

Waterfall Chart in Power BI

Version 1.0

Author-Shivani Kaushal

Date: 12 May 2018

A waterfall chart is a form of data representation that helps in understanding the cumulative effect of sequentially arranged positive or negative values. It shows running total as values are added or subtracted. The intermediate values can either be category based or time based. This chart is also called Flying Bricks Chart, Mario Chart or Cascade Chart.

Availability in Power BI:

Yes

Availability in Other Tools :

This is available in Tableau and Lumira.

Possible Usage :

- We can use this chart when we have changes across the measure different categories or time series.
- This chart is helpful in examining the major changes contributing to the total value.
- This chart is used to plot company's annual profit by showing various revenue sources.
- We can use this chart to represent beginning and ending headcount for a company in a year.
- We can also use this chart to visualize how much money earn and spend each month, and the account running balance.

Thumb Rule for Usage :

A bridge chart or waterfall chart is the best way to explain the change in earnings from one year to next year that how our earnings developed from last year to this year. We should probably use this chart when we want to see the profit development.

How to Use X and Y Axis :

In general the continuous variable would be represented with the x-axis and the y-axis represents the measurement.

Advantages :

- Waterfall charts are extremely user friendly as we can create these charts very easily.
- These charts are useful for understanding how an initial value for example, net income is influenced by a series of positive and negative values.
- These charts are good to show changes in revenue or profit between two time periods.
- These charts does not need any special data preparation.

Disadvantages :

- This chart cannot hold changing requirements as these are non flexible.
- The colors in waterfall chart can only be controlled via global color scheme.
- It is difficult to measure progress within the stages.
- There is uncertainty and huge amount of risk in these charts.
- Probably, we cannot show negative cumulative values in this chart.

Additional Comments :

- Waterfall charts shows dynamic user input. For example,
 1. Display sales projections from some finance databases and cubes.
 2. In real time, show the user's additional projections.
- The breakdown feature of waterfall charts allows us to see the proportion of increase or decrease in sales between each pair of years.
- These charts are also a good way to visualize non -financial data.

Example View :

Take a look at below waterfall chart, showcasing the profit of different states-

