MERCURY

Mastering Spreadsheet Skills for Planning, Forecasting & Budgeting

31 January – 4 February 2027
Sharm El-Sheikh (Egypt)



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Introduction

Planning, forecasting, and budgeting are three of the most critical functions in business. Appropriately performed, they can lead to exceptional success.

Yet many people do not use the tools available to them to their best advantage. In this financial forecasting and planning spreadsheet course, we will use Excel to demonstrate how to improve your forecasting, planning, and budgeting.

By developing better spreadsheets and models, planning is more accurate, forecasting is more precise, and budgeting is more attainable. And the time to create these is dramatically reduced.

Forecasts, plans, and budgets may be improved through extensive what-if analysis to find critical factors for management to monitor. Furthermore, these tools can be easily transferred into business plans, which guide the firm's overall performance.

Targeted Groups

- Financial accounting team members.
- Cost and management accounting staff.
- Finance managers.
- Budget managers.
- Commercial managers.
- Capital investment and project team members.
- This financial forecasting and planning spreadsheet is for employees who want to gain excellent knowledge to improve their careers.

Mastering Financial Planning with Spreadsheets

As budgets are a crucial component of any financial strategy, understanding how to create a detailed financial plan spreadsheet is invaluable.

This financial forecasting and planning spreadsheet course covers advanced techniques for developing sophisticated financial forecasting tools within Excel to enhance predictions and manage your financial budget spreadsheet effectively.

Building on fundamental spreadsheet skills, participants will learn to design comprehensive models that integrate financial planning and budget forecasts with business accounting spreadsheet methods.

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The goal is to simplify complex financial data management and improve analytical capabilities for more informed decision-making processes.

Course Objectives

By the end of this financial forecasting and planning spreadsheet course, participants will be able to:

- Understand the various Excel tools available for planning, forecasting, and budgeting.
- Perform sophisticated "what-if" scenarios to improve decision-making.
- Know what Excel techniques to use in a given situation.
- Use the most advanced spreadsheet techniques.
- Know when to take a chance and when not to.
- Learn to use and expand a range of Excel models.
- Develop an improved understanding of how well-prepared Excel models help the corporation in today's challenging world.
- Understand the risks and rewards of various planning decisions.
- Calculate the impact of alternative inputs on critical outputs.
- Understand the cost/benefit of every decision.
- Enhance their knowledge with the use of the models in the case studies.

Targeted Competencies

By the end of this financial forecasting and planning spreadsheet course, the target competencies will be able to:

- Budgeting.
- Building models in Microsoft Excel.
- Forecasting.
- Evaluating proposals.
- Applying Microsoft Excel functions and tools.
- Assessing the budgeting process.

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Course Content

Unit 1: Introduction to Spreadsheets using Excel

- Worksheet fundamentals.
- Use the F4 key for relative and absolute cell references.
- Expose ALL formulas in a worksheet using the built-in function for faster review.
- Naming cells and ranges for quicker, more accurate work.
- Freeze panes, columns, and rows for easier viewing while scrolling.
- Protecting cells and ranges to stabilize models.
- Function wizard benefits.
- Linking cells from various worksheets to reduce errors.
- Secret keyboard shortcuts.

Unit 2: Proper Planning

- Introduction to planning.
- What-if analysis:
  - Scenario analysis techniques.
  - Sensitivity analysis using spinners and scroll bars.
- Economic Order Quantity EOQ.
- Build out Data tables to see an entire range of options.
- 1-way Data tables.
- 2-way Data tables.
- Maximizing vs. optimizing techniques.
- Utilizing the goal seek command to calculate a reverse equation.
- Using Solver to calculate optimal product mix, distribution problems, and capital budgeting.

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Unit 3: Fantastic Forecasting

- What is forecasting?
- Qualitative techniques and their uses.
- Quantitative methods and their uses.
- Smoothing techniques.
- Regression analysis.
- Time series analysis.
- Forecasting growth rates for verification.
- Internal IGR.
- Sustainable SGR.
- MIN and MAX functions.
- MEDIAN, MODE, and AVERAGE functions.
- GEOMEAN to calculate Average Growth Rate AGR.
- When should you use RANK, QUARTILE, and PERCENTILE?

Unit 4: Beyond Budgeting

- What is a budget?
- How to build a simple budget?
- Build a flexible budget model.
- Build out a complete budget.
- Operating budget elements.
- Financial budget elements.
- Linking them.
- What is the variance analysis report, and why is it essential to improve your budget?
- Calculating variance analysis to see what must be changed.

Unit 5: Putting It Together - Building The Comprehensive Model

- Build your planning model.
- Build your forecasting model.
- Build your budgeting model.
- Link these together.
- Leverage optimization through capital structure.
- Bond buybacks.