Excel Quick Charts and More with These 5 Shortcuts

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No matter which version of Excel you have, there are shortcut keys to use that speed up the creation of a worksheet. Pretty much everyone knows about the generic shortcuts like Ctrl+C and Ctrl+V to copy and paste, or Ctrl+S to save, F7 to start spell check, and Ctrl+P to open the print dialog box. These work for most applications, Microsoft or not. What follows is a list of some of the other shortcuts in Excel I find useful.

Let's first review using a shortcut. There are always multiple keys on the keyboard to be pressed. This does not mean pressing them all at the same time. If there are two keys, like Ctrl+P, hold down the Ctrl and then with Ctrl held down, tap the P key, and then release both. If there are three keys, hold down the first two, and then tap the third.

1.   **Shift+F3** Open the Insert Function dialog box

This one does not save much time as all you have to do to open the dialog box is click on the fx to the left of the Formula Bar. But it does keep your fingers on the keyboard. Have the active cell where you want the function to be placed and press Shift+F3. The Insert Function dialog box opens and you can select the appropriate function.

2.   **F11** Creates a chart of the data in the current range

This is one I really like to use. One key and a chart is created. Select the range of cells to be charted and press F11. That is all you have to do and a column chart is generated for you on a new worksheet. Once the chart is made you can modify it any way you want, even changing the type a bar chart, pie chart, etc. If the data to be charted is in non-adjacent columns. Select the range in one column, the hold down the Ctrl key and select the second range before pressing F11.

3.   **F2 Edits** the active cell

Clicking on a cell makes it the active cell displaying the formula behind the cell in the Formula Bar. You can move up to the Bar and make any changes needed. Pressing F2 places the insertion point in the active cell allowing you

to make the changes right inside the cell instead of having to relocate to the Formula Bar. Use Home, End, or the right and left arrow keys to move the insertion point. After making changes, press Enter to lock them in. Press Esc at any time removes the changes. After hitting enter and locking in the changes you can use Ctrl+Z to reverse or undo them.

4.   **Shift+F2** edit a cell comment

Many are unaware you can make comments on a cell in a worksheet. This shortcut open up the comment box for the active cell. Type the comments about the cell which might be an explanation of what the data is all about or what kind of data should be entered in the cell. When you have finished typing, click off the box (Enter just brings you to a new line in the comment box). The comment does not show, but a red triangle in the upper right corner of the cell indicates that one exists. Mouse over the triangle and the comment appears.

5.   **Ctrl+F2** Opens the Print Preview window

This one saves many mouse moves and clicks. To open the Print Preview window, just press Ctrl+F2. Why print preview, you might ask. I always suggest doing a preview before printing to make sure you will be printing the right information on the number of pages you desire. With Excel if the data is too wide for one page, it automatically adds extra pages to the end of the printing. You have to tape them together to see the entire report left to right. In the preview window you can select Page Setup and make the report fit on one page, or change the margins to make it fit among other options.

I hope this has given you some fresh ideas about using Excel shortcuts. May these shortcuts make your time with Excel a little easier.