ACCESS ‹‹‹‹‹‹

By Patricia Cox

Master Budget Project: What If?

Last month we created a budget report for sales. The production budget report can be created in a similar fashion using the table we set up last month and adding data for production. The data for these budgets comes from the assumptions in the March 2010 *Strategic Finance* article, "Excel-Based Budgeting for Production," by Teresa Stephenson and Jason Porter. Additional budgets from the Excel series are a little more complex and will be addressed in coming months.

This month we will create a form that allows us to alter budget assumptions on the fly so that we can run some "What if?" alternatives through the budget process. As we progress through the project, this will ultimately affect all of our reports and the entire budget. Budget processes tend to be iterative, and this will allow us to vary our budget assumptions and see the effects of changing, for example, the sales growth percent assumption. Ultimately, we can capture our finalized assumptions into a table for comparison to actual numbers as the budget year ensues.

What If?

What if we want to check out the effect on the budget of varying the sales price of the Deluxe bike or the sales growth percent of the Basic bike? One handy way to do this is to enter numbers to a form, use queries to perform calculations and update tables, and then use a button to show us the resulting budget reports. Let's create a form for capturing the assumptions.

Figure 1. Form for Entering Assumptions

Budget Assumptions Entry Form

Sales Growth Assumptions

	Q1 Units	Growth per QTR	Sales Price
Basic Model:	4,000	2%	$150
Deluxe Model:	2,000	5%	$350

Create a blank form and save it as Budget Assumptions Entry Form. In Design View, add a label for "Sales Growth Assumptions." Then create two sets of text box controls for the number of units from Q1 (Q1 Sales), sales growth percent (Growth per Qtr), and sales prices assumptions (Sales Price) for

both Basic and Deluxe models, as shown on the finished form in Figure 1. Be sure to go to the properties for each control and type in an appropriate name. For example, for the Basic controls, use "SalesUnitsBasic" for Q1 Units, "GrowthBasic" for Growth per QTR, and "SalesPriceBasic" for Sales Price.

Change the format for each of the controls. The format for the Q1 Units controls should be standard; for Growth per QTR, it should be percent; and for Sales Price, it should be currency. We also want to set the default values for each control so that we don't have to keep entering them as we work with the database. The Default Values property can be found on the Data tab of the Property Sheet. Use the values shown in Figure 1 for the default values of each of the six controls. For the Basic Model Growth per QTR, use .02 as the default value.

Because we changed the format to percent, it will show up as 2% on the screen. After you've made all these changes, save the form.

Add Duplicate Feature

In earlier versions of Access, when creating a series of controls like we just did, I would go to the Edit menu and use the Duplicate feature to copy and paste a textbox in one step. Since the Edit menu went away in Access 2007, I needed to add it to the Quick Access Toolbar using the following steps:

1. Click the Customize Quick Access Toolbar dropdown and select More Commands.
2. In the Choose Commands From dropdown, choose All Commands.
3. Select Duplicate.
4. Click Add to move Duplicate over to the right column.
5. Click OK.

Duplicate will now appear on your Quick Access Toolbar. When in Design View, you can select a control and click the Duplicate tool in order to make a copy quickly. In the form we just created, you could've placed the first textbox control and then used the Duplicate feature to add the rest.

Whole Units

One of the things I noticed in the Bob's Bicycles Excel workbook created by Stephenson and Porter was that total listed for the Deluxe Bicycle for 2010 Q4 didn't look like it was 2,315 times $350. As I looked closer at the spreadsheet, I realized that the assumptions when carried out in calculations resulted in 2315.25 units. In other words, a "partial" bicycle would be produced when carried out to two decimal places. In Access so far, our data has only been entered manually from the spreadsheet. Ultimately, however, the Access budget will have to stand alone. Depending on settings or functions used in Excel or Access, we could assume that only full bicycles would be produced or that partials would be possible. We could expand the project and account for a work-in-process inventory. In the spreadsheet model, my assumption is that partials are shown in the sales assumptions. As you work on your budget, it's your choice whether to allow for partial items. I'm going to assume only full units for sale as I proceed. This will make any accuracy checks a little simpler.

To allow only for whole units, assign a field data type of Integer or Long Integer. Access won't store the decimal result. The equivalent in Excel is to use the INT function in calculations. Again, since budgets are estimates, you may or may not want to do so.

As we move forward in 2012, we will use queries, the values for assumptions entered in the form, and the values in tables to create the budgets to populate the budget numbers in the Budget table.

I hope readers will have a little time off to spend with family and friends over the holidays. Happy Holidays and Happy New Year to one and all! **SF**

Patricia Cox has taught Excel and Access to management accounting students and other college majors and has consulted with local area businesses to create database reporting systems since 1998. She is also a member of IMA's Greater Milwaukee Chapter. To send Patricia a question to address in the Access column, e-mail her at kathrynmann@tds.net.