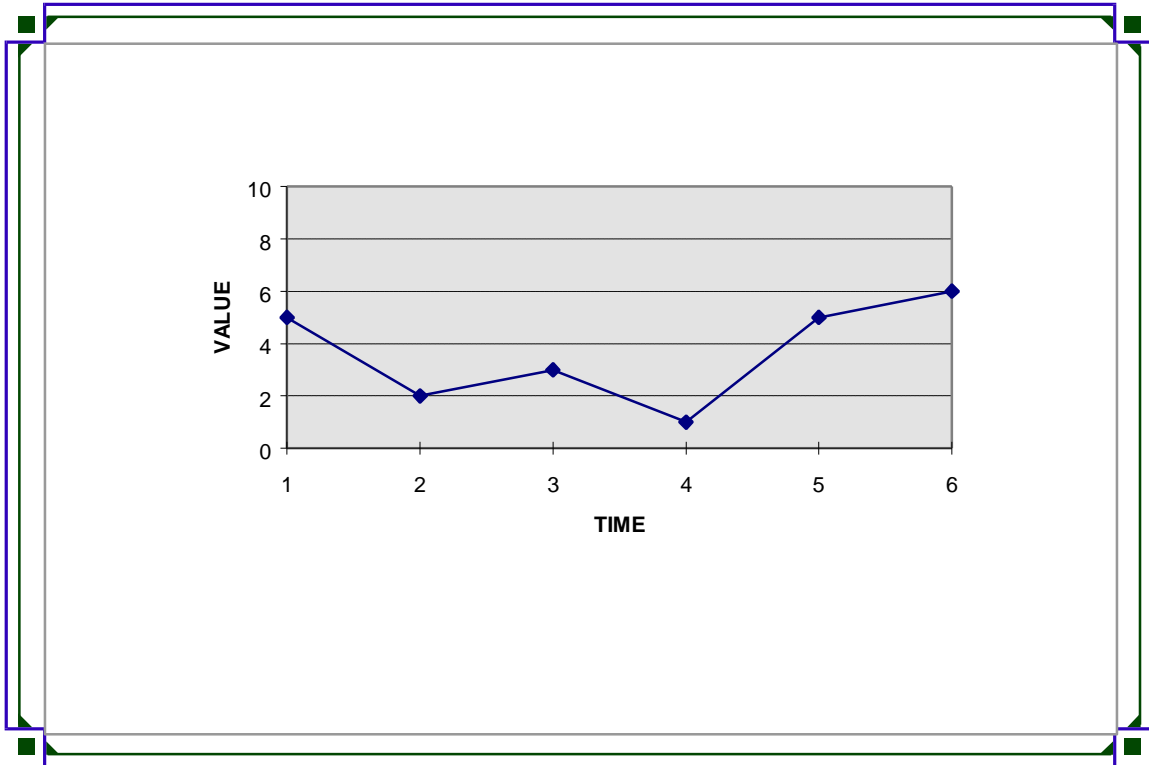


LINE CHART

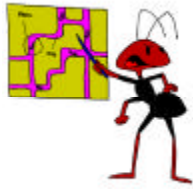


Purpose

A **line chart** is a graphic representation useful in comparing quantities or trends. It is made up of a series of data points along a line usually representing time. It is a useful outline of data that is easy to construct and allows for effective analysis of trends displayed.

Single Line Chart- The most simple of charts which shows the changes in values over time. The use of a line to connect data points is useful in visualizing trends and areas for further research or consideration.

Multiple Line Chart- Like the single **line chart**, this chart displays comparable values over a period of time. Several units are displayed allowing analysis of a several trends and comparison of several groups of data together.

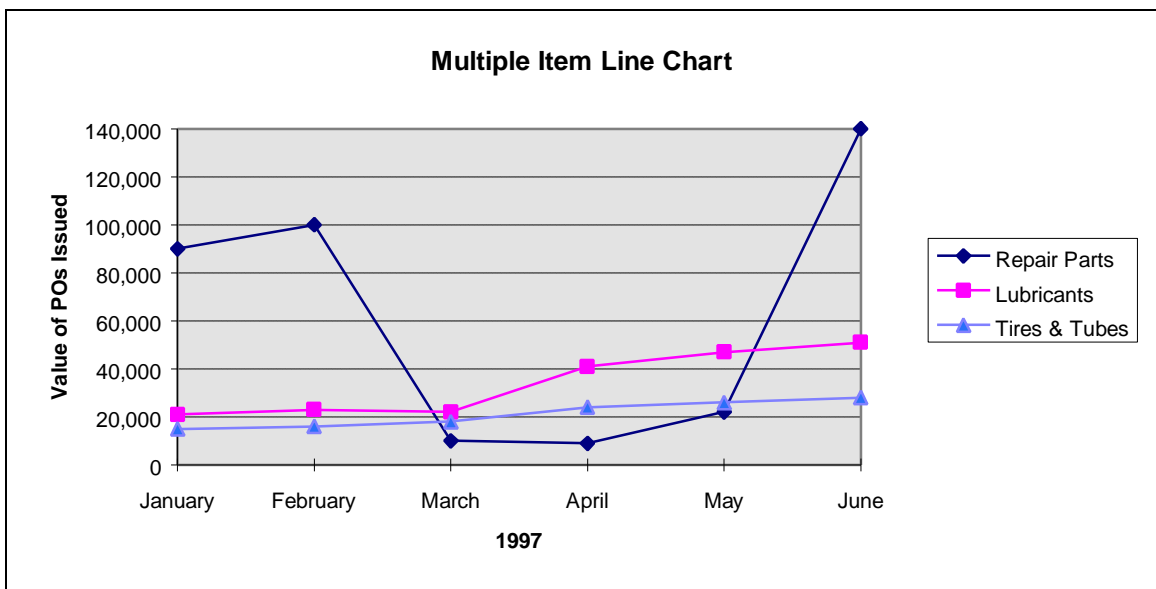
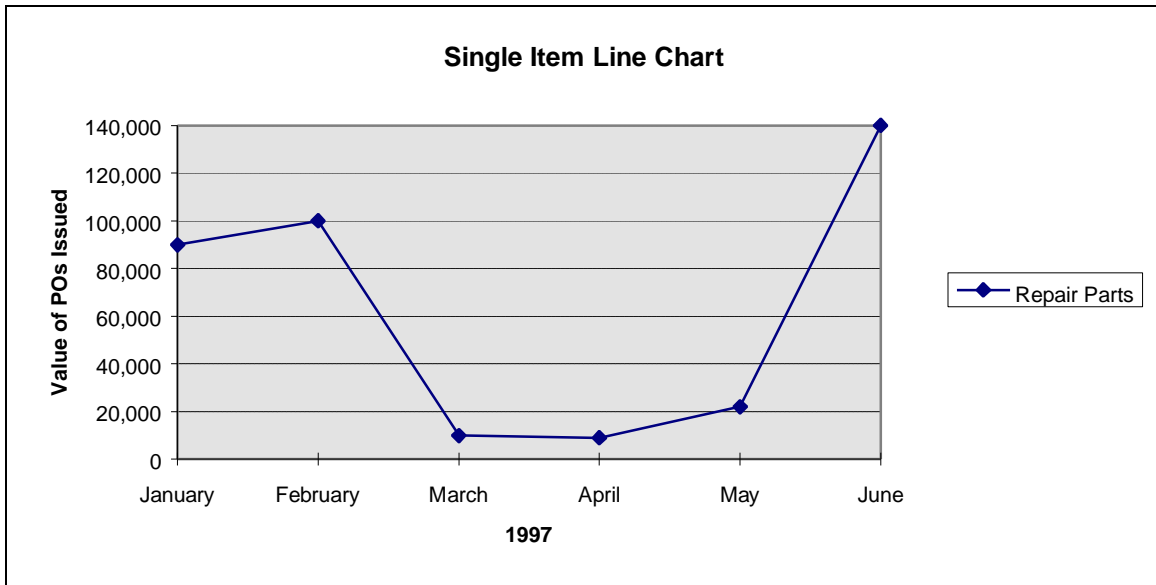


Process

1. Select the item or items you wish to track over time.
2. Decide if a single or multiple **line chart** is most appropriate to display desired data.
3. Decide how many categories you want to show on the horizontal line (X axis) of the **line chart**.
4. Choose a scale for the vertical line (Y axis) that is at least one-third higher than the highest value to be displayed. Since the top of the chart may not indicate anything significant, do not give the impression that the data is filling a required space or achieving some goal unless that is the intention of the chart.
5. Plot the data points on the chart then connect the data points to create a line.
6. Clearly label each axis of the chart along with the scales used to display the data. Be sure to include a descriptive title of the chart and other helpful information for the person who needs to understand the chart.



Examples





Key Points

- The use of spreadsheet software will greatly simplify the use of these charts. Scaling is automatic and most software will systematically carry the user through development of the chart.
- Construct the chart carefully and clearly. It is easy to distort or conceal data through the selection of the categories or the range of the interval along the (Y) axis.
- If using a multiple item **line chart**, a maximum of three will increase understanding of the chart. The black line on the chart carries the most emphasis and should contain data for the main item displayed such as the department in question as compared with others.
- If the **line chart** tracks data over time, attempt to use the most current data to present the results.