – "Aim for High Information Density". The dimensions details, such as period types, data types, business reports and currencies need to be clearly visible and should follow a consistent convention in order to make the content easier to understand.

057 **Table Design:** a consistent grid concept in reports and presentation slides facilitates the overview/transparency. Grid concepts are frustrating when valuable space is lost to over dimensioned logos and oversized fonts.

004, 007 **Forms/Formatting:** clear and consistently applied formatting and alignment is then helpful for the recipient when it is backed up with a concept of meaning. Varying border profiles can symbolize currencies, columns of various widths can differentiate different business indicators such as personnel status or production amounts.

019 **Colors:** one of the most common design mistakes lies in colour being used without meaning. Colour should never be used without a clear and uniform concept behind it.

062 **Fonts:** uniform font types and sizes are not only visually pleasing, they also facilitate comprehension. Underscoring should, for example, be saved for *web links*, bold and cursive fonts, as well as Serif fonts, should be avoided where possible.

057 Layout with the help of a grid

053 Avoid mundane messages
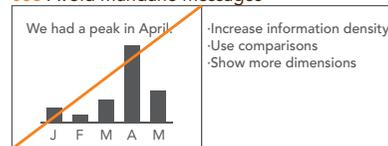
055 Avoid mundane slides
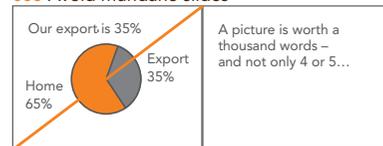

030 Use uniform titles, use several lines

004 Use different layouts for different meaning


007 Use uniform notation for time periods

019 Use consistent notation for data categories

062 Use uniform font size
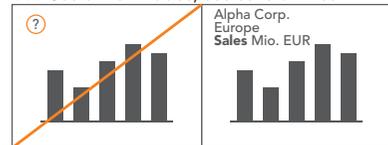
CONDENSE IT: CONCENTRATE INFORMATION

Slides are easier to understand and conducive to identifying relation-ships and dependencies when they have a high level of information density: It is easier to analyse four charts that belong together if they are arranged next to each other on one page than if they are displayed on four consecutive pages. The more that can be shown together, the faster complex topics can be understood. A measure of information density is the number of numerical values represented per area.

The current 'PowerPoint culture' too often results in the opposite: where it is not the illustrations that "do the talking" (as a result of their low information density), rather the speakers must explain them.

049, 054 **Don't leave anything out:** when possible 'everything' must be dis-played, in particular all extreme values and outliers. Details not only increase credibility, they also facilitate comprehension.

187 **Show comparisons:** the main purpose of charts is to facilitate com-parisons. The more comparisons – if possible in two dimensions or more – that are shown on one slide, the easier to understand and the more meaningful the slide will be. If charts show only one-di-mensional relationships – for example in pie charts – then the insight they convey is usually trivial.

095 **Show causes:** as much as possible charts should convey a clear message: to prove, explain and make plausible – and not merely a means for decoration or making the report look "prettier".

050 **Integrate texts and captions:** when possible, all captions and notes should be displayed directly in the chart. The use of references or legends impedes comprehension.

CHECK IT: DEMAND QUALITY

The content conveyed in reports and presentations should be "correct." In numerical values, this pertains to data quality in respect to business measures, their organizational unit and their 'dimensions,' such as product, country or company. In text information, this pertains to the ac-curacy of explanations and written messages. In charts, the appropriate type should be used, chart scaling should be uniform, and axes should not be 'cut.'

EXPLAIN IT: CONVEY EXPLANATIONS

Explanations in reports and presentations are notes and comments, such as footnotes in charts, tables and texts. Their purpose is to provide background information so that the message – and basically the content presented – is easier to understand. Thus, uncertainty is removed, deviations are explained and sources are named. By provid-ing these explanations, the presented information becomes more plausible.

052 **Substantiate messages:** slides should contain not only well-phrased messages; they should also provide explanations, background or evidence.

155 **Footnote:** the footnote serves to promote trust, removing uncertainty by indicating sources, naming responsibilities and providing clarifica-tions.

119 **Precise wording:** precise and on-target wording is required to assure accuracy. Words like significant, clearly, substantially, decisive and relevant should be avoided and replaced with 'facts'. Those delivering the reports state the data and the facts – it is up to the recipient to judge its relevance or significance.

049 Increase information density

054 Show high information density

+ 187 Increase information density

052 Substantiate your claims

»We have a fast solution.«

We have a fast solution.

095 Show details if differences are small

2006 ACT-BUD is 6%

2006 ACT-BUD is 6%

BUD ACT

BUD
ACT

+ 050 Integrate text and diagrams
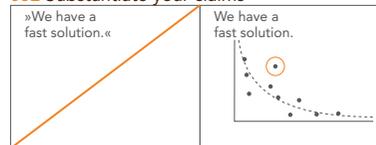
155 Connect comments to the content

Comments

Comments
1
2

+ 119 Use precise wording

·Significant variance	·Variance of 2%
·Around 5 tons	·Between 4.9 and 5.1 tons
·Convincing profit	·Profit of 25%
·Relevant difference	·minus 12%
·Booming results	·Results +15 Mio. USD
·Better than plan	·3% above plan
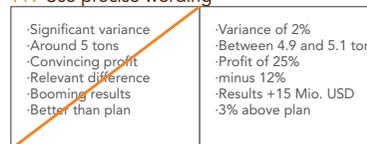
SIMPLIFY IT: AVOID NOISE AND REDUNDANCY

One could say that: information is that which lies between noise (incomprehensible, unnecessary) and redundancy (repetitive, familiar). Management reports and presentations represent an *offer of information* – for recipients this offer first becomes *information* when it has been understood and when it expands their existing knowledge. The consideration/absorption of information requires a level of trust in the presenter, without which it is impossible to convey information.

070, 071 Avoid noise: noise here refers to design aspects which do not con-
072, 172 tribute to comprehension. Typical examples of this are pseudo-3D,
077 frames, background patterns, shadows and unnecessary colours. The rule: do not present anything that has no meaning.

056, 184, 186 Minimize redundancy: redundancy refers here to 'repetitions' or 'known information.' An example of minimized redundancy: if the title of the page in a report is *Net Sales in M EUR, m$*, then these words don't need to appear anywhere else on this page.

STRUCTURE IT: CLARIFY STRUCTURES

In every form of specialized communication, the *content* should be at the forefront; things that are new, interesting and important should be conveyed. The best form cannot make up for poor quality and uninteresting contents. And it would be a shame if good content was understood either incorrectly or not at all by the recipient due to poor presentation. The three following criteria should be kept in mind:

112, 122, 124 Uniform: lists or structures should contain uniform elements on every level. This is not the case, for example, for the points: net sales, costs, logistics, and profit.

125, 128 Mutually exclusive: structures are difficult to comprehend when their elements overlap, such as in the outline points: project goals, project specifications and project results. The preparation of mutually exclusive structures is often a challenging task.

126 Exhaustive: you can refer to an *exhaustive* structure only when all aspects of a super ordinate topic are covered. Breaking down Central Europe into Germany, Austria, Switzerland and Belgium is *not* exhaustive in this sense.

In actual practice, these three rules of quality are not followed satisfactorily, particularly in structures such as tables of contents: the individual outline points often are not uniform, their contents overlap and they are not exhaustive regarding the subject or the named message.

070 Avoid 'decorative' layouts
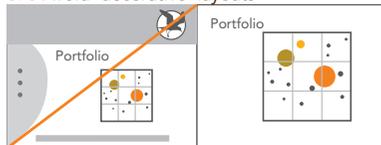
071 Do not use dashboard instruments

072 Try to avoid table gridlines

172 Try to avoid any frames
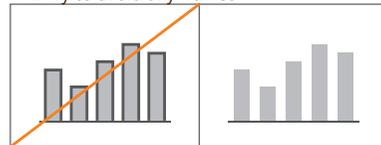
077 Reduce color where possible

056 Avoid serif, bold, and underlined fonts
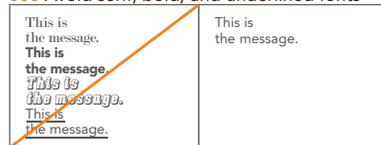
184 Avoid redundancies


186 Avoid redundancies

112 Use terms consistently

122 For Germans: Use either German or English

124 Avoid 'structure', 'development', etc. in titles

125 Build mutually exclusive structures
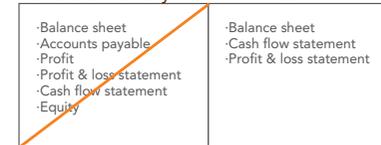
128 Build mutually exclusive structures

126 Build exhaustive structures

OBJECTS IN REPORTS AND PRESENTATIONS

Both management reports as well as presentations are built upon chart, table and graphics objects which are briefly discussed below.

CHARTS

Charts should help visualize numerical relationships. They always serve to *compare* figures. While tables are meant to be *read*, charts are meant to be *seen*. Good business charts should point out causes and not merely decorate trivial situations.

175 **Chart types:** different types of analysis, such as analysis of structure or periods of time, should be represented with different types of charts, for example bars or columns.

105 **Scaling:** correct scaling is a prerequisite for easily understood charts. The most common mistakes are cut axes and different scales for the content to be compared.

140, 150, 051 **Labels:** charts are easier to understand when labels are integrated – for example, legends should not be positioned outside the chart and labels at the data values directly within the chart.

002 **Chart details:** in ideal charts, design details such as headers, axis thickness, frame form , column width or bar colour are also part of an overall concept; see Notation and Meaning in 'Unify it: Standardize/Harmonize content.'

CHART MATRIX

You will find the most varied types of representation and the most diverse designs in the practical application of business charts. An attempt at systematization has been made in the 8x8 chart matrix shown here. The columns show the most typical analysis types The rows display the most widely used options for representation. In practice, the resulting 46 basic types can be arranged in various forms next to and above one another.

To complete this, four other basic types are shown in the lower right, which don't fulfil the requirements of the SUCCESS rules and are not recommended. There are many limitations in circle charts; they should be avoided particularly in this basic form. Pie charts have low information density, comparisons are difficult, and insight is trivial. Bar charts are preferable for such structural representations.
A radar chart, another basic type, is located on the lower left. It represents one of the least suitable chart types. Other types of misleading representations are torus charts, funnel charts, and all sorts of pseudo-3D visualisations.

Practice has shown that six to eight of these basic chart types can cover more than 90 percent of the charts needed in the most diverse reports of a business segment. It is useful to develop templates for this purpose which can then be used as needed: based on requirements and the application, for each individual case.

175 Avoid torus charts

105 Do not cut axes

140 Integrate labels into charts
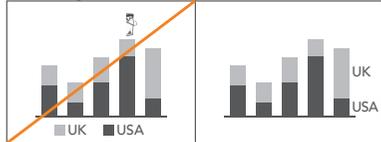
150 Avoid axes, label bars instead

051 Integrate explanations into charts
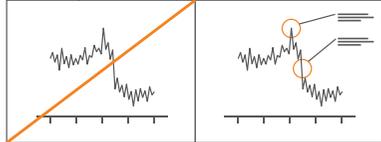
002 Give axes a meaning

Chart matrix with columns: Deviation, Group, Span, Standard, Plus-Minus, var. Width, Stacked, Waterfall; and rows: Columns, Bars, Area horizontal, Area vertical, Lines horizontal, Lines vertical, Dots horizontal, Dots vertical. Scatter, Radar, Pie, Bubble shown in corners.

TABLES

Tables provide information in the form of lines and columns. As a rule, they have no message unless a certain aspect is highlighted there and commented on.

047 **Table types:** period comparisons and deviation tables are the most important basic types. Additional classifications are possible by row and column types.

Table titles: table titles contain information similar to chart titles. Title information, such as 'Net sales by product and country,' is helpful.

158, 166 **Line and column types:** rows and columns can be divided into types, such as baselines, sums and deviations. Tables are easier to understand if they are underpinned not only with a clear hierarchical concept, but with a uniform notation as well.

160 **Enhancements:** the background of numbers should not be coloured either red or green when possible, as this limits legibility. It is better to use markers next to the figures. Deviation bars, such as in Fig. B, can be realized simply using an Excel trick.

TEXTS

Texts in management reports are easily understood when clear statements are made. This is a matter of using a standardised language and not about finding creative expressions. Texts in reports are not used to repeat table content, but rather should be used to provide explanations and recommendations.

109 **Glossary:** an important prerequisite for the uniform use of terms is the consistent use of a glossary with terms in long form (for names of lines), short form (for column headings) and abbreviations – as well as their definition and, if needed, translations in other languages.

123 **Special characters:** uniform notation and use of special characters, such as a slash, percent sign, hyphen and dash should be regulated.

Sum, total: these two words in management reports are typical examples of unnecessary buzzwords and lack of standardization. There is no difference between 'Results Alpha AG Overall' and Results Alpha AG'. Recommendation: "Alpha Corp EBIT" and "Segment XYZ EBIT"

Precise: expressions should be unequivocal and exactly representing the facts see 'Explain it: Convey Explanations.'
Expressions such as: rising, minimal, numerous, relevant, often, sometimes, unexpectedly, high, partial, substantial, slow, often, slightly lower, extraordinary, thoroughly, faster than expected… are unclear and difficult for the reader to understand. Readers are entitled to the facts – and will then decide for themselves what is relevant to them.

047 Integrate charts into tables

158 Use the same column sequence

166 Try to avoid thereof-rows in tables

160 Avoid redundancies, use color coding

109 Use uniform wording for deviations

123 Use precise expressions

A The example analysis is hard to understand because of the overloaded design.

B Through standardization and simplification, the table shown has become easier to understand than initial examples A and B.
Leaving out all meaningless design details makes tables easier to understand.

Not Precise

+ Markedly lower costs compared to the previous year

+ Significant improvement in the result in recent years

+ Substantial increase in sales in a range of products

Precise

+ We were able to reduce our HR costs by 5 percent compared to 2007.

+ Since 2005 our USA subsidiary has produced an average EBIT improvement of three percent per year.

+ For the three best selling products, Net Sales in Q2 were a total of 6M EUR higher than in Q1.

GRAPHICS

Graphics should include all non-quantitative representations, such as network plans, maps, organizational plans, flow charts and decision trees. However, images and drawings can also be used here. Similar to charts, graphics should also be used in reports and presentations to convey the intended message. For graphics – as well as in charts and tables – uniform design rules should be applied, whereby the focus is on understanding and not on pleasing. Note on maps: areas should only then be coloured when the represented measurement value is proportional to the surface area – for example to the number of inhabitants per km². For measures such as 'market share' mini charts – in this example displayed as a column chart - are more suitable.

OTHER OBJECTS

In addition to the aforementioned, reports and presentations can also contain:

Organizational objects: organizational objects are, for example, page numbers, page headings, as well as border lines and symbols if they have meaning.

Design objects: colours, fonts and forms should not only look pleasant, they should also have uniform meaning. Every design object should be checked to see whether it is important for conveying content.

Enhancements: trend arrows, deviation marks, circle or other highlights should make the message easier for the reader to find and thus also easier to understand quickly.

027 Do not color areas in maps for valuation
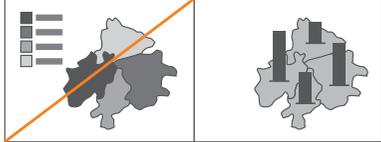
088 Avoid conceptual, use quantitative charts

001 Use symbols to inform more quickly
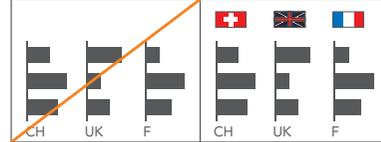
020 Use background structures for meaning
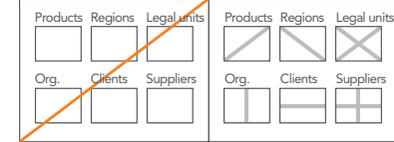
017 Use enhancements systematically
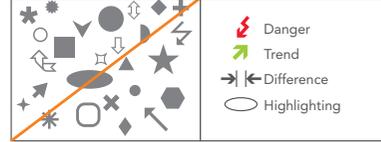
023 Use background colors for meaning

Carte Figurative des pertes successives en hommes de l'Armée Française dans la campagne de Russie 1812 –1813.

All types of cancer, white females; age-adjusted rate by county, 1950–1969

Source: Eduard Tufte
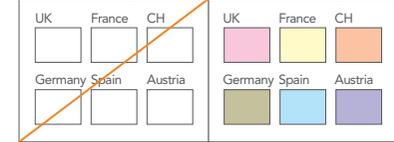
CARTOONS

In collaboration with Götz Wiedenroth, several cartoons have been developed to shed light on this topic. These cartoons can be downloaded free of charge at: cartoons.hichert.com. Permission from HICHERT+PARTNER is required for commercial use.
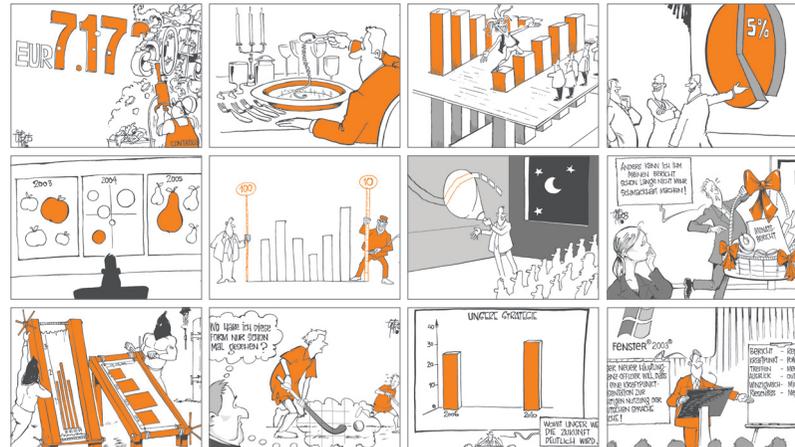
PRINCIPLES APPLIED

Following are a few examples that reflect the application of professional information design principles (Say it, Unify it, etc.) in visualizations (charts, tables, etc.) that are typically used in a business context

+Report pages
+Screen design
+Business dashboards
+Chart slides

We will now primarily cover the design of 'presentation slides' to demonstrate the application of the afore-mentioned SUCCESS Rules

REPORT PAGES

Working with the 'page types' previously mentioned in the chapter 'Management Reports' can contribute greatly to standardizing reports. With a few content-driven types of pages (a combination of report objects in a predefined layout) and other page types for title pages, tables of contents, management summaries, etc. can make even the most diverse reports uniform.

SCREEN DESIGN

What applies to report pages also applies to interfaces in business intelligence or management information systems: Standards facilitate comprehension. GUI (Graphical User interfaces), however, typically offer a lower resolution compared to printed paper. Uniform design of report pages and screenshots is thus impossible: either there is not enough room on the paper page or insufficient space on the computer screen. Moreover, interactive pages should allow for additional space for control elements.

BUSINESS DASHBOARDS

Business dashboards or cockpits are typically condensed overviews of the most important business drivers. The comparison of two examples of poorly designed dashboards (dashboards.hichert.com) with three professional dashboards on the right illustrates the advantages of high information density combined with 'Avoidance of noise and redundancy' ('Simplify it' rule).
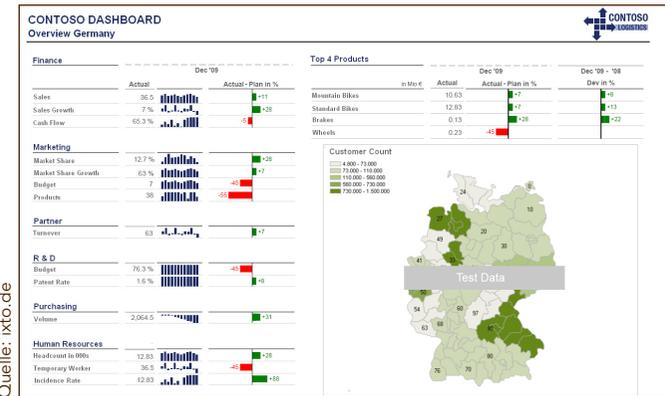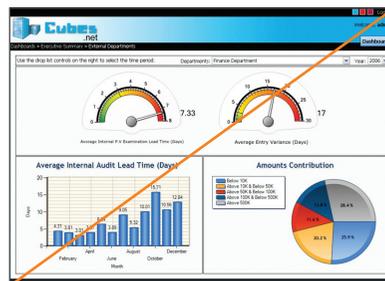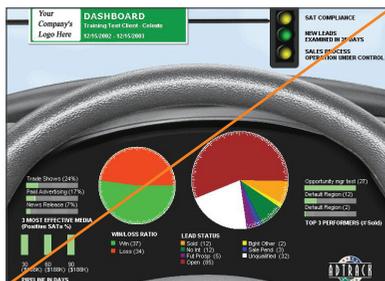
Quelle: ixto.de
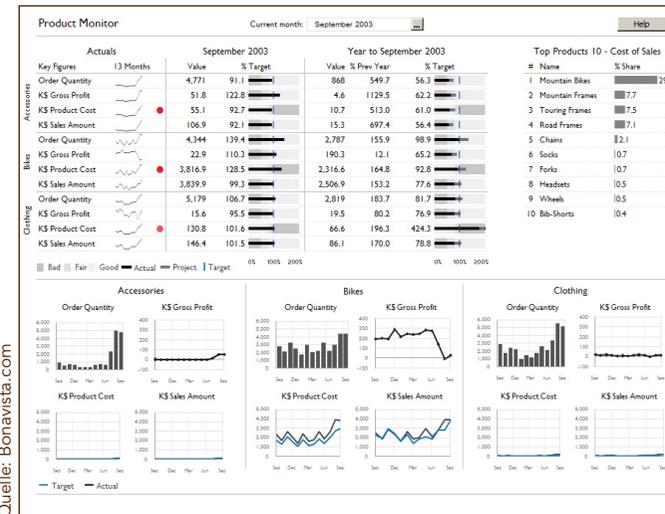
Quelle: Bonavista.com

CHART SLIDES

Chart-slides are usually used in presentations by the speaker to support what he or she is saying. They should contain the following elements: a straightforward title with organizational unit, business measure, unit, etc., a clear message in the form of a statement, one or more charts or graphics and enhancement of the message. Uniform notation, explanations in the footnote, etc. facilitate comprehension. Oversized logos and all decorative elements which do not convey any information conducive to the message of the respective chart should be avoided.

The following chart-slide examples take these requirements into account. They demonstrate how a message can be conveyed much better by using information design principles and the SUCCESS rules than just the default types and formatting offered by the Excel Chart Assistant. All examples can be reproduced with Excel (applying best practices and tips and tricks taught in our seminars) – without VBA programming and without manual intervention; for further information, please visit: excel.hichert.com.

The slides shown here serve to reproduce quantitative data. Text slides should be avoided where possible: words are spoken during the speech and text is of course the integral part of written reports. Similar design rules apply for slides with non-quantitative content, such as organization charts or network plans.
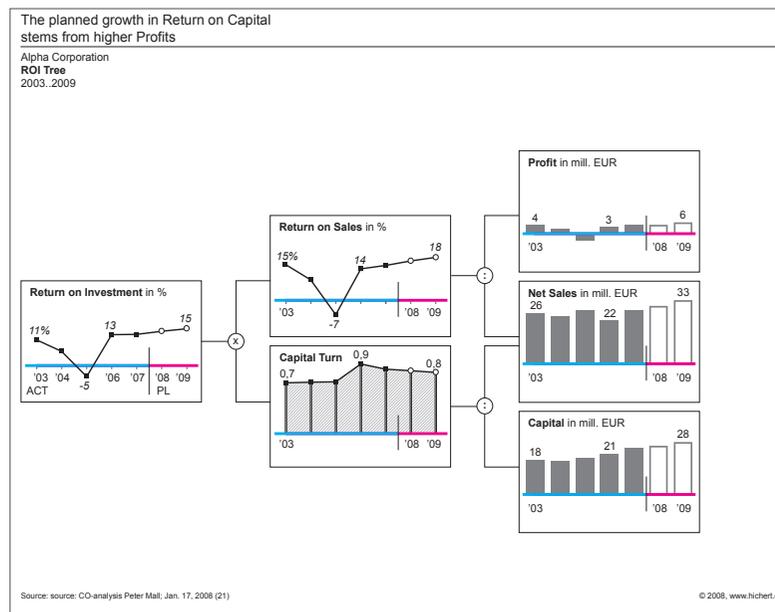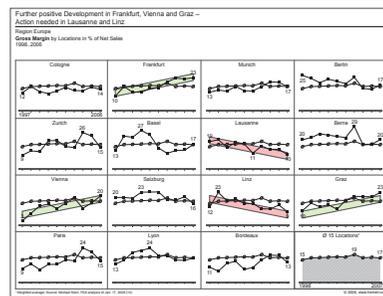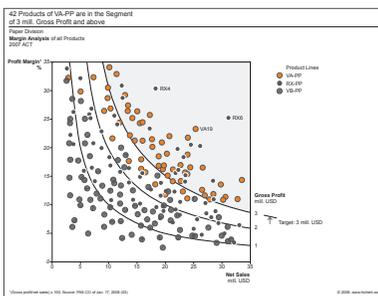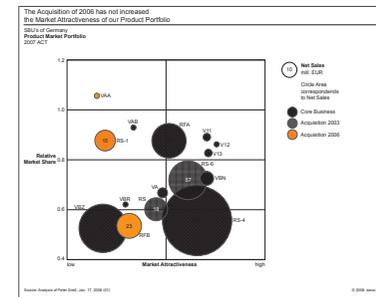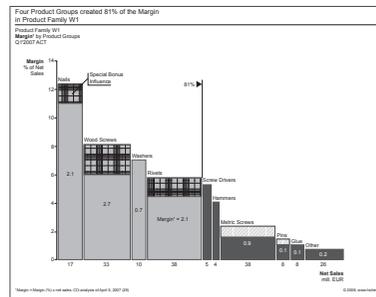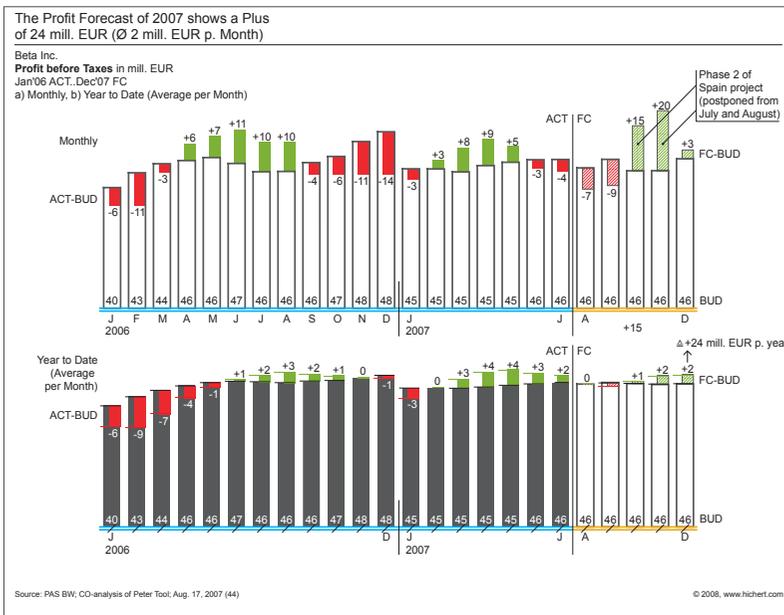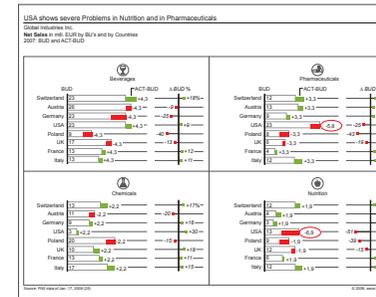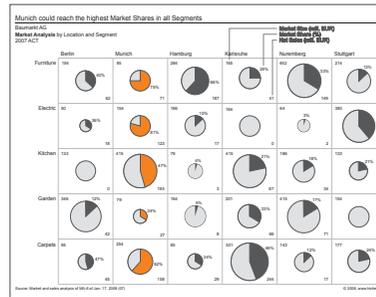
OUR OFFER

Our focus is on improving communication between specialists from segments, such as controlling, finance, sales and marketing, and their managers. This pertains to easy-to-understand management reports, effective presentations and, above all, correct chart design. To this end, we offer seminars, consulting and software.

WORKSHOPS

TOPICS

Business Reports and Presentation that convey the intended message: *how to prepare and implement* reporting systems using professional design principles like the SUCCESS Rules presented in this brochure.

Prepare and deliver presentations successfully: How to present your data clearly and drive your message home.
This seminar with the subtitle: *'Do you have PowerPoints or do you actually have something to say?'* focuses, on the one hand, on *'pyramidal thinking'* (Barbara Minto) and, on the other, on using the SUCCESS Rules to design slides that support the presentation and keep the audience interested.

PROFESSSIONAL MANAGEMENT REPORTS AND PRESENTATIONS

The design and delivery of management reports and presentations are crucial management skills: ensuring that information is conveyed as intended in a way that is quickly understood and engaging for an audience.

Today's reality, though is, that professionals responsible for creating regular management communication are faced with the reality that their reports aren't getting the level of attention they expect. On the other hand, many of those on the receiving end complain that reports are convoluted, not to the point and don't facilitate decision making. The same thing can be said for business presentations which too often are basically the equivalent of: "I'll show you my PowerPoints…".
In this "PowerPoint culture", the audience is usually relieved when speakers come to the end of their presentation – there rarely will be an encore. In this culture, the audience is not grateful for what they have learned; rather the speaker concludes with "Thank you for your attention".

THIS WORKSHOP WILL ADDRESS

Principles of professional management information
SUCCESS Rules for management reports:
SAY IT: NAME THE MESSAGE
UNIFY IT: STANDARDISE CONTENT
CONDENSE IT: CONCENTRATE INFORMATION
CHECK IT: DEMAND QUALITY
EXPLAIN IT: CONVEY EXPLANATIONS
SIMPLIFY IT: AVOID NOISE AND REDUNDANCY
STRUCTURE IT: CLARIFY STRUCTURES
+Usage of tables in reports
+Usage of charts in reports
+Professional techniques for presenting with PowerPoint
+Preparation
+How to use presenter view
+Slide libraries
+Chart design
+Automating data integration
+Case studies and practical examples

MEANINGFUL BUSINESS CHARTS AND DASHBOARDS

No information is more important to a business than quantitative information – the numbers that measure performance, identify opportunities, and forecast the future. Charts and business dashboards are integral instruments to present quantitative information. Out of the box Spreadsheet charts often don't reflect professional business information design principles. Almost no one who produces them, including specialists such as financial analysts and other report developers, have been trained in effective table and graph design. You can become an exception to this norm. Dashboards have become a popular means to present critical business information at a glance, but few do so effectively. When designed well, dashboards engage the power of visual perception to communicate a dense collection of information in an instant with exceptional clarity. This can only be achieved, however, by applying visual design skills that address the unique design challenges of dashboards.

This course exposes the common problems in chart and dashboard design and introduce effective design practices through examples that explain what works, what doesn't, and why.

MORNING SESSION: CHARTS
+Principles of communicating with charts
+Chart types and appropriate usage
+Time, Size, Category axis types
+Primary, secondary axis
+Small multiples principle
+Appropriate scaling
+Use of data labels and legends
+Stressing and highlighting content
+Positioning and handling of title, message, source information
+Dynamic linking of Excel and PowerPoint

AFTERNOON SESSION: DASHBOARDS
+Current state of dashboards
+Definition and potential benefits of dashboards
+Fundamental goals and challenges of dashboard design
+Thirteen common mistakes in dashboard design
+Characteristics of well-designed dashboards
+Steps in the dashboard design process
+Common dashboard information and techniques for enriching its meaning
+Selecting appropriate media for displaying the data
+Ideal library of dashboard display media
+Best practices of dashboard design

FINANCIAL MODELLING IN EXCEL

This course is designed for business professionals who need to explore the practical usage of advanced excel functions in a financial model. By creating your own user-friendly financial model, you will learn to translate business concepts into a structured format to identify weaknesses and predict future performance.

You will:
+Discover how to measure and interpret the performance of your company using Excel modelling
+Create your own effective and reliable model and identify weaknesses and predict future performance
+Gain an in-depth understanding of how to build a business case
+Master key steps to get the most out of Excel functionality to improve your financial modelling
+Learn how to enhance the decision-making process
+Maximise your analytical abilities by learning conventional and new approaches of modelling
+Translate business concepts into logically structured models and formats

Prerequisites Students are expected to be reasonably regular Excel users, and should be comfortable with simple formulas and linking between workbooks. Software used Microsoft Excel 2007 Learning Objectives During the course, participants will create their own financial model to take away and use for future reference. You will learn how to design and create a user-friendly model which can then be used by anyone with limited knowledge of Excel.
You will learn how to:
+Build a financial model from scratch, or modify and improve an inherited model
+Mitigate errors by building in error checks Prevent incorrect use of your model by protecting worksheets
+Validate data entry by setting data entry parameters
+Create a navigation page to help users find their way around your model
+Create drop-down boxes which enable a model to produce a series of results depending on scenario variable selected
+Mitigate liability by providing assumptions
+Write instructions for use
+Present findings in a concise and meaningful way

This course builds on students' existing knowledge of simple and complex functions and incorporates these into a financial model.

COURSE CONTENT

1. Model Tools
1.1 Choosing between Excel and Access
1.2 General Functions
  +Use of LOOKUP functions, SUMIF, COUNTIF and nested formulas within a financial model
  +How to model compounding inflation
  +Calculating customer acquisition numbers from the potential pool of customers
  +Modelling market penetration in a business case
1.3 Financial Functions
  +IRR (Internal Rate of Return)
  +NPV (Net Present Value)
  +How to calculate a payback period
1.4 Other Useful Tools
  +Hiding sections of the model
  +Avoiding error displays in formulas
  +Creating in-built error checks
  +Using Goal Seek within Financial Models
  +Macros and Financial Modelling

2. Modelling Techniques
2.1 Rebuilding an inherited model
  +Formula auditing
  +"Sense-checking" methodology
  +Identifying formula error
  +Dealing with links and the potential errors they can cause
2.2 Bullet-proofing your model
  +Protect data by locking cells
  +Protecting a worksheet
  +Password Protection
  +Building error alert formulas
  +Restricting incorrect data entry with data validations
2.3 Making a model user-friendly
  +Formatting
  +Inserting Navigation buttons
  +Hyperlinks
3. Final Model Results
3.1 Scenarios and Sensitivity Analysis
  +Manual sensitivity analysis
  +Creating drop-down switches for scenario selection
3.2 Presentation of Model Output
  +Summarising results and display of findings
  +How to create dynamic graphs
3.4 The Fine Print
  +Documentation and source referencing
  +Mitigate liability by including appropriate caveats and key assumptions
  +Writing operation instructions

BUDGETING AND FORECASTING IN EXCEL

If you are new to the budgeting and forecasting process, this practical course will cover issues such as using budgets to measure staff performance, linking budgets to the strategic planning process and a comparison of budgeting techniques. We will explore the difference between budgets and forecasts, and you will learn how to create your own budget, rolling forecast, variance report and budget scenarios in Excel.

Prerequisites
This course is designed for users who use Excel fairly regularly, and are comfortable with using simple functions. It is assumed that the user will know how to create simple formulas, and link between workbooks. Software used Microsoft Excel 2007.

Course Format
This course is delivered in two parts; the first day covers the theory of budgeting and forecasting within organisations. Issues such as budgeting to organisational objectives, level of granularity and selecting the correct budgeting tool will be discussed. Students are encouraged to share their own experiences with the class. On the second day, students will build their own budget and forecasting model to bring a practical application to the skills they have learned. The model will include a budget, rolling forecast, variance report as well as scenarios and sensitivity testing.

These axes are a joke.

Overstating the 'understatement'

. "Blinded by the light…"
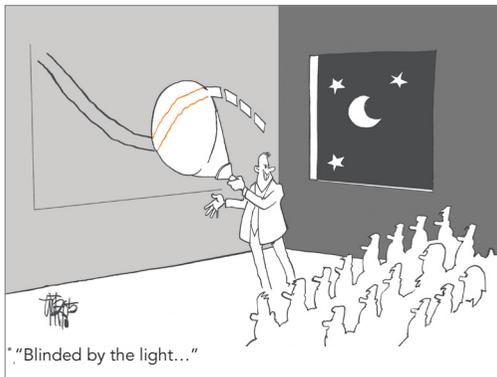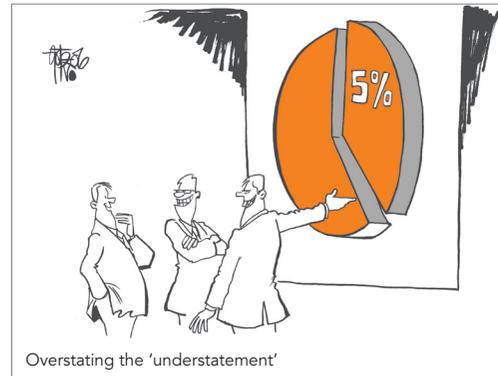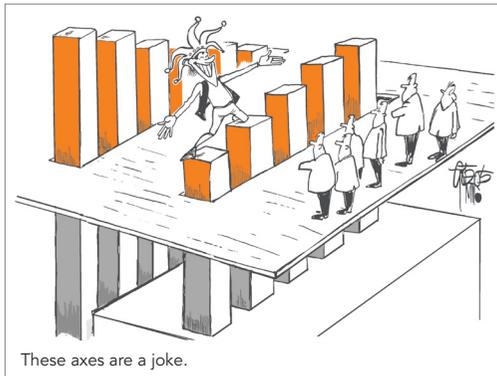
COURSE CONTENT

DAY ONE: BUDGETING AND FORECASTING
+Theory Budgets and Strategic Planning
+Linking Budgets to business objectives
+Budgeting to achieve organisational objectives
+How to turn measurement into management
+Using Budgets as Performance Management
+The impact of budgets on organisational performance
+Successfully integrating forecasting and budgeting as essential tools for measuring performance
+Translating the organisation's values into measures and targets
+Reporting
+Using reporting to promote accountability
+Variance analysis
+Budgeting and forecasting as a planning and management tool
+Assessment and selection of appropriate systems
+Budgeting Techniques
+Historical-based versus Zero-based budgeting
+Top down vs bottom up
+Activity Based Budgeting
+Differences between a static, flexible and rolling budget
+Budgeting for capital expenditure vs. operational expenditure
+Limitations of budgets
+Estimations and rigidity
+Staff perceptions and changing environments
+Dysfunctional budgeting behaviour Budgeting "Soft" Skills
+Achieving buy-in from stakeholders
+Involving non-financial management of the organisation
+Techniques in getting your budget approved
+Managing conflicting priorities and demands
+Setting timelines

DAY TWO: BUDGET AND FORECAST MODELLING
+Building a Budget
+Revenue calculation
+Headcount and other staffing costs
+Operational expenses
+Capital expenditure
+Building a Forecast
+Incorporating budgets, actuals and forecast
+Creating a "rolling" forecast with live data
+Reporting
+Creating an actual vs budget vs forecast report
+Building a variance analysis with "alert flags"

IMPLEMENTING WINNING KPIS
+What are key performance indicators?
+Case studies.
  The characteristics of winning KPIs.
+The difference between the 3 types of performance measures.
+Lead and lag indicators revisited
+The 10, 80,10 rule for performance measures.
+How to develop and use winning KPIs: the 12-step model
  The four foundation stones of a KPI project.
+Workshop #1: Brainstorming critical success factors
+Present KPIs in a decision-based way
+Daily KPI reporting.
+Weekly KPI reporting.
+Monthly performance measure.
+Reporting to the Board, management and staff.
+Workshop #2: Designing a dashboard for the Board
+(attendees in sector groups) part of step 10
+Workshop #3: Developing team balanced scorecards
+Reviewing a sample of performance measures from the
  performance measures database
+Summary and conclusions – and the road ahead

WORKSHOP CHARACTER
All our training course offerings differ substantially from typical one to many instructor led courses: there are held as workshops where interaction and the individual challenges of the attendees are an integral part of the learning, Participants are encouraged to submit anonymised versions of their management communications (pres-entations, reports, charts, etc.). Those will then be used as hands-on examples for applying the taught principles or can be discussed in one on one sessions with the presenters.

TARGET GROUPS
Our course and consulting offering is designed to serve a broad range of professionals: anyone who is involved in making sense of and communicating quantitative business information. This includes people in business, non-profit, and government organizations, from secretaries who need to prepare reports for their managers to CFO's who need to keep their fingers on the pulse of the company, as well as analysts of all types (financial, sales, marketing, research, to name a few).

OUTCOMES
+Know how to select the best means of displaying your data to
  present your message
+Be able to speak in the language of graphs
+Understand why some means of presentation work and others
  utterly fail
+Design dashboards can be used to monitor what's going on at
  a glance
+Know how to design and interact with graphical representations
  of data to spot and understand meaningful patterns, trends, and
  exceptions

PROFESSIONAL USE OF EXCEL FOR FINANCE PROFESSIONALS
This course provides practical instruction and numerous tips and tricks to create sophisticated charts that can be used as standardised templates – without VBA programming. excel.hichert.com. It elimi-nates countless hours of confusion and frustration.

WORKSHOP DATES 2008

Date	City	Topic
June		
04	Sydney	Implementing winning KPIs
05	Sydney	Implementing winning KPIs
09	Melbourne	Financial Modelling in Excel
10	Sydney	Business Reports and Presentation
11	Melbourne	Budgeting and Forecasting in Excel
11	Sydney	Meaningful Business charts and Dashboards
12	Sydney	Chart and Table design with Excel
17	Melbourne	Implementing winning KPIs
17	Melbourne	Business Reports and Presentation
18	Melbourne	Meaningful Business charts and Dashboards
July		
01	Sydney	Financial Modelling in Excel
09	Brisbane	Financial Modelling in Excel
10	Brisbane	Budgeting and Forecasting Modelling in Excel
22	Sydney	Budgeting and Forecasting Modelling in Excel
August		
05	Sydney	Financial Modelling in Excel
06	Sydney	Budgeting and Forecasting Modelling in Excel
12	Sydney	Business Reports and Presentation
13	Sydney	Meaningful Business charts and Dashboards
14	Melbourne	Chart and Table design with Excel
19	Melbourne	Business Reports and Presentation
20	Melbourne	Meaningful Business charts and Dashboards
26	Melbourne	Budgeting and Forecasting Modelling in Excel
27	Melbourne	Chart and Table design with Excel
October		
07	Sydney	Business Reports and Presentation
08	Sydney	Meaningful Business charts and Dashboards
13	Melbourne	Quick Month End
14	Melbourne	Implementing winning KPIs
15	Melbourne	Implementing winning KPIs
17	Sydney	Implementing winning KPIs
20	Sydney	Quick Month End
21	Melbourne	Business Reports and Presentation
22	Melbourne	Meaningful Business charts and Dashboards

SPEAKERS

Rolf Hichert, Prof. Dr.-Ing., Head of HICHERT+PARTNER AG. Prior to this he was a professor at the Universities of Applied Sciences of Constance and Eberswalde, managing director of MIS Switzerland Inc., co-founder and managing director of MIK as well as a management consultant with McKinsey & Co., Inc.

Martin Kratky, Co-Founder INTALIGN. Martin's expertise in Business Intelligence and Performance Management Systems is derived through practical experience and extensive knowledge working for a wide array of clients with MIS AG for 9 years across the globe. In 2003 Martin co-founded INTALIGN specialising in custom-built BI solutions (reporting, analytics and planning) on the Microsoft platform and professional information design for business reporting. Martin's recent clients include the Australian Gas and Light Company, Honda UK, Boots Healthcare, BMW Australia, e-Kit, Emirates Airlines (Dubai), State Street Australia, Reading Cinemas among others. Martin is a frequent speaker at special interest conferences.

Holger Gerths, Dipl.-Ing., Head of itbuero Gerths in Berlin. Prior to this he was a software developer at MIS Inc. Holger Gerths is the 'inventor' of our Excel tricks and helps in matters concerning Excel charts, MS Office applications and other software issues.

David Parmenter is the CEO of Waymark Solutions, a performance management company. He is an international presenter who is known for his thought provoking and lively sessions, which have led to substantial change in many organisations. David is a leading expert in: the development of winning KPIs, replacing the annual planning process with quarterly rolling planning, quick month-end processes and converting reporting to a decision based tool.
John Wiley & Sons Inc have published his first two books "Key Performance Indicators – developing, implementing and using winning KPIs" and "Pareto's 80/20 rule for Corporate accountants".

Markus Wolff, Dipl.-Bw. (FH), MBA, is our partner for projects in Austria and is a specialist for sophisticated Excel charts. Before that he was a financial analyst in Graz; Austria, and an instructor in adult education.

Danielle Stein Fairhurst, MBA, is a qualified business professional with over twelve years' experience as a financial analyst. With her talent for financial modelling and professional approach, she helps her clients create meaningful financial models in the form of business cases, pricing models and management reports. She has hands-on experience in a number of industry sectors, including telecoms, information systems, manufacturing and financial services. Danielle is regularly engaged as a speaker, course facilitator, financial modelling consultant and analyst. She runs regular training seminars around Australia and globally.

Clean up the clutter

Don't water down information.

Using two different scales is criminal

It's torture trying to get any clear information.

"You can tell he still thinks in Excel!"
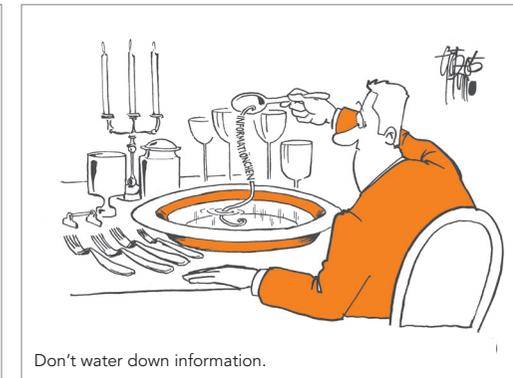
CONSULTING

Evaluation of existing MIS and report solutions, redesign of manage-
ment reports and development of presentation standards are the main
focus of our consulting services, see the following "chart strip".

SOFTWARE

The examples shown here and on pages before should illustrate how
consistent application of the HI-CHART Rules leads to charts which are
easier to understand. Using our Excel chart tricks is helpful in develop-
ing charts, creating sophisticated solutions even without program-
ming. Uniform scaling, axes which are well aligned, highlighting using
arrows or circles, colored axes, masking figures that are too small, etc.
– all of which are tricks that function without VBA programming or
macros. Standard and practice examples are available to download
free of charge, individual Excel solutions are developed according to
the customer's needs. Our experience has shown that five to eight
adjustable standard charts (templates) can represent over 90 percent
of the charts found in a typical business report. For examples, see:
www.intalign.com.
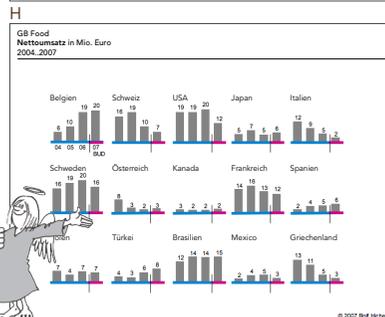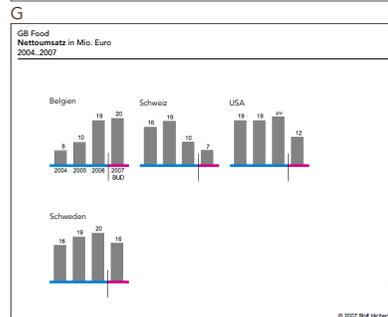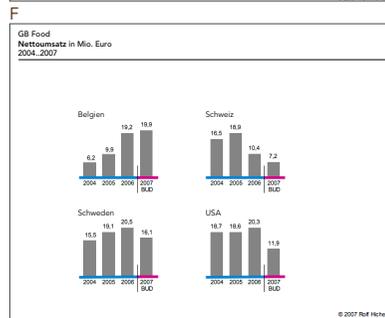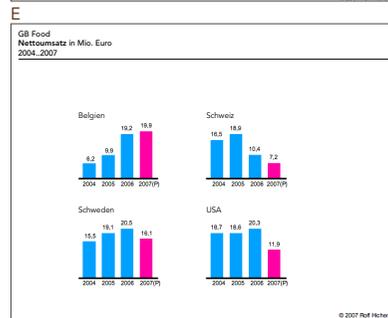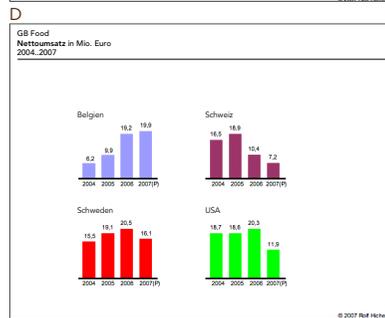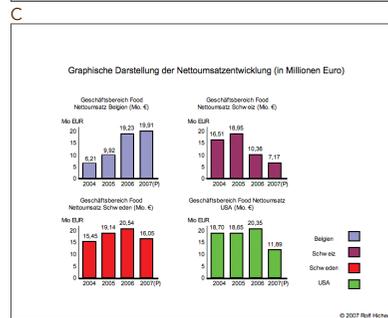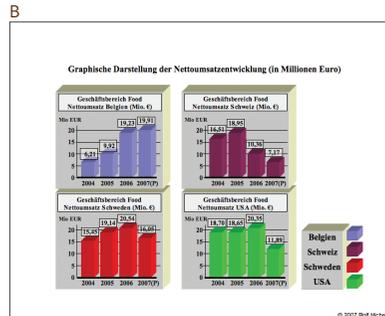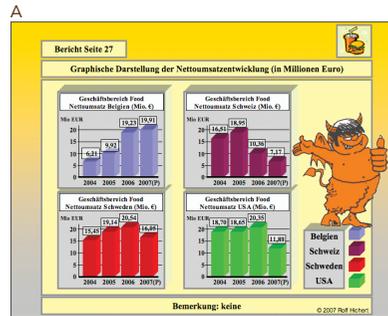
Charts created with Excel.
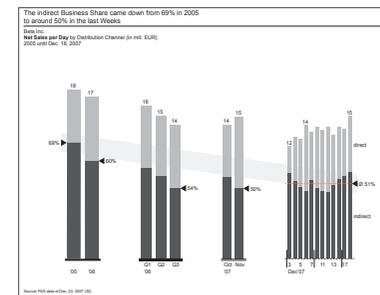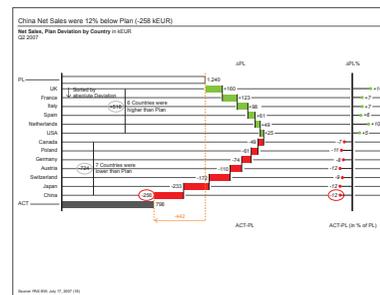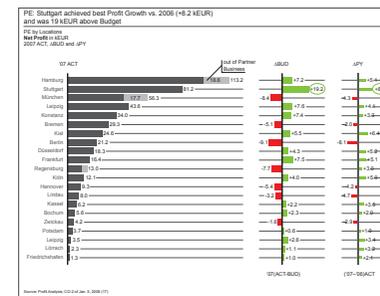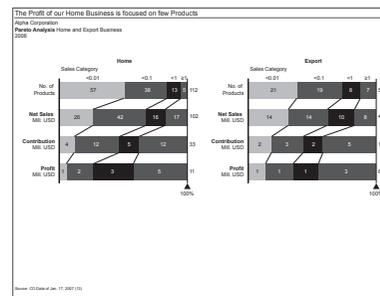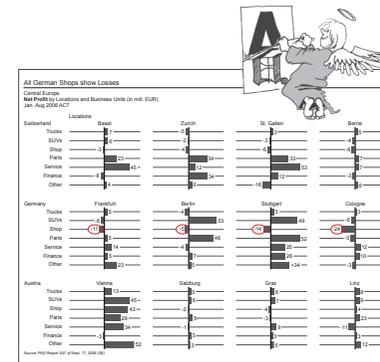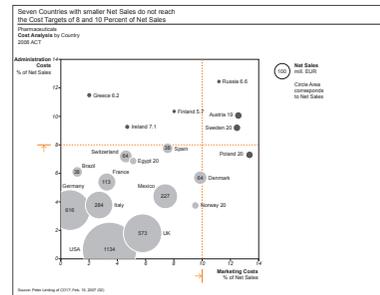
APPENDIX

Here we would like to present our partners, a few references, our posters and manuscripts as well as seminar clients.

PARTNERS

ifb Suisse AG in Zürich: As a consultant and software provider, the ifb group is specialized in corporate management, risk management, accounting and reporting. Reporting also includes redesign of reporting systems based on the SUCCESS Rules presented here, for which specially trained ifb consultants are available. Consultations are carried out in close cooperation with HICHERT+PARTNER. The ifb group includes companies in Germany, the USA, China, Austria, Switzerland and Luxembourg with currently roughly 400 employees.

ifb-group.com
Contact: Johannes Balling, partner

itbuero Gerths in Berlin: developments in Excel, database integration and OLAP applications are itbuero Gerths' key activities. Holger Gerths is the leading expert in the German-speaking region particularly in developing professional Excel charts to use in financial applications and related segments. Many customers are served jointly by itbuero Gerths and HICHERT+PARTNER.

itbuero.gerths.de
Contact: Holger Gerths, Managing Director

Vereon AG in Kreuzlingen: Vereon is a specialist in expert seminars and conferences. Vereon is responsible for the planning as well as administrative and financial processing of all events for HICHERT+PARTNER.

vereon.ch
Contact: Johannes von Mulert, Managing Director

INTALIGN in Sydney: helps organisations translate business strategies into action by ensuring effective and efficient handling of management information focusing on:
+Professional presentation and visualisation through business information design programs
+Implementing strategic Corporate Performance Management (CPM) business consulting solutions
+Custom-built BI solutions (analytics, budgeting and planning) on the Microsoft platform
+Guided Analytics and Data mining solutions

intalign.com
Contact: Martin Kratky, Director

TESTIMONIALS

Here are excerpts taken from the comments made by seminar participants – You will find these texts in their entirety under: testimonials.hichert.com:

+Jens Gräf Horváth & Partner
"...his talk was an extraordinarily valuable contribution to our symposium."

+Hon Luong Ly Solvias
"I strongly recommend this seminar to all controllers."

+Barbara Hilger VNR
"Simply fantastic. My recommendation: make time for two days."

+Georg Karolus-Burkhart Telekom Austria
"Since we have been following these recommendations, we virtually cannot keep enough of our reports in stock."

+Michael Wilfing-May MIS Austria
"I am of the opinion that no one else in the German-speaking region has taken such a critical and competent approach to management reports and presentations."

+Dirk Schimkat La Prairie Group
"A good investment of two days' time."

+Herwig R. Friedag Internationaler Controllerverein
"...have never had such an experience at our conference: by far the best grade for a speaker in many years

+Marcel Baumgartner Nestlé
"Mr. Hichert has done an excellent job to identify what needs to be improved when communicating quantitative information to decision makers."

+Torsten Schiermeister debitel
"Many thanks for two extremely informative days at this seminar!"

+Stephan Pflaum HVB Direkt
"I can heartily recommend this seminar."

+Prof. Dr. Jürgen Weber WHU
"This was an 'aha experience' not only for my students."

+Dr. Martin Hutzli ABB
"We plan on putting his suggestions into action."

+Heike Spöhrer Lufthansa
"Here a professional has made a lasting impression on nearly 50 participants."

+Dirk Wiedensohler Gütermann
"A must for every controller!"

+Baris Ergun Swisscom
"Your first meeting with Mr. Hichert is guaranteed to be an "aha experience."

+Martin Harbauer Huber+Suhner
"He has set new standards for Huber+Suhner."

POSTERS

Details about our current posters as well as the opportunity to place orders are found under: posters.hichert.com. The poster 'HI-CHART RULES' sheds light on implementing the SUCCESS Rules for business charts using small *Lo-Hi illustrations*.

'HI-CHART TEMPLATES' shows 28 examples for quantitative slides with a uniform notation concept. The slides shown here will be available for downloading soon under: excel.hichert.com. 'HI-CHART CARTOONS' shows 28 Cartoons of Götz Wiedenroth.
Another poster 'HI-CHART NOTATION' is planned for the underlying notation concept.

The 'HI-CHART CARTOONS' poster available from our office contains 36 humourous examples of information design challenges.
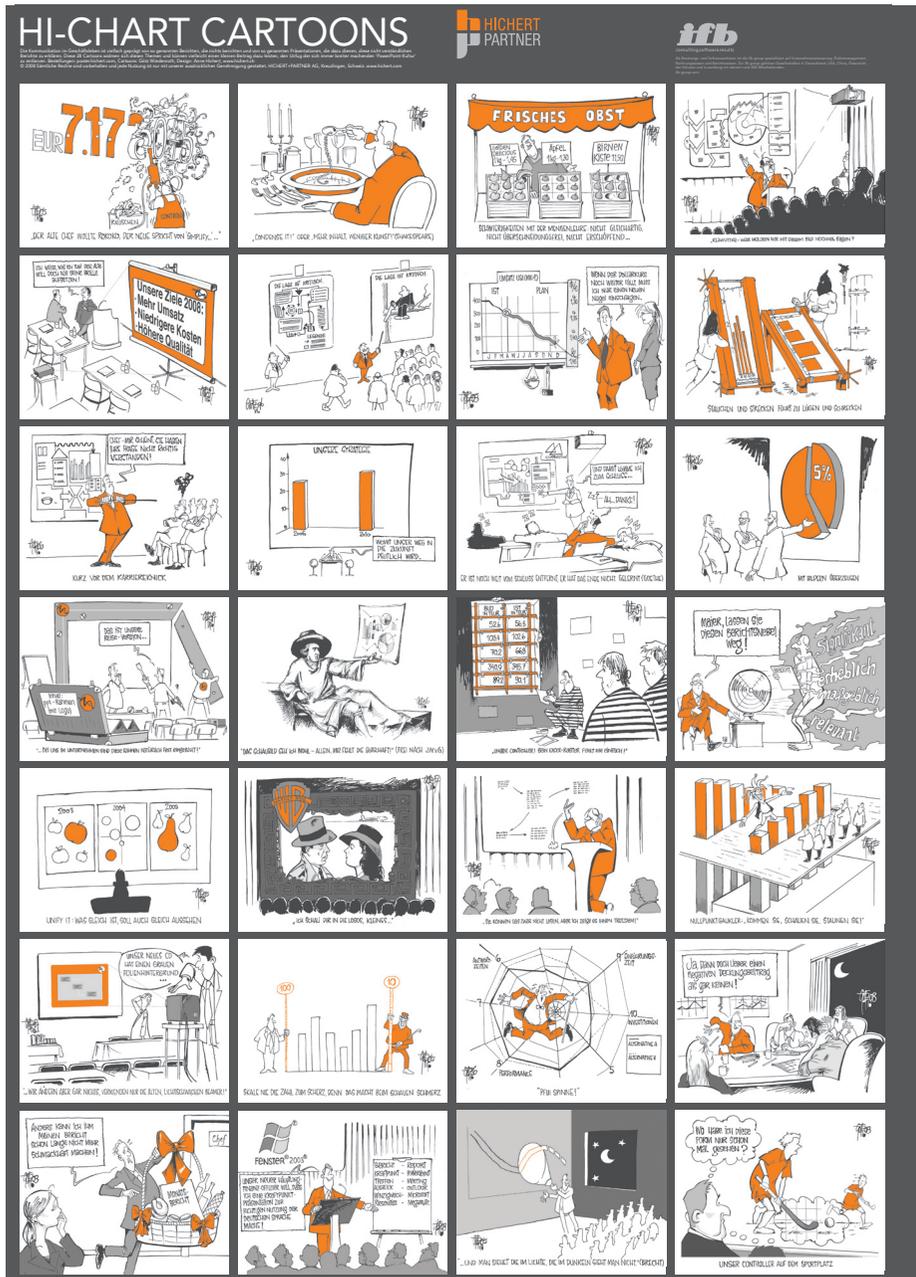
LITERATURE

For publications by Rolf Hichert see: publications.hichert.com, general references on this subject are available under: literature.hichert.com

WORKSHOP MATERIALS

A condensed version of documentation from our seminar and talks on 'Management Reports and Presentations' can be downloaded free of charge as a PDF file on www.hichert.com or www.intalign.com. You can order the full materials used in our seminars – even without attending the seminar – at: www.intalign.com. Currently, the materials on 'Excel-Charts 1' (roughly 50 pages) and on 'Management Reports and Presentations' (roughly 200 pages) are available. These manuscripts are no substitute for seminar attendance; however, they do sum up the most important points and serve as a reference guide.
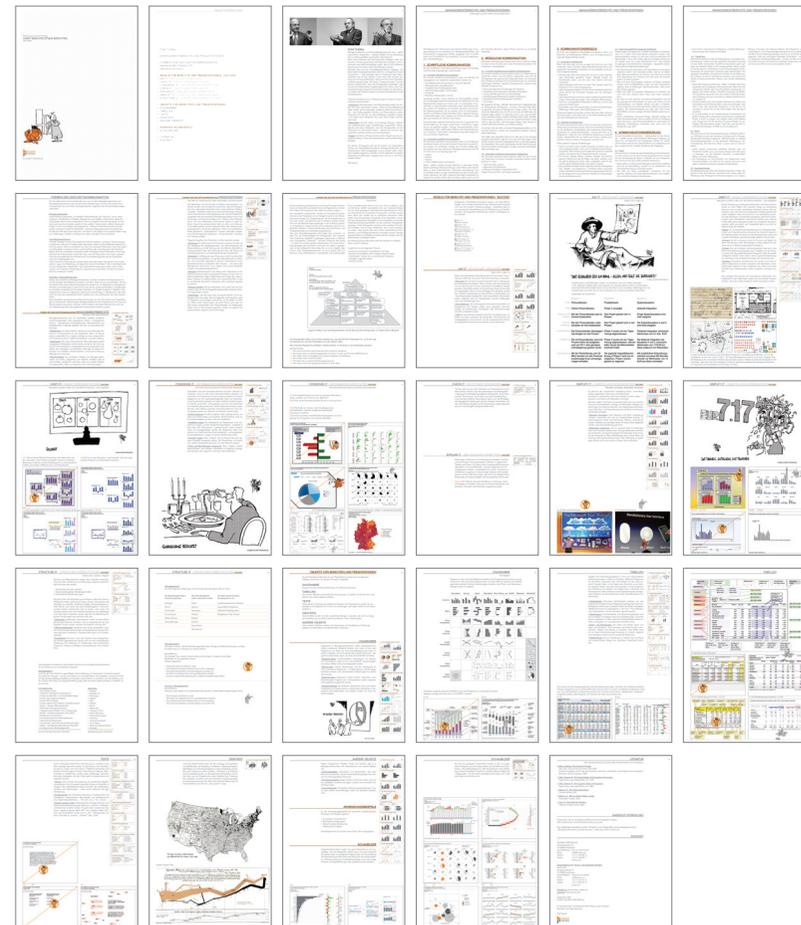
CUSTOMERS

The following companies held in-house seminars from 2003 to 2008 with Rolf Hichert or allowed their employees to participate in our open seminars (selection):

+ ABB + Actelion + ADAC + adidas + AGIS + Airbus + Allianz + ALSTOM + Altana + Amadeus + AMD + Ankerbrot + AOK + apetito + Aramark + AstraZeneca + ATEL + Austria Tabak + Austrian Airlines + AWD + AXA + Bank Austria Creditanstalt + Bank Julius Bär + Bank LEU + Bank Sarasin + Bank Vontobel + Bankgesellschaft Berlin + Barth + BASF + Bauerfeind + Bayer + Bayerischer Rundfunk + BayWa + BDO Visura + Benteler + Berliner Bank + BILLA + Billag + BIPA + Bluewin + BMW M + BNP PARIBAS + Boehringer Ingelheim + Bristol-Myers Squibb + Brita + Brose + Bundesagentur für Arbeit + C1 CONEXUS + Clariden Bank + Clearstream + Colt Telecom + Commerzbank + Corus + Credit Suisse + DaimlerChrysler + DAK + DATEV + debitel + Degussa + DekaBank + DEKRA + DELO + Delvag + Deutsche Bank + Deutsche Bundesbank + Deutsche Leasing + Deutsche Post + Deutsche Postbank + Deutsche Telekom + Deutscher Herold + DHL + DORMA + Dresdner Bank + DVAG + DVB Bank + E.G.O. + E.ON + EADS + Eckes-Granini + Eduscho + Elbe Flugzeugwerke + Electrolux + EM.TV + EnBW + Energie Steiermark + Ernst Klett + Esprit + ETH + EVN + Evobus + Faber-Castell + Fernwaerme Wien + Fielmann + FinanzIT + Flughafen München + Flughafen Wien + Framfab + Fraunhofer + Freudenberg + Fuji Photo + GAD + Generali + Glas Trösch + Glatt + Gruner & Jahr + Gütermann + Hagleitner + HALI + Hallesche + Hannover Rück + Hansgrohe + HDI + Heer VBS + Heinrich Bauer + Hella + Helsana + Hengstenberg + Henkel + Heraeus + HEW + Hilti + HOCHTIEF + Hoesch + Huber+Suhner + HUK-COBURG + Hutchison + HVB + IBM + ifb + IG Metall + IHK + Infront + Intersport + Ivoclar Vivadent + Jowat + Jungheinrich + KABEG + Kantonsspital SG + Kapsch + Karstadt Quelle + Klinikum Nürnberg + Klöckner Pentaplast + Kölner Verkehrs-Betriebe + Konica Minolta + KPMG + Kraft Foods + La Roche + Landesbank Berlin + Landkreis Osnabrück + LBS + Lexware + Linde + Lindt & Sprüngli + Lübecker Nachrichten + Lufthansa + LV 1871 + Maag + Magistrat Wien + Mainova + MAN Nutzfahrzeuge + Mann+Hummel + Media Saturn + MERKUR + Miba + Microsoft + MIGROS + MIGROSBANK + MIS + Montblanc + Münchener Rück + Münchener Verein + Naveg + Nestec + Nestlé + Nordwest Lotto + norisbank + Novartis + ÖBB + OMV + ORF + Ostfriesische Tee + Otto + Otto Junker + Partylite + Paul Hartmann + PCK + Penny-Markt + Philips + PHOENIX + Prettl + Pro 7 + Provida + Provinzial + PUMA + PWC + R+V + Raiffeisen Zentralbank + Rail Cargo + Railion Danmark + Ratiodata + Reader's Digest + Red Bull + REWE + Ringier + Roche + Rodenstock + RWE + SAF + Sage KHK + Sana Kliniken + SAP + SBB + Schering + Schindler + Schüco + Schwabe + Schwäbisch Hall + Schwarz Pharma + SICK + Siemens + Sika + Sirona + Skidata + Softlab + Solvias + Spanset + Spar + Sparkasse OÖ + Spinner + SR Technics + Stadt Zürich + Stadtwerke Augsburg + Stadtwerke Osnabrück + Stage Entertainment + Styria + Südpack + Sulo + SUVA + SWISS + Swiss Life + Swisscanto + Swisscom + Swissport + Telekom Austria + Telekurs + Thurgauer Kantonalbank + Tiroler Versicherung + T-Mobile + Trichema + Trodat + T-Systems + tucano + TUI + TÜV + UBS + Vaillant + Vattenfall + Verbund + Vita + Viterra + VNR + Voest Alpine + Volkswagen + WDR + Wien Energie Fernwärme + Windmöller & Hölscher + Winterthur + Wittenstein + WOBA + Würth + ZF + Zürcher Kantonalbank + Zürich Versicherungen +