

ANALYZE

Advanced

45 MIN

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Run a two-way sensitivity analysis with conditional highlighting.

Build a Price × Volume sensitivity table for Operating Income and have Copilot auto-highlight the danger zone.

MICROSOFT 365

Excel

WORKS WITH

Copilot

Business Outcome

A visual map of which price/volume combinations put the business at a loss, before it happens.

Workflow Steps

Step 1: Set up the base model

Excel

Put Price and Volume in their own clearly labeled cells (not buried inline in a formula) and build the Operating Income formula to reference those cells directly.

What-If Analysis's Data Table feature needs exactly this structure to work, with the formula in the corner of the table referencing the two input cells it will vary.

Step 2: Ask Copilot to build the sensitivity table

Copilot in Excel

A manual two-way data table is fiddly to set up correctly — let Copilot handle the Excel mechanics.

PROMPT

Build a two-way data table showing Operating Income for Price ranging from \$18 to \$28 in \$1 steps, and Volume from 8,000 to 14,000 units in 1,000-unit steps. Conditionally highlight any cell where Operating Income is negative.

Step 3: Read the danger zone

Excel

Look at the highlighted region as a whole, not cell by cell — the shape of the boundary between profit and loss tells you more than any single number.

Step 4: Stress-test the assumptions

Copilot in Excel

Ask what happens if a fixed cost assumption changes, and regenerate the table — a sensitivity analysis is only useful if you actually vary more than one input.

✓ Check the work

- Re-derive one or two cells by hand to confirm the data table formula is referencing the right input cells.
- Check that the highlighting rule is capturing true negatives, not just low positives.
- Confirm the price/volume ranges you tested actually bracket your realistic scenarios.

Expected Outcome

A two-way data table of Operating Income across a Price × Volume grid, with all negative cells conditionally highlighted.



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