Excel Conditional Formatting Tip

Would you like a way to quickly analyze Excel data? Perhaps you want a quick snapshot of the accounts with the largest outstanding balance due. Using Excel's Conditional Formatting feature, you can direct attention to the most crucial overdue accounts or top sales. It allows you to skip to important data with highlighted cells. This Excel tip will explain Conditional Formatting and how to use it for data analysis.

Conditional Formatting

Conditional formatting is a data visualization tool used in data analysis to highlight, emphasize, and differentiate by using colors, bars or icons to cells or ranges of interest to us. In the example below (left side), notice the Balance Owed column. Conditional formatting was used to differentiate amounts by color so that problem accounts can be quickly identified. Data bars can be used to emphasize problem accounts (center). And icons can also be used to highlight problem accounts (right side). Your preference determines which one to use.

F	F	F
Balance Owed	**Balance Owed**	**Balance Owed**
$147,113.50	$147,113.50	◆ $147,113.50
$1,509.10	$1,509.10	● $1,509.10
$22,630.79	$22,630.79	△ $22,630.79
$119,430.72	$119,430.72	◆ $119,430.72
$36,609.80	$36,609.80	△ $36,609.80
$2,800.44	$2,800.44	● $2,800.44
$47,915.99	$47,915.99	△ $47,915.99

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How to Use Conditional Formatting

To highlight cells that are greater than a value, for example customers with a balance due of over $100,000, follow these steps.

1. Select the range of cells to highlight.

Balance Owed
$147,113.50
$1,509.10
$22,630.79
$119,430.72
$36,609.80
$2,800.44
$47,915.99
$1,987.44

2. On the Home tab, in the Styles group, click **Conditional Formatting**. Next click on **Highlight Cells Rules**, then **Greater Than** in the pop-up menu

.
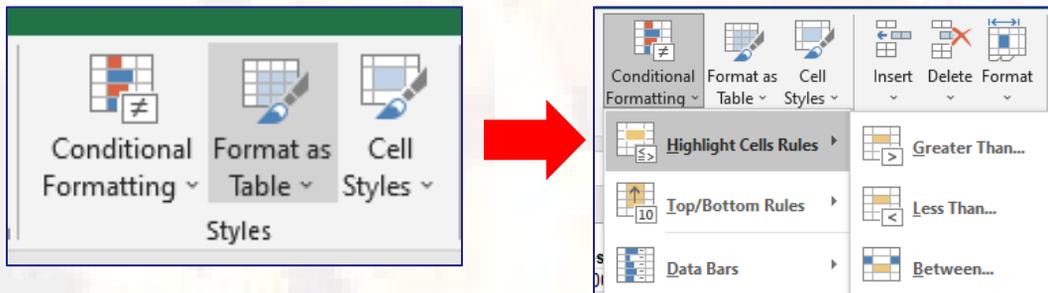
In the **Great Than** form, type `100,000 and select how you want it highlighted.

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Excel Conditional Formatting Tip

How to Use Conditional Formatting, Continued

The result is shown in the screen shot below. Now you know which customers you need to contact about the large balance owed.

Balance Owed
$147,113.50
$1,509.10
$22,630.79
$119,430.72
$36,609.80
$2,800.44
$47,915.99
$1,987.44

You can also use the Highlight Rules category to highlight cells that are less than a value, between two values, equal to a value, cells that contain specific text, dates (today, last week, next month, etc.), duplicates or unique values.

How to Clear Rules

To clear a conditional formatting rule, select the range of cells, **Click Clear Rules**, **Clear Rules from Selected Cells**.

Icon Sets	▶	
New Rule...		
Clear Rules	▶	Clear Rules from Selected Cells
Manage Rules...		Clear Rules from Entire Sheet

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