

When to use a Spreadsheet over Software



I'm sure you think that we will be biased, and tell you that you should always be using a spreadsheet over software, but that is just not the case. There are many times when a spreadsheet just won't do the job, and we are the first to admit when those times occur. There are also however, many times when people feel pressured into buying software, and a spreadsheet would have done a better job for a fraction of the price. That is why we try to educate people as to when to use spreadsheet, and when to move to software. Just because your current spreadsheets may not be sufficient, does not mean that spreadsheets can't do the job, you may just need an upgrade. So when do you move to software, and when do you get a spreadsheet upgrade? In the interest of keeping this somewhat objective, lets first look at when a spreadsheet is possibly NOT the answer.

When not to use a spreadsheet

1. There is too much data

Too much' is a relative term, so you may need to find out when this is the case, it also depends how many formulas rely on that data. For example, 100,000 rows of data is no issue but that data with 20 formulas, each checking those 100,000 rows of data 100,000 times (1 for each row) will cause Excel to crash. If you want high levels of calculations done on a huge batch of data, it may be a good reason not to use Excel. Again, it depends on what needs to be done.

2. Automatic integration with other software

Again, this is not a hard and fast rule, as you can sometimes automatically collect data from other software programmes into Excel. As a general rule, most software packages export to Excel, but that is not an automatic exchange of data. If you have a software package that you want to communicate seamlessly with another software package, and the two are made to communicate with each other, then that may be the best option. If you want to analyse exported data, then spreadsheets are back on the table.

Does that rule you out for a spreadsheet? If you're not sure, please get in touch and we'll let you know if your project is possible in Excel. If this doesn't rule you out, then take a look below, at some of the reasons why you SHOULD use spreadsheets as software. Then you can make the right decision for your business.

When to use a spreadsheet

1. Spreadsheets and software are not that different

Invoice & Billing Information	
Company	Sample Company
Address 1	Unit 3 Corporation Park
Address 2	1 High Street
Contact	Mr Client
Telephone	0800 123 4567
Fax	0800 123 4567
Mobile	0800 123 4567
Email	client@spread.biz
Address 3	Unit 3 Corporation Park
Post Code	123 4567 89

Project Details	
Number of Jobs	4
Jobs Completed	3
Project Start Date	29 August 2015
Project End Date	02 September 2015
Project Completion	75%
Days Remaining	7

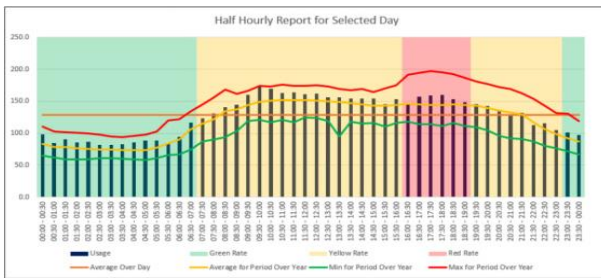
Software developers use coding to 'tell' the software package what to do. We use formulas to 'tell' spreadsheets what to do. Yes, there are fewer limitations on what a software developer can code than what we can do using Excel, but those limitations may not be as great as what you may expect. Excel is not just for storing data, or doing basic calculations, it can do so much. It can do many things that software can do, only Excel provides a great platform to easily create a solution, instead of programming software from scratch. If spreadsheets can do what you need, why not make use of them?

2. You want an uncomplicated solution



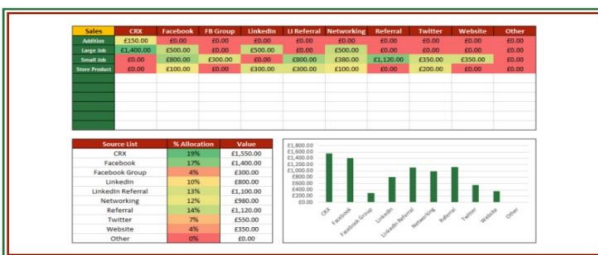
Software is often made to accommodate many different requirements, so it is quite bulky and 'busy'. You may end up not using all the functionality (see the next point), which means that the software becomes too complicated. Also, if you're used to using spreadsheets, you know where to put the data and you know what to do. Now all of a sudden everything has been switched around. Then just when you figure out what to do, they do an upgrade, and everything switches around again. If you need the full functionality of the software then this may be something you need to endure, but if you can get the job done with a simple, easy to understand spreadsheet, why don't you? If that's what you're used to, then using one of our spreadsheets will be second nature.

3. You need something bespoke and affordable



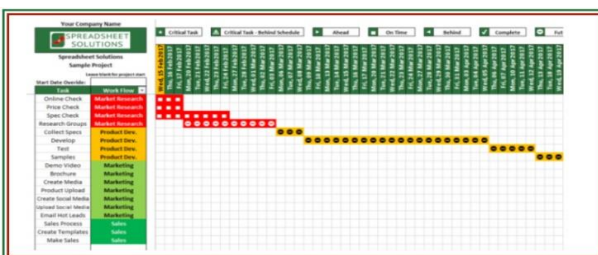
Software is designed to sell as many copies as usual. It is so expensive to develop, that the only way to make it worth while and affordable is to sell many copies. This means that often software is designed to do as much as possible, so that they can cover as many user requirements as possible. You may find yourself in a situation where you need 10 things done, the software does 100 things, but only 9 of the things you need. Now you have something which doesn't do 1 thing you want, but it does 91 things you don't need. We create spreadsheets to do the 10 things you need. No more, no less. Not only this, but it is quicker to develop, and therefore not as expensive.

4. You need something transparent and customisable



I often hear an argument 'for' using programmed software along the lines of 'it automatically checks that, and uploads it to here, and I don't have to do anything'. That is great, but how do you know what it has done? Software is getting more and more clever, and we are getting more and more dependant on it, and we actually don't even know what it is doing most of the time. As a business owner, you need to understand what has been done. A spreadsheet will do the calculations for you, but you can clearly see where the data is, and what it is producing. No more, "I entered that data, where did it go". Transparent software, which does what you need, but keeps you in control.

5. You want something that puts you in control



Many people use spreadsheets in the first place because they want to be in control. As we said above, software often takes that control away, leaving you wondering what it has done. Spreadsheets put you back in control, as you dictate not only what it does, but you can clearly see what has been achieved. The main reason why people want to progress from spreadsheets is because THEY can't get the spreadsheets to do what they need, not because they don't want to use spreadsheets. That is why WE are here. We can get spreadsheets to do more than what most other people can. We want to put you in control by making you a spreadsheet for your business, to do exactly what you need it to do.

So what do you need? Can it be done using spreadsheets? Are you already putting Excel to work in your business, why not get it to do more?

Get in touch, and let's discuss what you need, and see if there is a spreadsheet solution. If not, we will recommend that you use a software package. If you go for a software package first, do you think they will say, "Well actually, this could be done in a spreadsheet"? We doubt it.

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