

Create a Combo Chart in Google Sheets (Step-by-Step)

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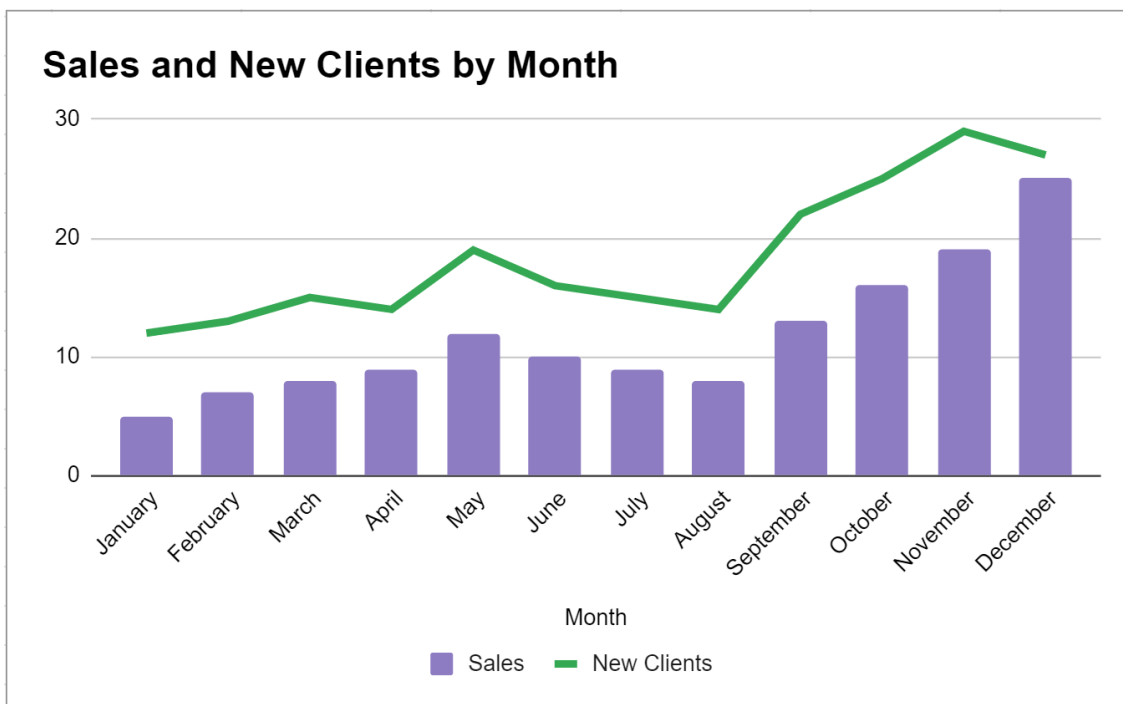
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A **combo chart**, frequently referred to as a dual-axis chart, is a sophisticated form of **data visualization**. This method strategically combines two distinct chart types--most commonly a bar chart and a line chart--to effectively display two separate **datasets** within a single graphical representation. Its primary utility arises when comparing metrics that share a common categorical axis (like time or location) but are measured on vastly different numerical scales (e.g., millions vs. hundreds).

The core advantage of leveraging a combo chart is its ability to facilitate complex analysis without sacrificing clarity. By assigning the primary data series (often volume or magnitude) to the bars and the secondary, related data series (often rate or count) to the line, the visualization significantly enhances analytical capability. This structure allows viewers to instantly identify correlations, disparities, and trends between the two measures, offering insights that might be overlooked in separate, individual charts.



This comprehensive, step-by-step tutorial is designed to guide you through the process of structuring your raw data, inserting the initial visualization, and utilizing the powerful customization options available within **Google Sheets**. Following these instructions will enable you to create a professional, informative, and highly effective combo chart tailored to your specific analytical needs.

Understanding the Data Requirements for Dual-Axis Charts

The success of any complex visualization hinges entirely on the proper structure of its underlying

data. Combo charts have specific requirements that must be met before attempting generation: they mandate three distinct columns. These columns must include one for the categories (which will form the X-axis) and two separate columns for the quantitative values (which will form the two distinct Y-axes).

Crucially, the two quantitative columns must represent metrics that are conceptually linked--meaning they influence or relate to each other--but are measured on potentially divergent scales. For instance, comparing revenue figures (in the thousands or millions) against unit sales (in the tens or hundreds) is an ideal scenario for a combo chart, as plotting both on a single axis would render the smaller metric virtually invisible.

For the purpose of this tutorial, we will track the monthly performance of a hypothetical organization over a 12-month period. The two metrics chosen for comparison are the company's total sales volume and the total number of new clients acquired. By visualizing these two measures side-by-side, we can investigate whether sales growth exhibits a direct or lagged correlation with new customer acquisition rates month over month, thereby providing valuable business intelligence.

Step 1: Preparing and Organizing Your Data in Google Sheets

The foundation of a successful visualization begins with clean, meticulously organized data within the spreadsheet environment. Before proceeding with chart insertion, ensure all necessary data is accurately entered and structured. Proper labeling of the column headers is paramount, as [Google Sheets](#) automatically uses these labels as titles for the axes and series names within the final chart legend.

Our required structure involves three contiguous columns: the categorical variable (Month), the primary quantitative variable (Total Sales), and the secondary quantitative variable (Total New Clients). Verification is essential at this stage; ensure that your quantitative columns contain only numeric entries and that the data range is free of any blank rows that could disrupt the charting function.

We will now populate the spreadsheet with hypothetical data detailing total sales and new clients signed for a company across a 12-month span. Observe the inherent difference in magnitude between the sales figures (which are in the thousands) and the client acquisition figures (which generally fall in the tens or low hundreds). This scale difference confirms the necessity of a dual-axis approach for clear visualization.

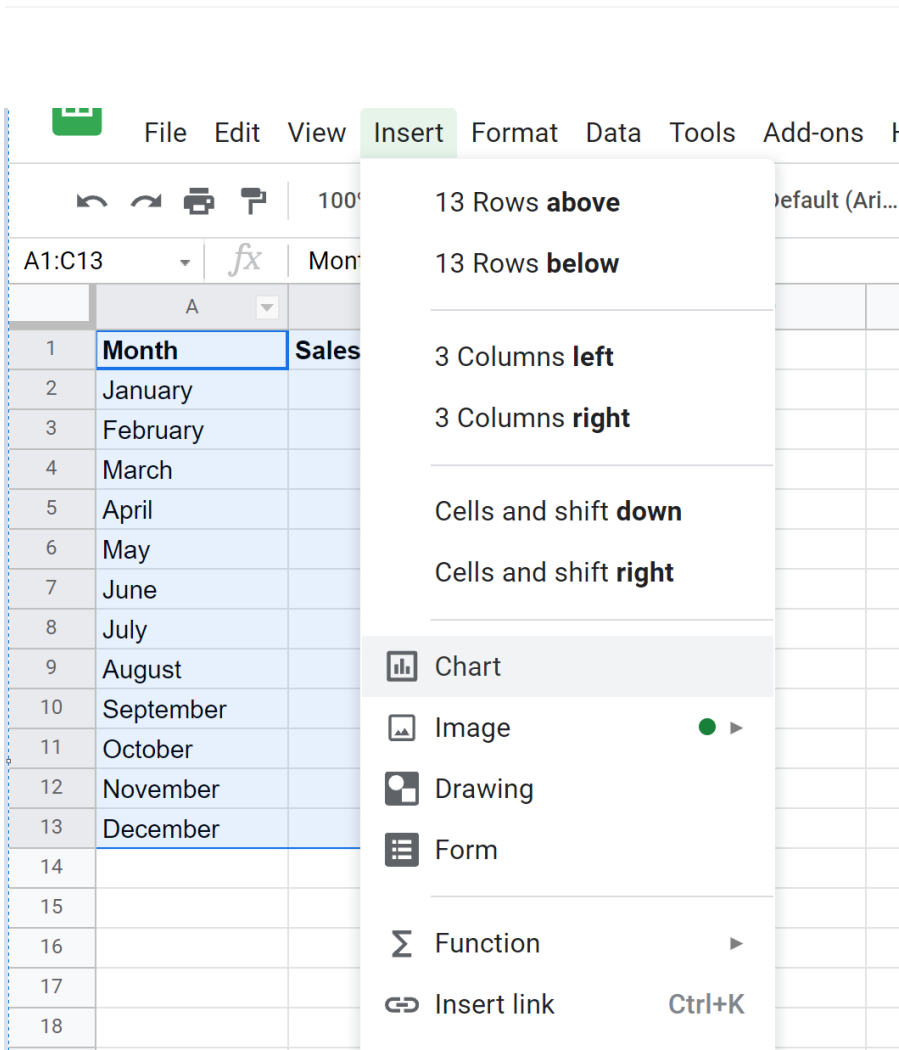
| | A | B | C | D | |
|----|--------------|--------------|--------------------|---|--|
| 1 | Month | Sales | New Clients | | |
| 2 | January | 5 | 12 | | |
| 3 | February | 7 | 13 | | |
| 4 | March | 8 | 15 | | |
| 5 | April | 9 | 14 | | |
| 6 | May | 12 | 19 | | |
| 7 | June | 10 | 16 | | |
| 8 | July | 9 | 15 | | |
| 9 | August | 8 | 14 | | |
| 10 | September | 13 | 22 | | |
| 11 | October | 16 | 25 | | |
| 12 | November | 19 | 29 | | |
| 13 | December | 25 | 27 | | |
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| 21 | | | | | |

Once this data entry is complete and the integrity of the figures has been verified, the preparation phase is concluded. We are now ready to leverage the built-in charting tools provided by [Google Sheets](#) to begin the visualization process.

Step 2: Initial Chart Creation and Default Setup

The next phase involves initiating the chart creation by selecting the complete data range. Google Sheets is designed to intuitively generate visualizations from structured inputs, often attempting to predict the most appropriate chart type based on the selected metrics.

To begin, select the entirety of the dataset, which must include the descriptive header row. In the context of our example, this required range is **A1:C13**. After highlighting the necessary cells, navigate to the main menu bar, click the **Insert** option, and then select **Chart** from the dropdown menu.



Upon insertion, Google Sheets typically defaults to a simple Line Chart or a standard Column Chart, depending on how it interprets the relationship between the two quantitative series. In our specific scenario, the system will likely display a line chart showing two distinct lines--one representing Sales and the other representing New Clients. This automatically generated visualization serves as the foundational element that we must now modify and transform into the desired combo chart format.

Step 3: Transforming the Visualization to a Combo Chart Type

Since the default chart type is rarely the dual-axis combo chart we require, we must access the advanced settings via the [Chart editor](#). This editor panel grants granular control over every structural and aesthetic parameter of the visualization, making it the central hub for customization.

To launch the editor, simply click anywhere on the newly created chart object. A small configuration menu, usually represented by three vertical dots, will appear in the chart's upper right corner. Click this icon, and then select the **Edit chart** option to open the configuration panel on the right side of your screen.



Within the Chart editor panel, ensure you are on the **Setup** tab. Locate the **Chart type** dropdown menu. Scroll through the available options until you find and select **Combo chart**. This option is typically categorized under either "Suggested" or "Other" chart types, depending on the current version of Google Sheets you are utilizing.

The screenshot shows the 'Chart editor' window in Google Sheets. The 'Setup' tab is active. The 'Chart type' dropdown is set to 'Line chart'. Under the 'SUGGESTED' section, four chart thumbnails are shown, each titled 'Sales and New Clients'. The first thumbnail is highlighted with a blue border. Below this, there are sections for 'Line' and 'Area' chart types. The 'Line' section has three thumbnails, with the third one labeled 'Combo chart' in a black tooltip. The 'Area' section has three thumbnails.

The selection of the combo chart type immediately converts the visualization. By convention, Google Sheets automatically assigns the first numerical series (Total Sales) to the bar format and the second series (Total New Clients) to the line format.



The resulting chart now clearly distinguishes the two series based on their presentation format. The **x-axis** plots the chronological month sequence, the **bars** represent the total sales referencing the left Y-axis, and the **line** represents the total new clients signed. The final, crucial step is to formally assign the line series to a secondary axis to account for the magnitude difference.

Step 4: Configuring the Secondary Axis and Enhancing Aesthetics

While the chart is now structurally a combo chart, it is not yet fully optimized for analytical effectiveness. Due to the substantial disparity in magnitude between the Total Sales (thousands) and Total New Clients (tens/hundreds), it is mandatory to assign the "Total New Clients" series to a separate, secondary Y-axis. This dual-axis configuration is the defining element that transforms a basic combined chart into a highly readable and professional visualization.

To perform this critical adjustment, remain within the **Chart editor** and switch to the **Customize** tab. Locate and expand the **Series** section. Here, you can control the formatting of each dataset independently. Click on the series corresponding to **Total New Clients**. Under the series formatting options, find the **Axis** setting. Change this default setting from "Left axis" to "Right axis." This action instantly introduces a second vertical axis scaled specifically and optimally for the client count data.

Beyond the dual-axis configuration, further modifications under the Customize tab are essential to maximize clarity and aesthetic quality. Utilize the customization panel to modify individual chart

elements directly:

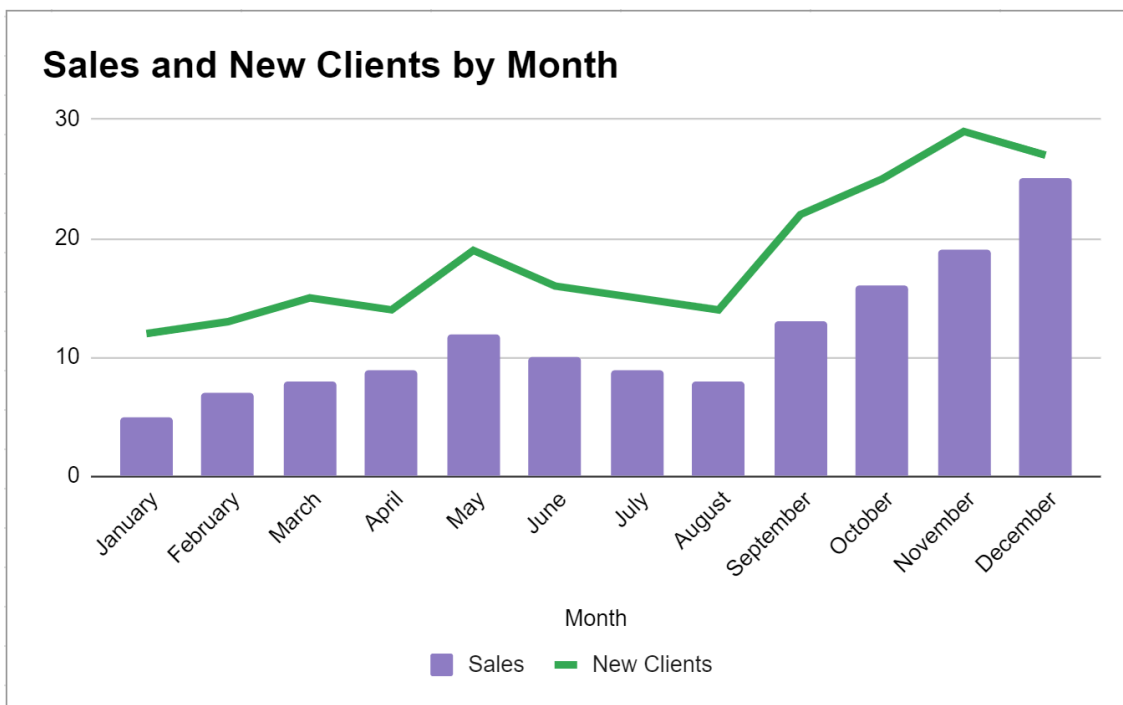
Chart Title: Create a highly descriptive title, such as "Monthly Sales Performance vs. New Client Acquisition," using the "Chart & axis titles" section.

Colors and Styling: Adjust the colors of the bars and lines within the **Series** section to ensure high contrast and alignment with any corporate branding guidelines.

Axis Labels: Clearly label both the primary (Left Vertical Axis) and secondary (Right Vertical Axis) to ensure the viewer immediately understands which metric corresponds to which scale.

Legend Placement: Optimize chart space and readability by adjusting the location of the legend (e.g., placing it at the bottom center).

Applying these detailed refinements results in a fully functional and visually appealing [combo chart](#), as illustrated below. The visual comparison between the high-volume sales bars and the proportional new client line becomes immediately evident, fulfilling the analytical purpose of the dual-axis design.



Conclusion and Advanced Visualization Resources

Successfully mastering the creation of the dual-axis combo chart represents a significant milestone in enhancing your proficiency in advanced [data visualization](#). For analysts who frequently work with [Google Sheets](#), exploring other specialized chart types can unlock even deeper, more

nuanced insights into complex organizational datasets.

Understanding the full spectrum of visualization techniques ensures that you are equipped to select the most appropriate method to communicate your findings effectively, whether the goal is to compare parts to a whole, track cumulative performance, or illustrate complex multi-metric relationships over time.

Explore the following tutorials to learn how to create other common and specialized visualizations within Google Sheets:

[How to Create a Stacked Bar Chart in Google Sheets](#)