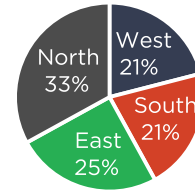# BEST PRACTICES FOR PIE CHARTS

A quick guide to help keep your pie charts honest and easy to consume

1 **A pie chart displays the percent or proportion of total for each category.**
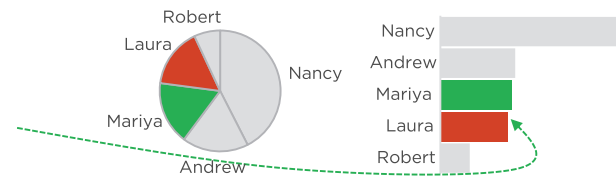All slices should add up to 100%.

2 **It's difficult to compare the size of the triangular slices.**
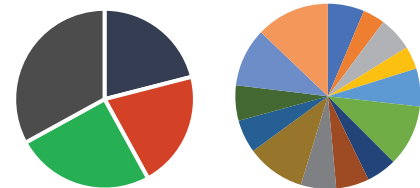Use a bar/column chart when the data has **small variances** between categories.
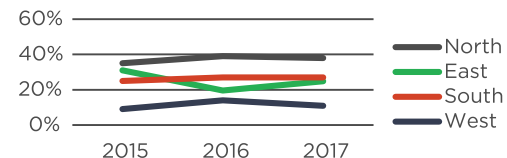

3 **Keep the number of slices to a minimum.**
Usually 4-6 slices max. Too many slices makes the chart **difficult to read**.

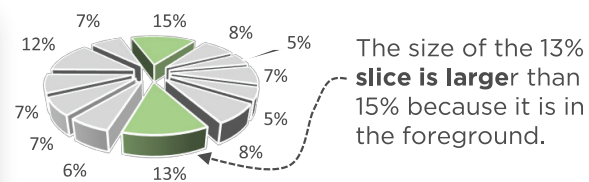**4** **Don't use multiple pie charts to make comparisons over time.**
Line charts can be a good alternative.
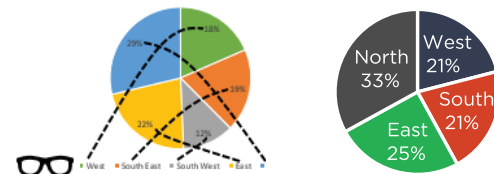

5 **Don't use 3D pie charts, ever.**
The size of the slices is deceiving. Chart does not accurately represent the data.

The size of the 13% **slice is large**r than 15% because it is in the foreground.

6 **Avoid the Legend**
This makes the chart slower to read.
Add category labels on/outside the chart instead.

7 **Use pie charts sparingly, when the data meets the rules above.**
Do your best to educate your boss & audience about the principles of data visualization, but don't get too upset when their demand for pie charts wins.

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