

Charts with Their Missing Data

Show what the table supports, including the gaps

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How to use this guide

People preparing a small operational report from CSV data for colleagues or clients.

An original support-workload case with incomplete months, a duplicate, category ambiguity, weighted averages and a chart whose values can be reproduced from the raw rows.

- Define row meaning, units and completeness before choosing a chart.
- Distinguish missing observations from measured zero and calculate weighted means correctly.
- Deliver a chart with a value table, exclusions and bounded interpretation.

Scope and limitations

- All support records are fictional; no real team performance or customer activity is measured.
- The example is not a staffing forecast, service-level assessment or causal experiment.
- The editable SVG and HTML examples are learning materials, not a complete accessibility audit or real service report.
- Tool results depend on supplied data and mapping; no missing values are invented.

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01

Start with an answerable reporting question

A chart begins with a question, even when the software opens directly to a colorful preview. Write the question before selecting columns. Our report asks how much recorded support-handling time belongs to each complete month in a fictional six-month period. It does not ask whether the team is productive, whether customers are satisfied or how many staff will be needed next year. Those questions require different definitions and evidence. A limited question produces a clearer chart than a broad headline that the source cannot support.

The teaching dataset describes the Harbor Desk support team from January through June 2026. Each ordinary row summarizes one month and one support channel. It contains ticket count and total handling minutes, not a separate record for every customer. The two expected channels are email and chat. We will encounter one exact duplicate, a missing time value and an ambiguous extra category. All of those conditions are invented for the exercise, so the report cannot be used as a benchmark for a real team.

Define handling minutes before calculating. In this exercise they are the recorded active handling time summed for the channel, not elapsed response time, opening hours or the time a customer waited. Tickets are the completed cases included in that same channel record. These definitions allow a minutes-per-ticket calculation for supported rows. They do not make it legitimate to call that value response speed or resolution quality. The unit in the axis label should preserve the definition rather than shorten it into a different claim.

Choose a deliverable that includes evidence alongside the visual. We need a cleaned value table, a disposition ledger for every source row, a chart specification and a short interpretation. The SVG is one view of that package. A colleague should be able to remove the image and still understand the values and their limits from the remaining files. That is a useful test of reporting quality because it reveals whether the visual is explaining evidence or concealing the absence of it.

Sources and tools

[S1] UK Government Analysis Function: Data visualisation charts

<https://analysisfunction.civilservice.gov.uk/policy-store/data-visualisation-charts/>

Checked: 2026-10-01

[S2] RFC 4180: CSV format

<https://www.rfc-editor.org/rfc/rfc4180>

Checked: 2026-10-01

[S3] W3C: Complex images

<https://www.w3.org/WAI/tutorials/images/complex/>

Checked: 2026-10-01

CSV and Excel chart report

Plot a reviewed numeric table and inspect excluded rows; no forecasting or missing-value invention.

<https://kitforma.com/en/csv-chart-report/>

Numeric frequency table

Count occurrences of numeric values; not a replacement for category reconciliation.

<https://kitforma.com/en/frequency-table/>

Weighted average

Check averages using declared nonnegative weights after confirming their meaning.

<https://kitforma.com/en/weighted-average/>

Inside the complete guide

Know the grain and preserve the original rows

Resolve labels with evidence rather than guesswork

Distinguish unknown, partial and measured zero

Calculate a weighted average with the right denominator

Choose a display that preserves the comparison

Give readers the values and the missing context

Keep interpretation smaller than the evidence

Capstone: reconcile the Harbor Desk report

Maintain the report as a reproducible decision aid