

GROUP PROJECTS

CASE 3: EXECUTIVE INFORMATION SYSTEM REPORTING

Political Campaign Finance Consultants

When it comes to campaign finance, Americans want a system that minimizes the influence of “fat cats” and organized money, that keeps campaign spending at sensible levels, that fosters healthy electoral competition, that doesn’t take advantage of wealthy candidates, and that doesn’t require candidates to spend all of their waking hours raising money.

Indeed, the much maligned congressional campaign finance system we have now is itself a product of well-intended reform efforts, passed by Congress in 1974 to achieve these ideals. Moreover, dozens of new reform plans have emerged during the 1990s that also reach for these goals. Yet no reform scheme, however well intended, is likely to produce a perfect congressional campaign finance system.

The city of Highlands Ranch, CO wishes to organize its campaign contributions records in a more linear format. The city council is considering various executive information system packages that can show them overall views of the contribution information as well as give them the ability to access more detailed information. You have been hired to make recommendations about what reports should be available through the soon-to-be-purchased executive information system.

The table below is a list of the information that will be the foundation for the reports in the proposed executive information system. To help you develop realistic reports, the city has provided you with a spreadsheet file that contains specific contributions over the last six months.

Column	Name	Description
A	DATE	The actual date that the contribution was made
B	CONTRIBUTOR	The name of the person or organization that made the contribution
C	DISTRICT	The district number that the councilperson belongs to
D	AMOUNT	The amount of the contribution
E	TYPE	The description type of where the contribution amount was given
F	COUNCILPERSON	The councilperson’s name
G	PARTY	The councilperson’s political party

What the city council is most interested in is viewing several overall reports and then being able to request more detailed reports. So, as a consultant, your goal is to develop different sets of reports that illustrate the concept of drilling down through information. For example, you should develop a report that shows overall campaign contributions by district (each of the eight different districts) and then also develop more detailed reports that show contribution by political party and contribution by type.

Some Particulars You Should Know

1. The council would much rather see information graphically than numerically. So, as you develop your reports, do so in terms of graphs that illustrate the desired relationships.
2. As you consider the information provided to you, think in terms of overall views first and then detailed views second. This will help you develop a logical series of reports.
3. If you wish, you can explore a variety of software tools to help you create the reports. Then prepare your presentation using a presentation graphics package that lets you create a really great presentation of your recommendations.
4. Again, your goal is not to create reports that point toward a particular problem or opportunity. Rather, you are to design sets of logical series of reports that illustrate the concept of drilling down.
5. File: CONTRIBUTE.xls (Excel file).