

EXCEL YOUR FINANCIAL MIND

A bimonthly message which covers some cool tools in Microsoft Excel

By Bob Walker @ Outside Bank Services 5/16/08

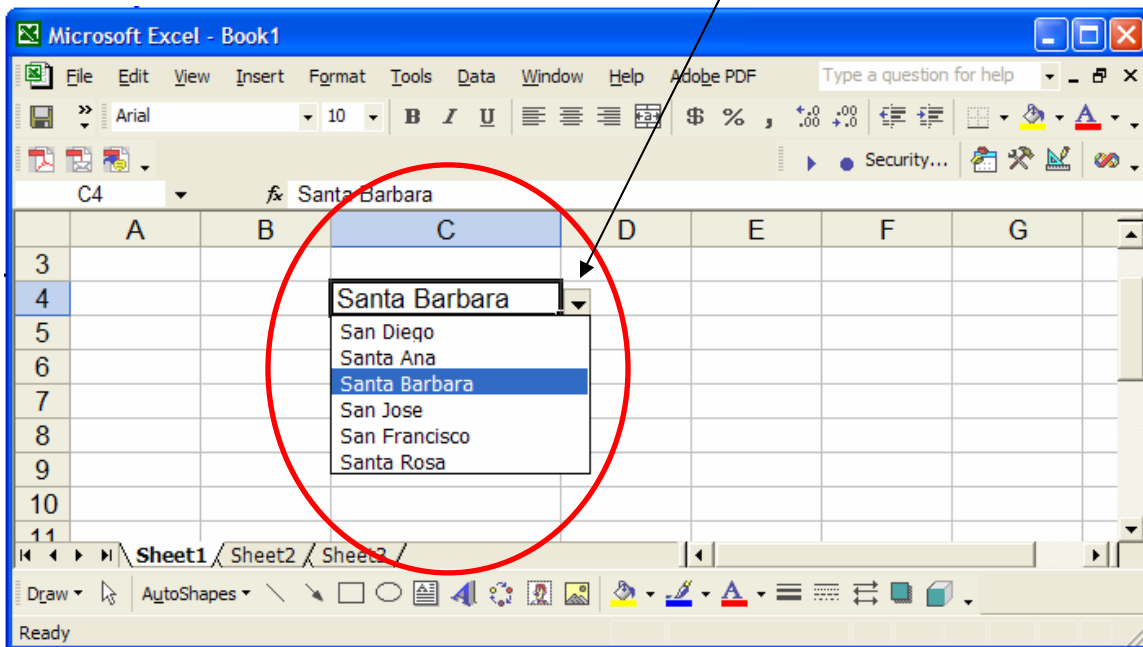
Today I want to cover a simple "combo box" generated through **Data Validation**. Validation can be found under Data on the toolbar. You can use Validation to create the following:

1. Combo box (which we will discuss today)
2. Message box to inform the user about the cell that was just entered or clicked on,
3. Message box to inform the user that incorrect information was imputed.

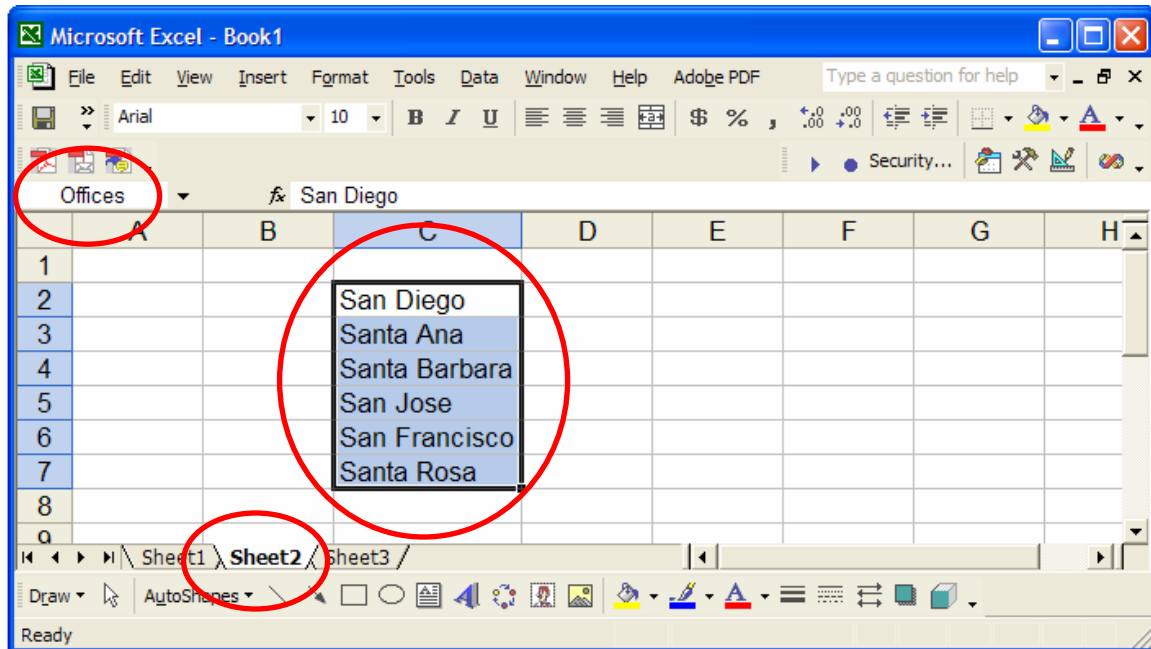
I will cover the Message Box in my next letter.

But, **the Combo Box is my focus today**. If you ever booked a flight over the internet, you used a drop down combo box to view a list of airports to click on. There are many good reasons to use a Combo Box. One reason could be to limit the number of options entered in a particular cell (or field). Or another reason could be to verify the exact spelling of the data imputed. I'm sure you can think of many other good reasons for a Combo Box but today let's talk about how to create one.

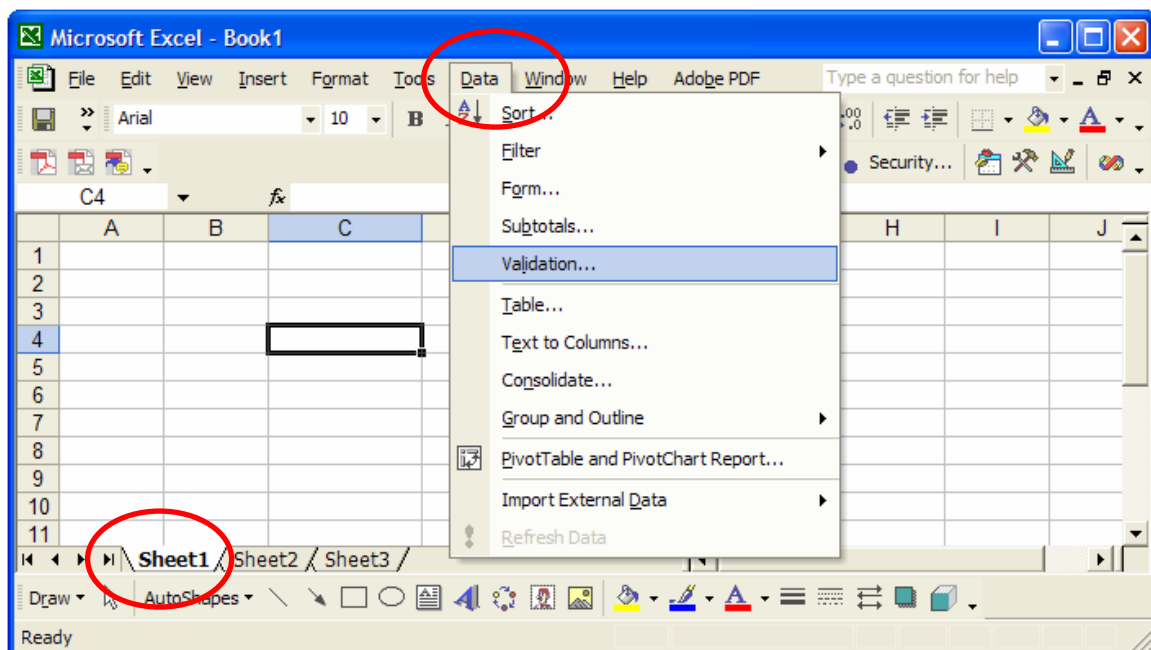
Combo Box



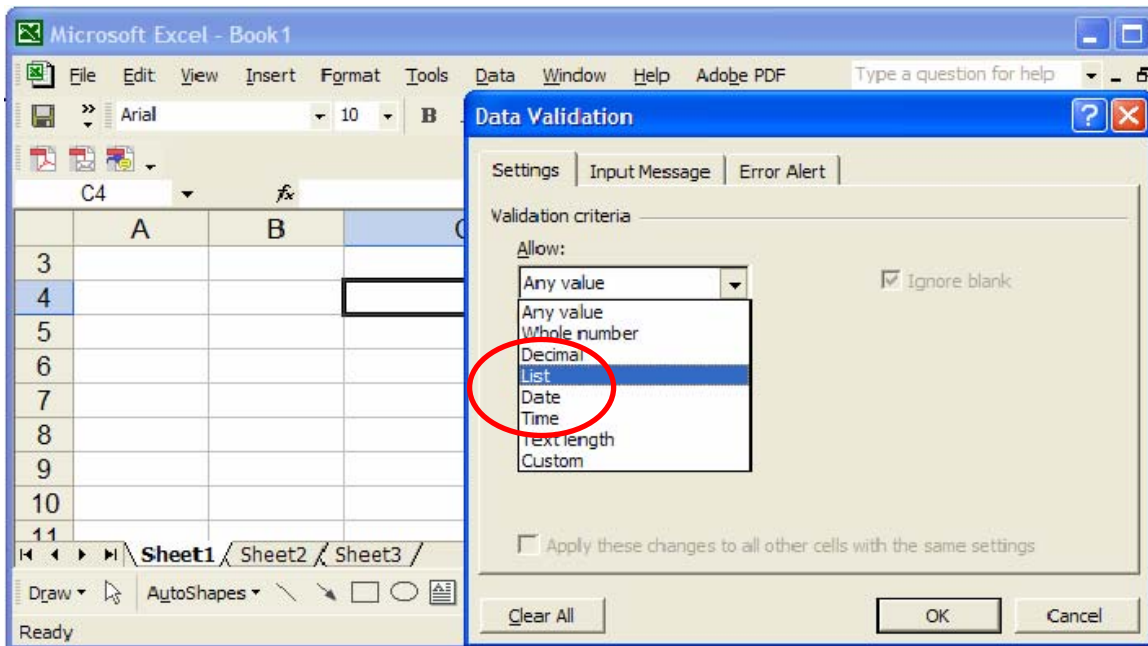
To create a **Combo Box**, you first need to create a list that you will want to show up in the drop down Combo Box. To create a simple list, let's go to **sheet two** and **type a list of names**, of district offices, for a fictitious business. Once the list has been defined, **highlight the list**, go to the Name Box on the top left side of your screen next to the Formula Bar, and **change the name of the range from C2 to Offices**. If you don't know how to highlight the list, call or e-mail me. I will walk you through it.



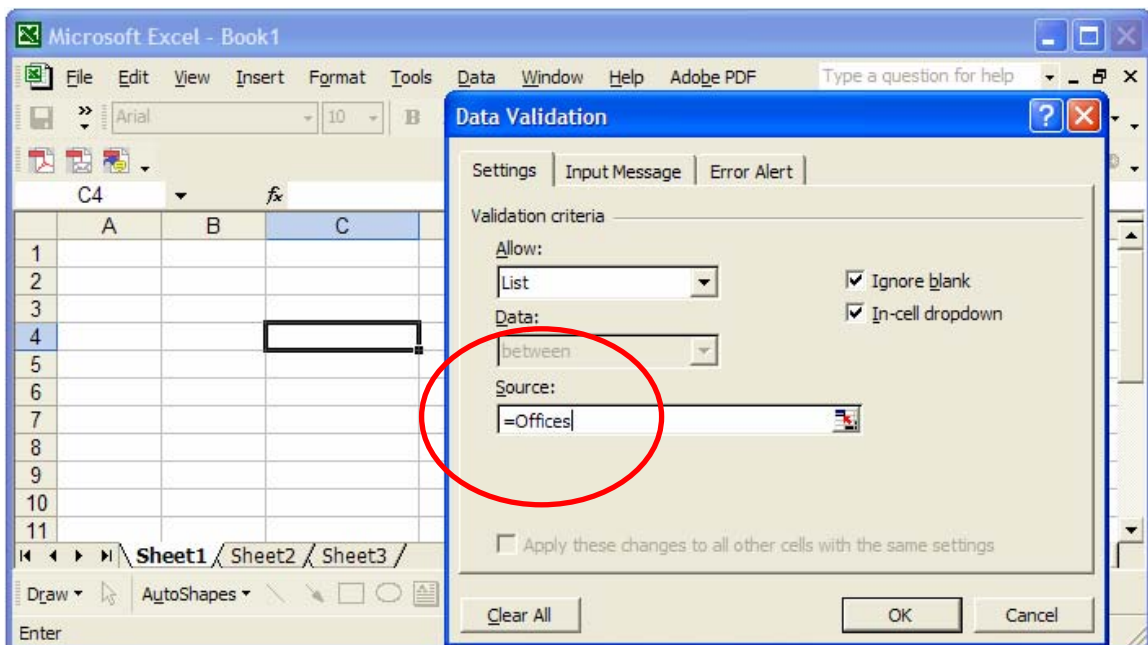
Now, go back to Sheet One and put your cursor on cell "C4". Click on **Data** on the Menu Bar. Slide down and click on **Validation**.



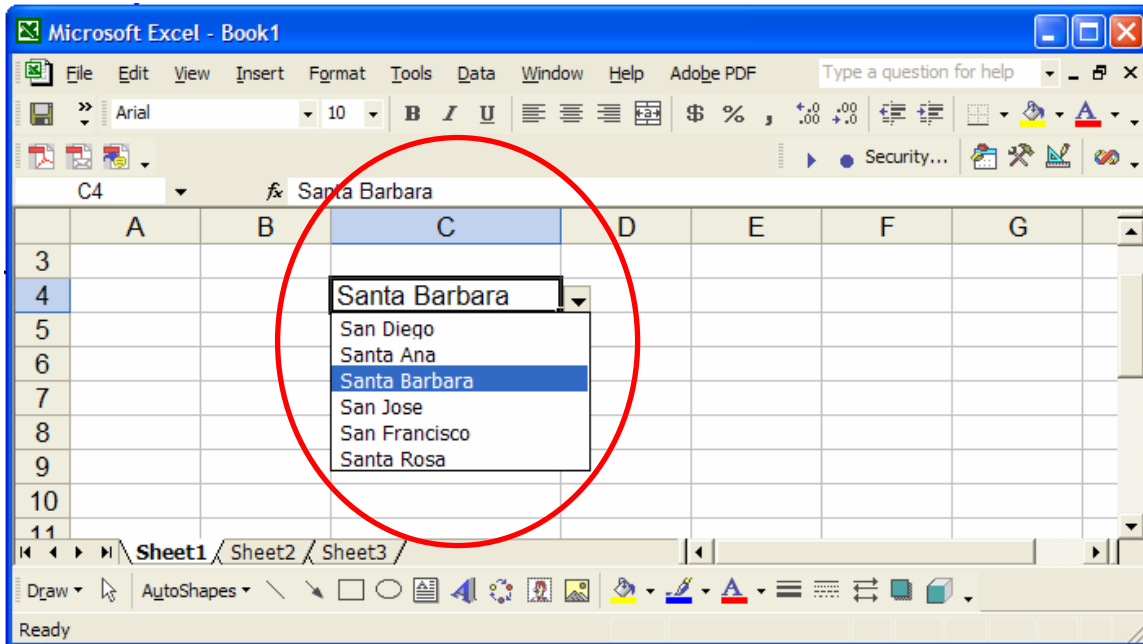
You will see a **Data Validation** menu. Slide down and click on **List**. We are telling Excel that we want to validate the data using a predetermined list (the list you typed on sheet two named *Offices*).



Once you click on **List** in the menu, a new text box will open asking you to define your source (range of the list or the name of the list). Because we gave the list or range a new name: *Offices*, all we have to do is **type in the textbox =Offices**. Press **OK**.



You're done. You created a **Combo Box** which references a predetermined list you created on another sheet. When you **go back and click on Sheet One, cell C4** you will now see a down arrow. **Click on the arrow** and you will get the new drop down list for your choice to populate cell C4. **Pretty cool!**



I hope this helps you out and you can use it in some of your spreadsheets. Watch for my next **Excel Your Financial Mind** in two weeks. If you have not received any of these in the past and would like to see some of my previous tips for cool tools, drop me a line: bobw@outsidebankservices.com. I will be glad to send you some of my archived tips. Or, if you have any questions or ideas for future tips, let me know and I will try to cover the topic of your request.

If you need some help in spreadsheets, databases, or to create a custom stand alone windows program, I can help, it's my job. I have worked in the lending industry for over 20 years. I can and will do anything lenders don't want to do themselves. I'm also a California public notary. You can read about me at my website www.outsidebankservices.com.

You can call (760) 522-5878, or fax (866) 651-7350 or email bobw@outsidebankservices.com.

Thank you and I'm looking forward to some dialog.
Bob Walker