

THE TOP 10 MOST USEFUL EXCEL FORMULAS

WHAT I WISH MY 21-YEAR
OLD SELF WOULD KNOW

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FOREWORD

This ebook is the brainchild of [Chris Chua](#), founder of [DefeatExcel.com](#). DefeatExcel aims to spread Excel literacy and empowers everyone to use Excel efficiently.

So, feel free to send and distribute this ebook to anyone who you think will benefit — family, friends and colleagues. You'll definitely make their day, and mine too!

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Enjoy this ebook and if there are any questions, as always, reach out to me at defeatexcel@gmail.com.

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INTRODUCTION

Want to know what I wish my 21-year old self would know?

That there are [478 Excel functions](#) (predefined formulas) listed on the Microsoft Excel official website as of now.

Really? 400+? That's.. Wow!

Even if I were to learn one new Excel function per day, it would take 1.3 years to learn Excel formulas alone!

But the good news is: **You don't need to learn them all.**

You only need to know what's commonly used.



Pareto's Principle

According to the [Pareto's Principle](#) (more commonly known as the “80/20 rule”), it states that for most of the time, you'll only use a handful of Excel functions in your work.

I wish my 21-year old self would know which Excel functions to learn as a start. And really master them so that they become part of the Excel magic you can wield comfortably.

You ready?

1. SUM

The #1 Excel function that I use daily to add up numbers. It's hands-down the most popular function and even has a keyboard shortcut of its own.

Windows: ALT + =

Mac: COMMAND + SHIFT + T

2. COUNTA

If you are doing counting instead, COUNTA helps you to count the number of non-empty cells.

Related: COUNT, COUNTBLANK

3. CONCATENATE

To join a combination of cell values and/or text (typically used for presentations and reports), CONCATENATE is really helpful here. I use the "&" symbol which is the equivalent of the CONCATENATE function.

Related: TEXTJOIN (Excel 2016)

4. ROUND

If you are dealing with dollars and cents, you'll need ROUND.

Related: ROUNDUP, ROUNDDOWN

5. IF

The basic logical function that allows you to create a logic and have different things happening for different scenarios.

Related: IFS (Excel 2016), AND, OR

6. SUMIFS

SUM and IF combined. An upgrade of the previous SUMIF function. It is used to sum values if conditions are met.

7. COUNTIFS

COUNT and IF combined. An upgrade of the previous COUNTIF function. It is used to count the number of occurrences if conditions are met.

8. VLOOKUP

VLOOKUP is a favorite Excel interview question often used to determine one's proficiency. The VLOOKUP is the most basic function used to look up or to join tables together. And if you've heard about HLOOKUP, don't waste time on it. You'll do better with the next Excel formula...

9. INDEX + MATCH

While VLOOKUP is simple, it is limited. The upgrade version — INDEX + MATCH is a more powerful beast that allows you to look horizontally, left, right, up, down... (OK you got the idea). We simply chain these two functions one after another.

10. TEXT

The TEXT function is often used to format values for presentations and reports. Displaying 2,100,000 as 2.1M or 18 Feb 2019 as Monday is easy with TEXT.

CONCLUSION

Yes, so that's the Top 10 most useful Excel formulas that I wish I mastered before entering the workforce. Even after working 9 years as a financial analytics professional, these 10 Excel formulas are still the most common ones that I used.

Head over to [\[this page\]](#) and share with us what are your most commonly used Excel functions and if there's any one in this list that you need some resources on.