[NDA website](#)	[NDA training course dates](#)	[Make an enquiry](#)

Dear [fname]

Spreadsheets are the multi-tool of computers. If all other sources of inspiration fail you can bet your life someone will volunteer to "spreadsheet it" – even if it makes about as much sense as putting a new hospital on top of Mt Wellington (and remember, you heard that here first).

Spreadsheets are all about formulas and the question our trainers least like to hear at the beginning of an Excel Intermediate or Advanced course is "How do you do formulas?" It means wasting the first half hour of the course going over pre-requisite material taught in earlier courses.

For this reason, whenever someone is unsure whether to book on an Introductory or Intermediate Excel course the first question we ask is "Are you comfortable with formulas?" On 90% of occasions we recommend the client to attend an Excel Introductory course to learn how to use formulas correctly.

So - in this issue, NDA's **Top Tips for Excel Formulas**.

We have just renewed NDA's accreditation as a Group Training Organisation (GTO). Many NDA trainees are already hosted out to clients and we are working with several other smart young people who are looking for positions with host employers - see **Your Next IT Trainee** below.

Kind regards

Nigel Davies
Director, NDA
Please click [Forward-to-a-Friend](#) if you know someone in the industry who would like to receive this newsletter.

Top Tips for Excel Formulas
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Here are the nine most useful formula tips NDA trainers have found in 27 years of teaching spreadsheets.

1. Understand BODMAS. BODMAS stands for Brackets, Order, Division, Multiplication, Addition and Subtraction and it defines the sequence in which Excel evaluates formulas. In simple terms, Excel will evaluate 2+3*4 as 14 because it multiplies 3 by 4 first and then adds 2. If you want it to perform the addition before the multiplication then the expression should be typed as (2+3)*4 which Excel will evaluate as 20. The O for "Order" would be better expressed as "Power" but BPDMAS doesn't quite have the same ring to it.

2. Never put a number in a formula. Rather than type 1.94*3.6, put the numbers into cells (perhaps B2 and B3) and then enter the formula by referring to the cell addresses B2*B3. Why? There are two reasons:
   • Values typed in formulas are hidden from the user. It is better to designate an area at the top of the spreadsheet for variables and constants and put the values in clearly labelled cells where any user can see what they represent.
   • If the same value is typed in more than one cell then a user may edit one of the values without realising that the same value occurs in other places in the spreadsheet, thereby introducing an error. If the value is in a separate cell then only the contents of that cell need be edited, and all references to the value will automatically change.

3. And while on the subject of cell addresses, enter cell addresses in formulas by clicking on a cell with the mouse and allowing Excel to automatically enter the address. If you type a cell address there is always a chance you will misread or mistype the coordinates.

4. The SUM function is a great way to add up a column or row of numbers – but don't make the mistake of thinking it is the only way to enter a formula. For example, there is no need to say SUM(B2*B3) – a simple B2*B3 will suffice. Similarly, SUM(B2+B3+B4+B5) can be more easily expressed as SUM(B2:B5) – and yes, we have seen both of these on more than one occasion.

5. Long and complex formulas are difficult to check for errors and even harder to modify. Make life easier by breaking complex calculations into several simple calculations, then combining the results of these calculations with a separate formula.
6. Type simple round numbers into formula cells so you can more easily check the accuracy of formula calculations before replacing the test numbers with 'live' data.
7. Use the Formula Auditing (see View, Toolbars, Formula Auditing in 2003) to evaluate formulas, track precedent cells and trace dependent cells.
8. Understand the difference between Moving and Copying a formula. When you Move a formula Excel automatically preserves cell addresses in the formula (ie the moved formula refers to the same cells as the original and produces the same answer). When you Copy a formula the cell references in the copied formulas all adjust relative to their new positions and produce different answers – unless, that is, they are Absolute cell references…
9. Understand the difference between Relative and Absolute cell references. This is the key to creating robust spreadsheet solutions to business problems. We're not going to try and explain it here – NDA's Excel Intermediate course is the place to learn.

Test your own expertise with formulas. Click on Excel Formulas to download an Excel worksheet with some self-test exercises.

Booking an NDA Spreadsheet Course
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NDA offers four days of spreadsheet training in different combinations, each designed to address a different need.

Excel Basics   One day course for people who are required to enter data, edit, format and print from existing spreadsheets, but who are not expected to design and create new spreadsheets themselves. This course teaches how to use formulas.

Excel Introductory   Two day course for people needing to design and create solutions to simple business problems. Day One is Excel Basics. Day Two teaches how to solve business problems using absolute cell references (check this…) in simple, single and multi-sheet spreadsheet solutions, how to create databases and how to create charts.

Excel Intermediate   Two day course for people needing to design and create solutions to larger and more complex business problems. Day One is the second day of Excel Introductory. Day Two teaches how to solve more complex business problems that require an understanding of a wide variety of formulas and functions.

Excel Advanced   Two day course for people needing to use spreadsheets to analyse business decisions. Day One is the second day of Excel Intermediate. Day Two teaches how to import data from other applications to Excel then perform historical data using more advanced database techniques, future analysis using what if, goal seek and sensitivity analysis, and trend analysis using more advanced charting techniques.

You can book on any of these courses using the online booking form.

Your Next IT Trainee?
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Alex Ladaniwskyj is 19 years old, wants to work in IT and is not your average IT geek. He is a product of Dominic College Hobart, where he was School Captain, and Elizabeth College where his academic record is littered with High Achievements and Exceptional Achievements. He has two years experience in retail and call centre experience with a major bank where he received training in customer service and sales. Alex describes himself as highly motivated and a fast learner, with a sound knowledge of computer hardware - including networking, printers, scanners, cameras and projectors - and Microsoft software. If selected he will approach his new position with enthusiasm and professionalism.

If you feel that Alex might be a good fit for your organisation please call Chris Carlson on 1300 765 736 or visit http://www.nda.com.au/traineeships/grouptraining.html to find out more about NDA's Group Training services.

Partners Wanted
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The Commonwealth will soon be launching the latest incarnation of the Productivity Places program. This will invite applications for training funding from employers and RTO partners. Please call us if you have a training need that you have not been able to fill due to the costs involved and we can discuss the preparation of a joint proposal. To kick the brain cells into gear, here are some current training programs NDA is working on.

Some Current NDA Training Projects
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The number of trainees studying for a qualification with NDA doubled in the last calendar year - a tribute to the good work of Chris Carlson and our team of trainers and assessors. Some of our more interesting assignments are listed below.

• **Certificate IV / Diploma in Project Management** Several staff from a statewide electrical company are learning how to complete projects on time and within budget. The staff attend NDA's Managing Successful Projects and Microsoft Project training courses and are assessed based on 'live' project work completed on the job.

• **Diploma in Information Technology** We were contracted by Skills Tasmania to provide an innovative variant on the Dip IT qualification for ten people working in the industry. As well as the diploma, trainees also acquire the skills to complete Microsoft's MCSE qualification. At the request of their employers we provide additional training in project management and sales so that trainees are not confined to the traditional, rather narrow IT role.

• **Certificate III and IV in Information Technology** For several years NDA has trained all the IT trainees employed by the Education Department to manage networks and PCs in the Schools. The trainees attend one week of training three times a year at our training centres in Hobart, Launceston and Devonport. Assessment is completed on the job at the schools.

• **Certificate II and III in Retail** This is a new one for us but we are seeing a gradual increase in the number of retailers sending their staff to NDA for training and a qualification. As always, the trainees may attend any relevant NDA short course at no charge as a part of their qualification.

• **Diploma of Business (Frontline Management)** NDA provides assessment services and the qualification to a major national health fund which provides the training in-house.

• **Certificate IV in Training and Assessment** This is the replacement qualification for the old certificate in Workplace Training and Assessment. The new qualification is more demanding, combining both classroom and training observance sessions.

Many of these qualifications receive some funding from the state and federal governments. NDA's unique advantage on the Tasmanian training scene is that we offer formal training sessions with expert trainers, as well as the more common workplace training and assessment component.

You can learn more about our qualifications at http://www.nda.com.au/traineeships/overview.html or by calling 1300 765 736.

Forthcoming Training Courses
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NDA is now able to release the following courses for stand-by enrolment, some at significant discounts on standard rates (**to obtain the discount, please phone Kristina on 1300 765 736** and mention this email when making bookings):

Hobart – IT courses

Publisher 2003 and 2007 3 Mar – 30% discount $161 (standard rate $230)

Outlook 2007 10 Mar – 20% discount $184 (standard rate $230)

MYOB Setup & Operation 16 Mar – standard rate $550

Word Intermediate 2007 16 Mar – 10% discount $414 (standard rate $460)

Access Intro / Intermediate 2007 17/19 Mar – 10% discount $414 (standard rate $460)

MYOB Payroll 20 Mar – standard rate $275

PowerPoint 2003 20 Mar – standard rate $230

MYOB Advanced 23 Mar – 20% discount $220 (standard rate $275)

Hobart – Business Skills courses

Maintain Financial Records 2 Mar – standard rate $275

Managing Successful Projects 25/26 Mar – 10% discount $495 (standard rate $550)

Launceston – IT courses

Publisher 2003 and 2007 3 Mar – 30% discount $161 (standard rate $230)

Excel Introductory 2003 4/6 Mar – standard rate $460
Excel Intermediate 2003 6/10 Mar – standard rate $460
Excel Advanced 2003 10/12 Mar – standard rate $460
Project 2003 and 2007 10/11 Mar – 10% discount $414 (standard rate $460)
Word Advanced 2007 18/20 Mar – 20% discount $368 (standard rate $460)
MYOB Advanced 23 Mar – 20% discount $220 (standard rate $275)
Access Advanced 2007 24 Mar – 10% discount $217 (standard rate $230)
Designing Simple Websites 30 Mar – standard rate $230
Launceston – Business Skills courses
Training Delivery 26/27 Feb – standard rate $550
Managing Successful Projects 25/26 Mar – 20% discount $440 (standard rate $550)
Devonport – IT courses
Excel Introductory 2003 4/6 Mar – standard rate $460
Project 2003 and 2007 10/11 Mar – 20% discount $368 (standard rate $460)
Excel Advanced 2003 12/13 Mar – 10% discount $414 (standard rate $460)
Word Intermediate 2007 16/18 Mar – standard rate $460
Access Intro / Intermediate 2007 17/19 Mar – 10% discount $414 (standard rate $460)
MYOB Advanced 23 Mar – 20% discount $220 (standard rate $275)

HOBART	**LAUNCESTON**	**DEVONPORT**
Level 3, Trafalgar Centre, 110 Collins St Hobart TAS 7000 Phone: (03) 6224 2660	Level 1, 65 St John Street Launceston TAS 7250 Phone: (03) 6334 4910	The Roberts Building, 23 Stewart St Devonport TAS 7310 Phone: (03) 6423 4547