SAP Dashboard

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About the Tutorial

SAP Dashboard is a SAP Business Objects Data Visualization Tool that is used to create interactive dashboards from different data sources. Dashboard allows BI developers to create custom dashboards from almost any data source to meet the business requirements in an organization. You can export the dashboard to PDF, PPT, etc.

This is a fundamental tutorial that covers the basics of SAP Dashboards and how to deal with its various components and sub-components.

Audience

This tutorial has been prepared for those professionals who wish to learn the basics as well as the refinements of SAP Dashboards and execute it in practice.

SAP Dashboard will be useful for BI Developers, Executive Managers and Information Consumers as it provides tools for Data Visualization, Enterprise Reporting, Business Objects Planning and consolidation, Enterprise Performance Management, Query and Analysis, Enterprise Information Management, etc.

This tutorial aims to make the reader comfortable in getting started with SAP Dashboard and its several other utilities.

Prerequisites

It is an elementary and straightforward tutorial which the readers can easily understand. The concepts are explained here with a basic knowledge of how a company or an organization deals with its various reports and Data. However, it will help if you have some prior exposure of charts, tables and working on MS Excel Workbook.

Additionally, it will also be good if the reader has knowledge of Flash files (.swf), Adobe PDF, Power Point Presentation etc. which will help them immensely in understanding this tutorial.

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Table of Contents

1. SAP Dashboards – Introduction

In this chapter, we will begin with discussing about the basics of what SAP Dashboard is and how it evolved.

What is SAP Dashboard?

Dashboard designer is a SAP Business Objects Data Visualization Tool that is used to create interactive dashboards from different data sources. Dashboard designer allows BI developers to create custom dashboards from almost any type of data source to meet the business requirements in an organization.

Dashboards can include different graphs, charts and gauge that are based on the data provided by data sources. Dashboards are used by Senior Management that offers up to date information to information to company CEO's and VP's.

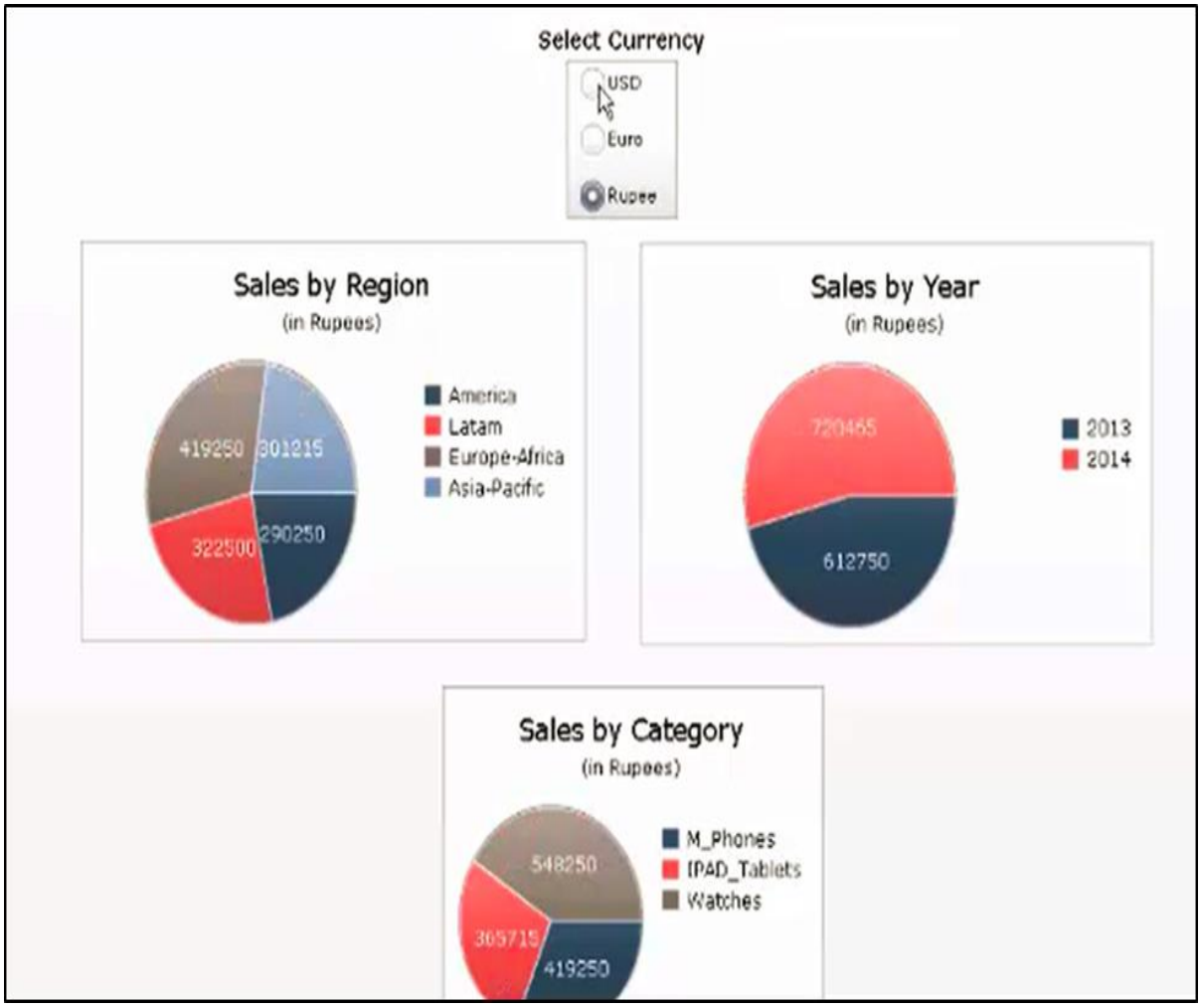
SAP Dashboard – Overview

Consider that you have been promoted to the position of CEO of a company and you want to head a board meeting that shows your company's annual sales growth in different regions.

SAP Business Objects allow you to create dynamic corporate Dashboards for business presentations that looks user interactive and provides the information in quick up to date summary form.

A Dashboard will contain –

- A tab that contains a dynamic chart that contains profit margin by product line, region and Year.
- A tab that contains a chart showing sales versus profit margin.



In the above image, a currency convertor option has been added, to see $ by value in different currencies.

2. SAP Dashboards – Version

Earlier this Dashboard Designer was known as Xcelsius in SAP Business Objects 3.x version. It was also called Crystal Dashboard when Business Objects was not a product suite of SAP.

When Business Objects was acquired by SAP, the products were renamed as follows –

- BOXI 3.1 compatible Dashboard is called Xcelsius 2008.
- BOXI 4.0 compatible Dashboard is called Dashboard 4.0.
- BOXI 4.1 compatible Dashboard is called Dashboard 4.1.

SAP Dashboards Vs Design Studio

SAP Dashboards Designer and Design Studio both are excellent tools for creating dashboards and support advanced features. The selection to choose one over other purely depends on the client requirements and system landscape.

Features	Dashboards Designer	Design Studio
Chart Types	There are 22 charts of 16 types	34 charts of 12 types
Selectors	18 Selectors of 16 types	10 Selectors of 10 Types
Containers	7 Containers of 3 Types	5 Container of 5 Types
Maps	For 100 Countries	No Maps
Calendar	Calendar is available as table	Calendar is available as input field
Filter Panel	No filter Panel	Drilling and Filtering Capabilities
What-If Component	6 components	No components

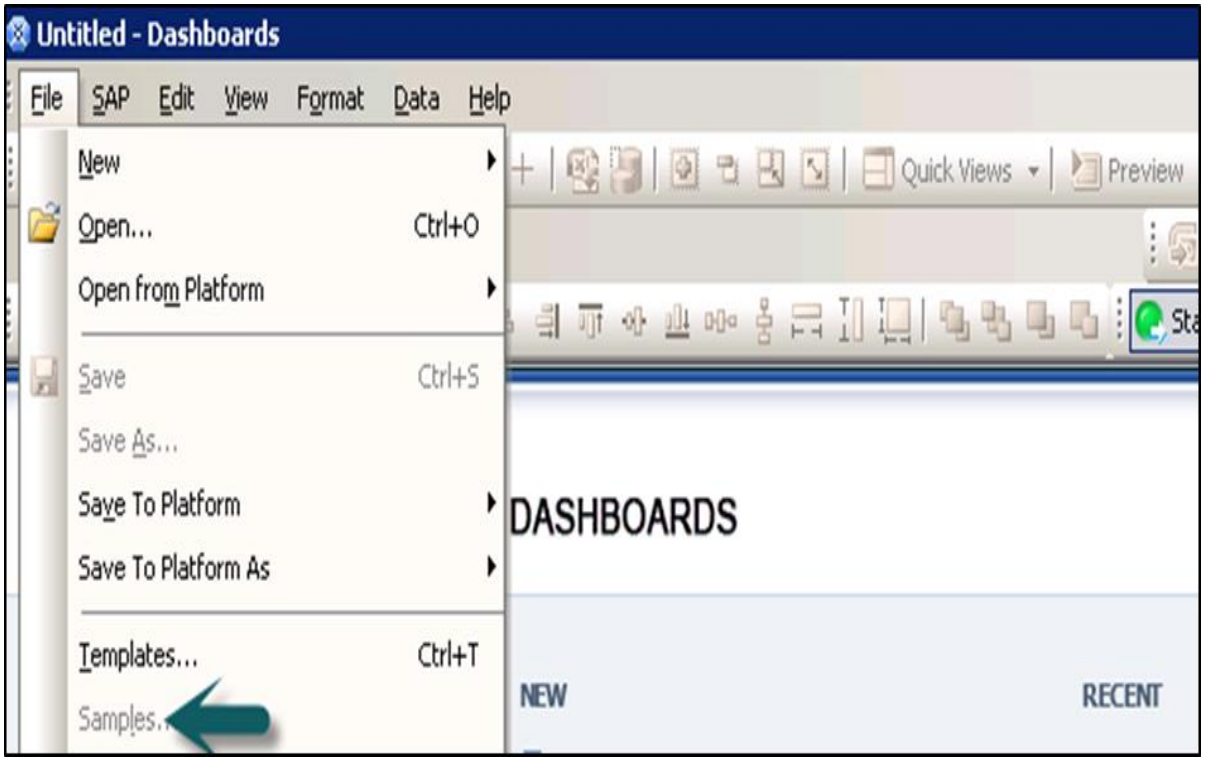
Visualization Engine	Adobe Flash with HTML5 support	Native HTML with CSS
Design and Color Schemes	Multiple themes, customize using GUI	Basic themes, customized using CSS

Filtering	Basic	🟡	Advanced	🟢
Parameterization	Basic	🟡	Advanced	🟢
Drag and Drop	No	🔴	Yes*	🟢
Report to Report Interface	No	🔴	Yes*	🟢
Bex Utilization	Full	🟢	Full	🟢
Hierarchies Utilization	Basic	🟡	Advanced	🟢
What – If Scenarios	Yes	🟢	Only via BI IP functionality	🟡
Context Menu in Crosstab	No	🔴	Yes*	🟢
Planning (BI IP) Support	No	🔴	Yes	🟢
Offline Analysis	Yes	🟢	No	🔴
Reuse of Dash. Fragments	No	🔴	Yes*	🟢
Export to PDF and Excel	Yes	🟢	Only Excel	🟡

Sample Models

Sample models can be used to check how the different functions work in Dashboards and how you can use these functions in your own model. Each sample model includes own embedded spreadsheets data to check how different components are bound to data in spreadsheets.

You can check sample models in Dashboard by going to the File option at the top.



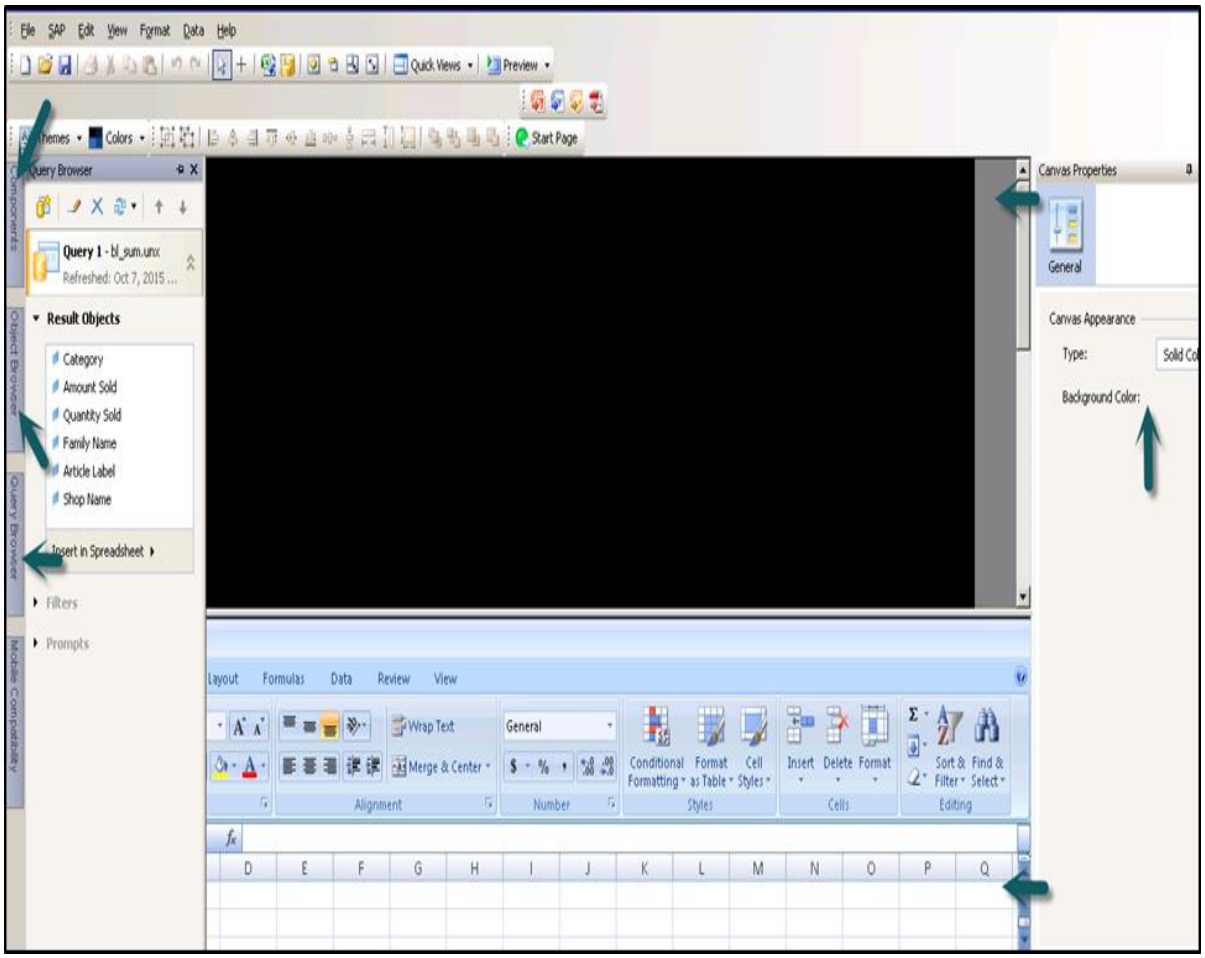
Under Category -> User Guide Samples -> Items list -> OK

3. SAP Dashboards – Workspace

In this chapter, we will discuss about the various tools and buttons that are available in SAP Dashboards.

The following image shows the most commonly used browsers available in the Dashboard designer:

- Component Browser
- Object Browser
- Query Browser
- Canvas
- Embedded Spreadsheets
- Properties Panel



There are five toolbars that you can use when working with models. These are –

- Standard
- Theme
- Export
- Format
- Start Page.

Standard Tool Bar

It contains a button for completing general tasks.

Theme Tool Bar

It contains buttons for working with themes.

Export Toolbar

It contains buttons for exporting your model to different formats.

Format Toolbar

It contains buttons for adjusting component on the canvas.

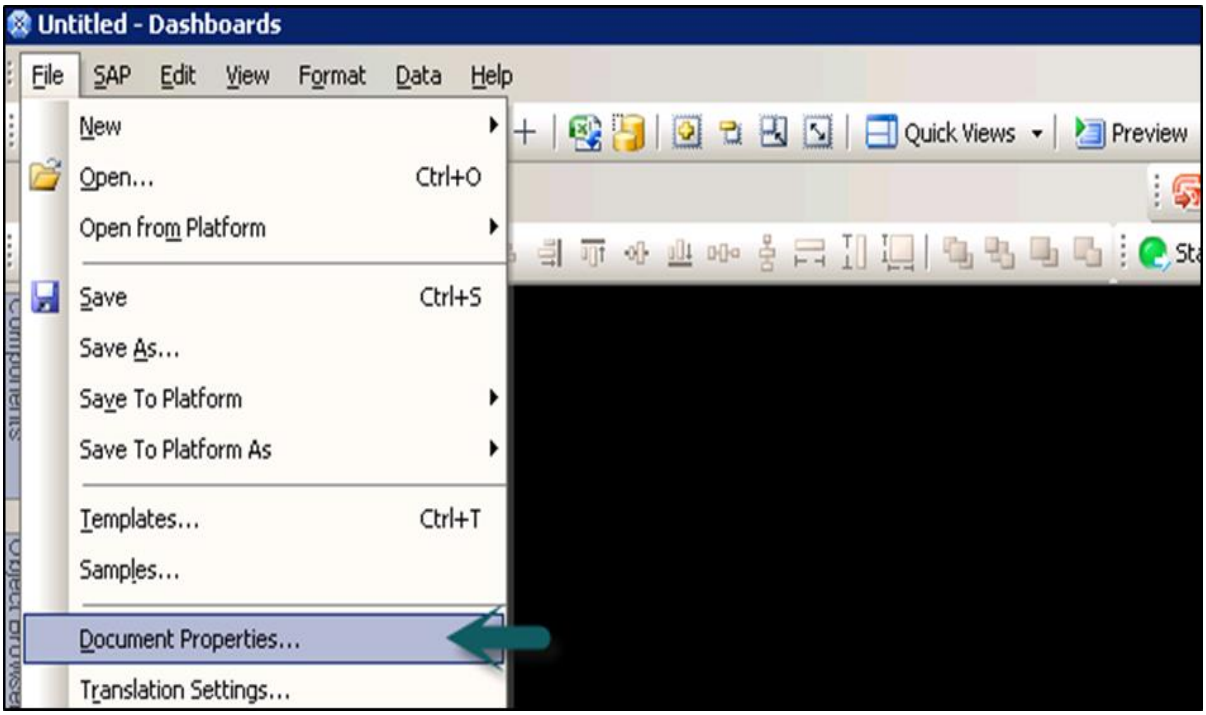
Start Page Toolbar

It contains one button that is used to toggle the start page. You can use shortcuts to create new files or to open existing files.

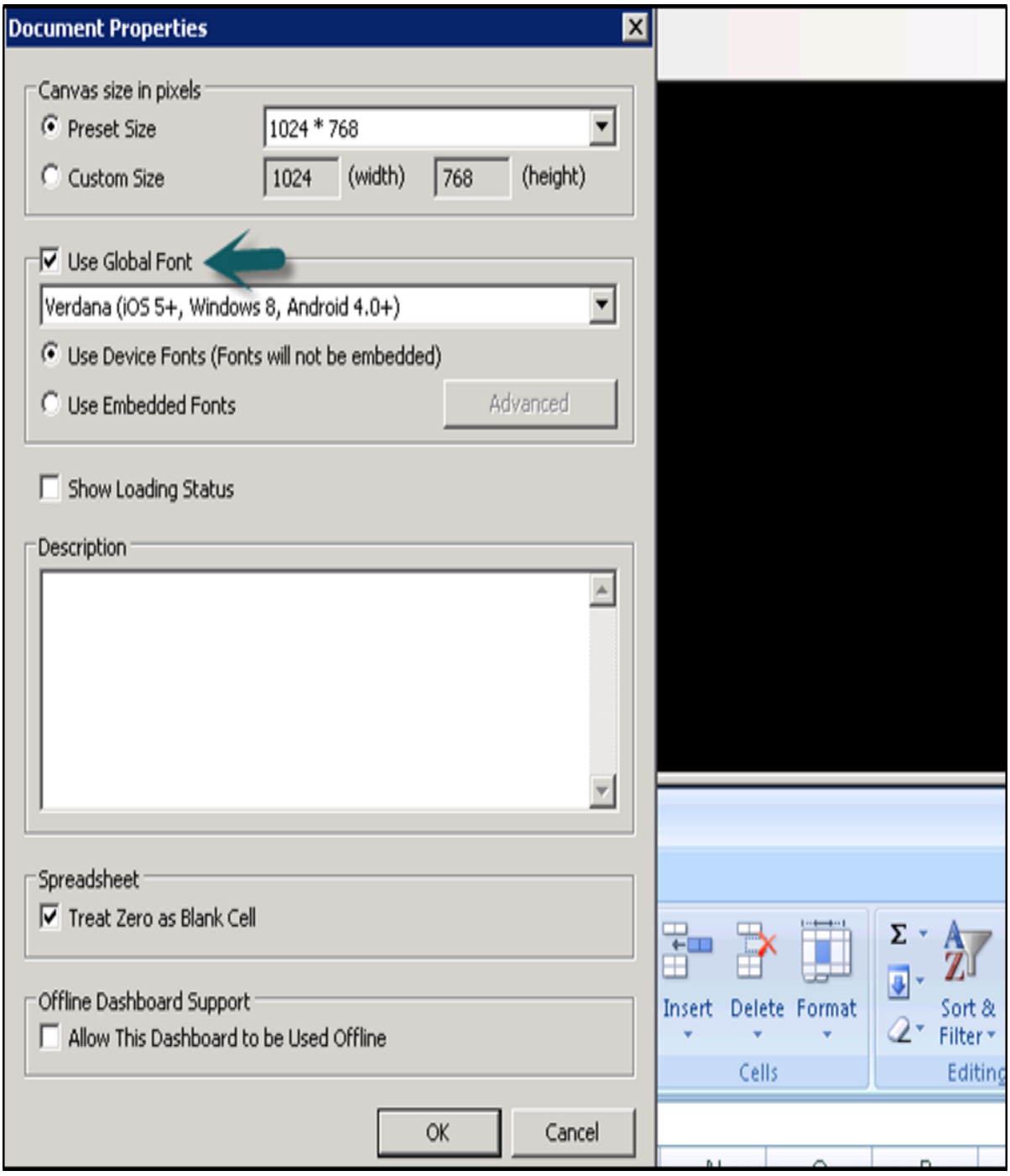
4. SAP Dashboards – Font Options

Different fonts can be set for different components. There is an option to setup the global font if you want to use the same font for all the components. This can be used on device fonts or on embedded fonts. When you use machine fonts, exported file is smaller and you can't rotate text. When embedded fonts are used, you can rotate the text but the file size will be large.

To set Global Font, go to **files -> Document Properties**.



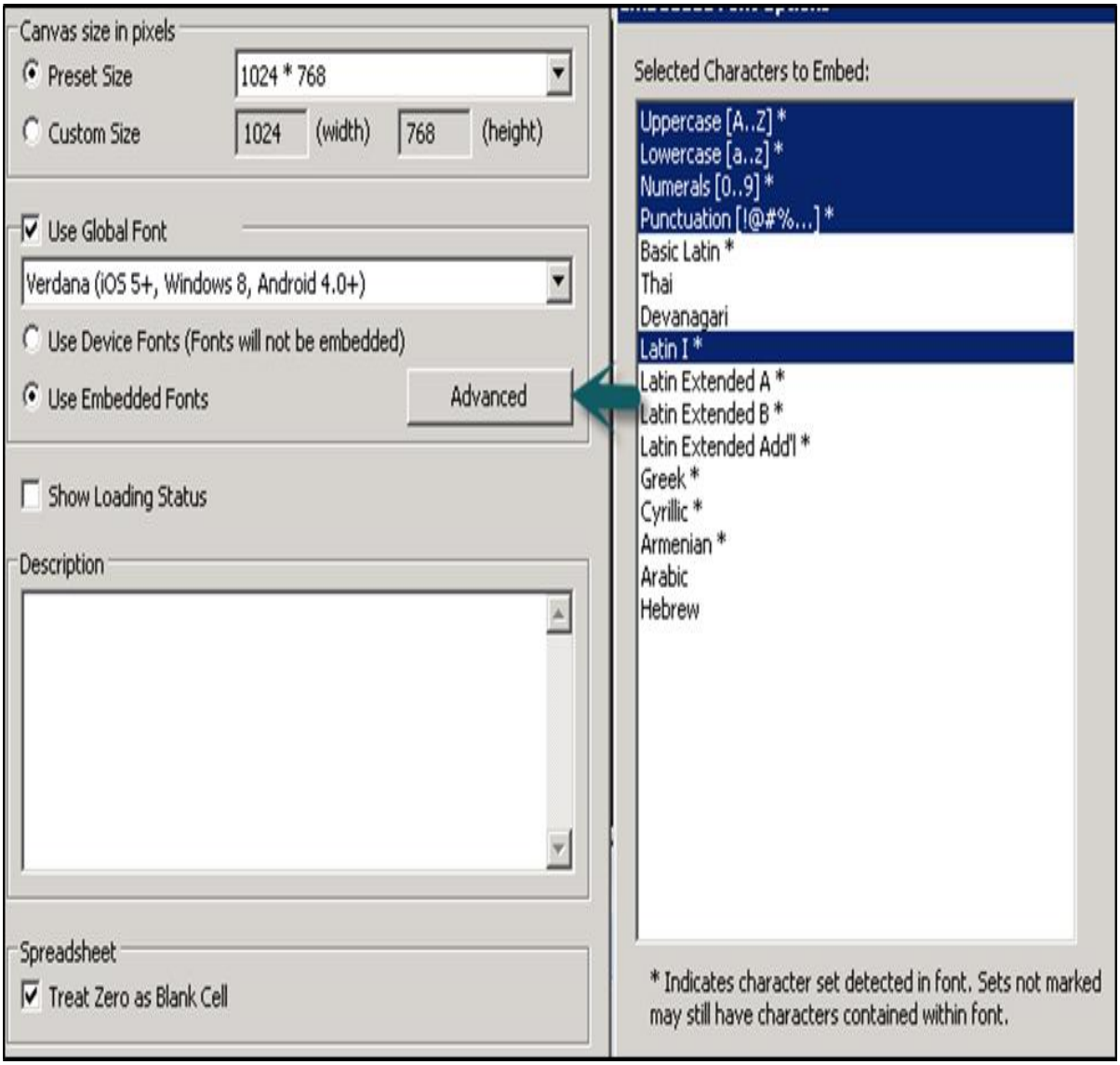
Click on use Global fonts and options for setting up the global font. It will be enabled as shown in the following screenshot –



From the list, you can select –

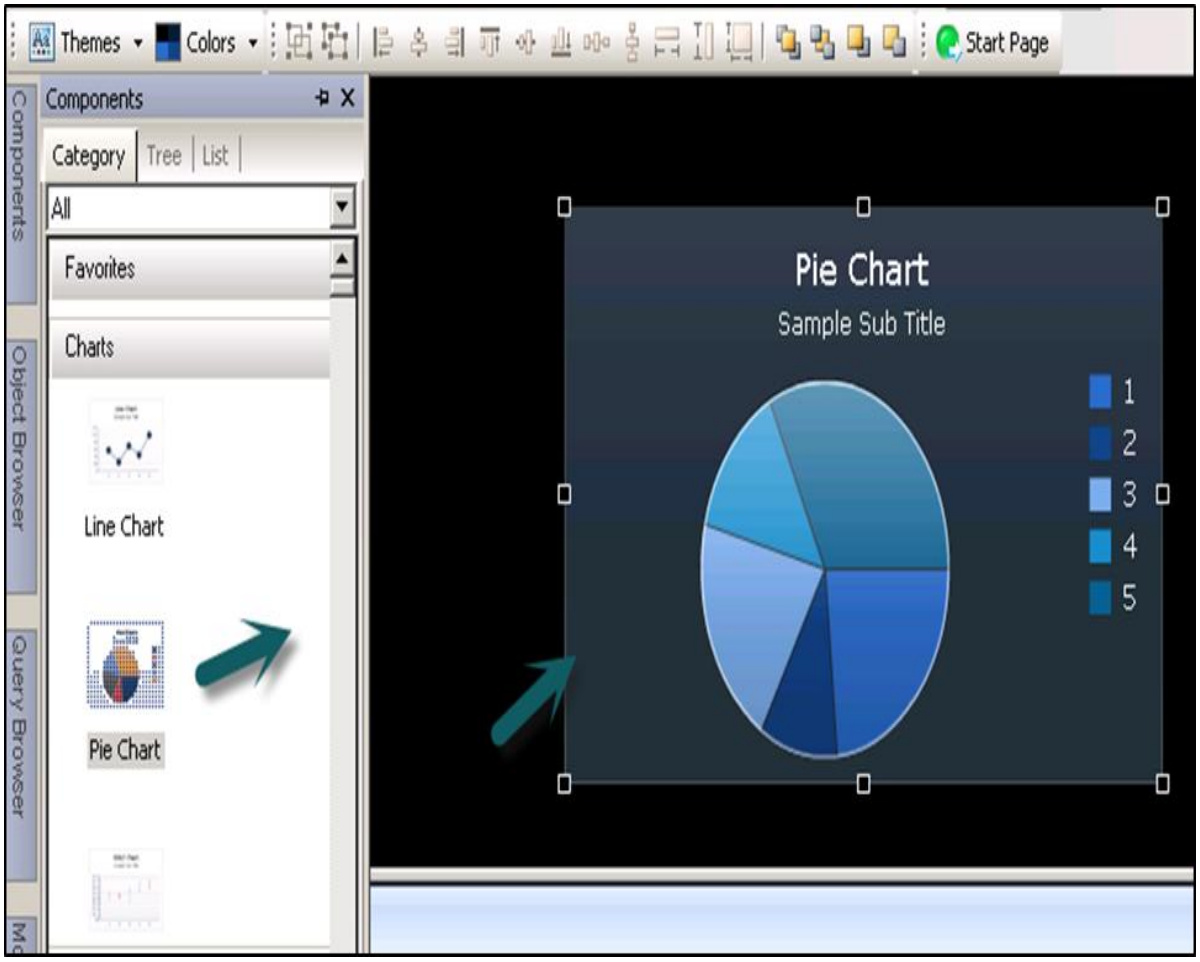
- Use Device Fonts (Fonts will not be embedded).
- Use Embedded Fonts.

In Embedded fonts, you can go to the advanced tab as shown in the following screenshot and then Click OK.



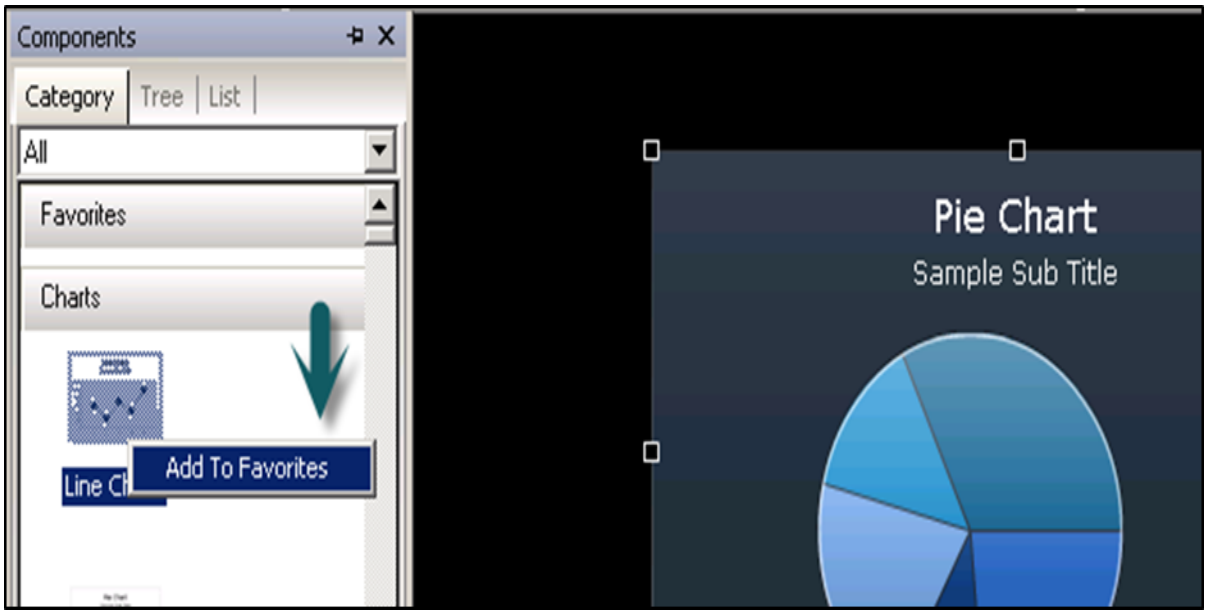
5. SAP Dashboards – Components Browser

This browser provides you with a list of all the components that are available to add to the model in Dashboard. You can drag these components to Canvas.

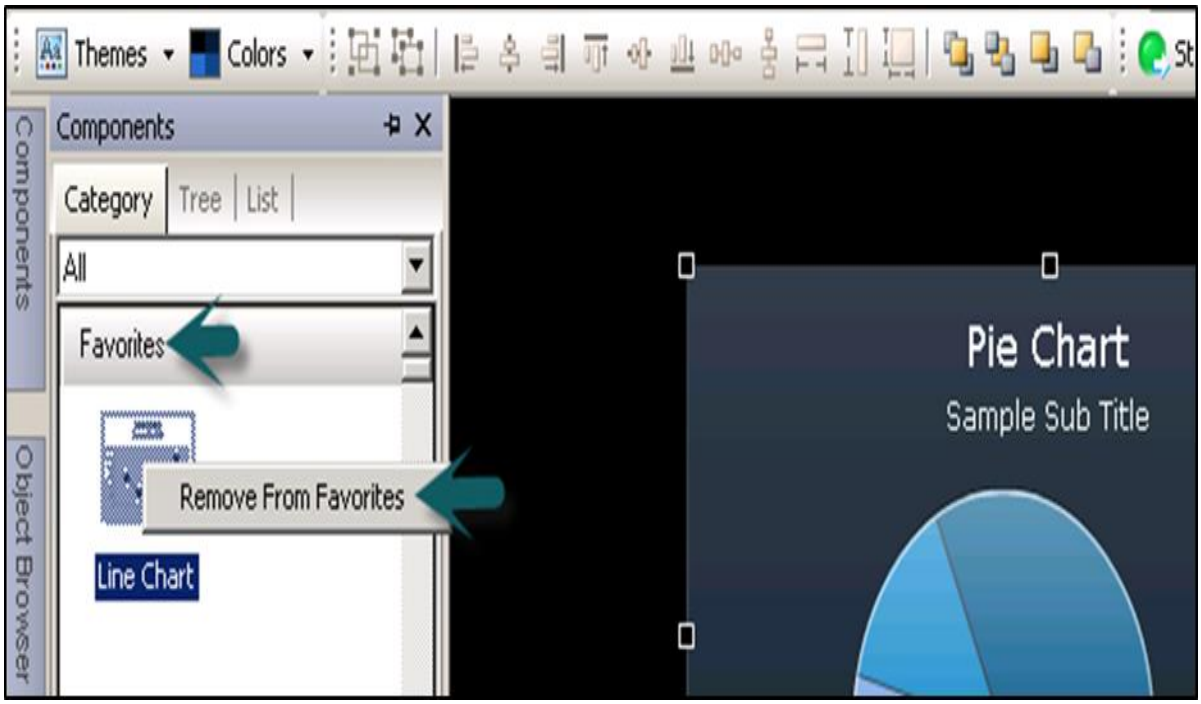


You can also view the components under **Tree and List** as per the functional category.

Favorites: These are available under Category and Tree view. To add a component to Favorite, right click on the component -> Add to Favorites.



Once you add a component to Favorite, you can see it under the Favorite tab. To remove the component, right click -> Remove from Favorites as shown in the following screenshot.



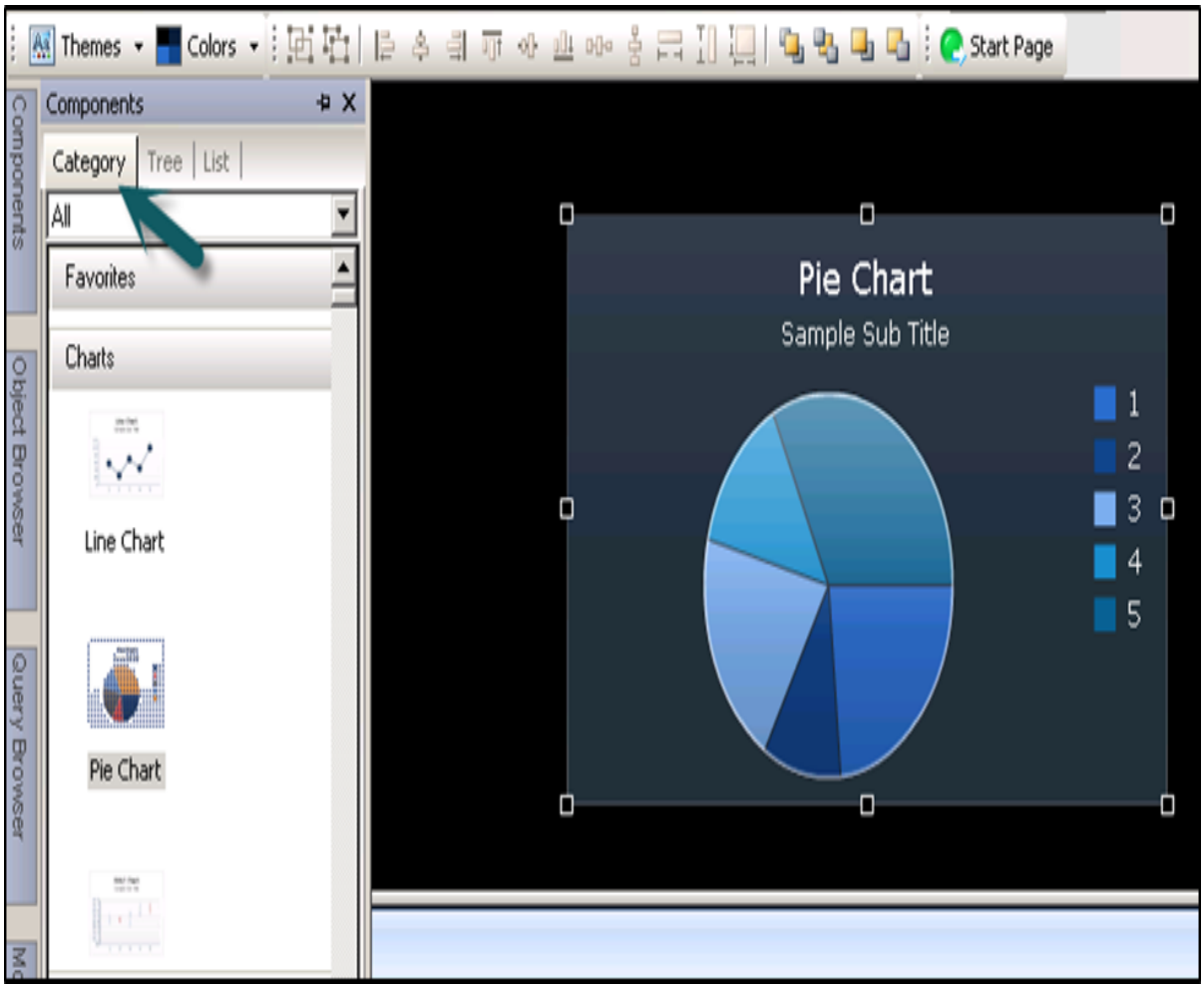
Charts: Charts are used to perform comparison, trend and patterns.

Containers: Container components group and display other components.

Selectors: It allows dashboard consumer to select data at run time.

Maps: It is used to display data by region.

Category View: Components are grouped in a sliding view and you can scroll down to open each category.

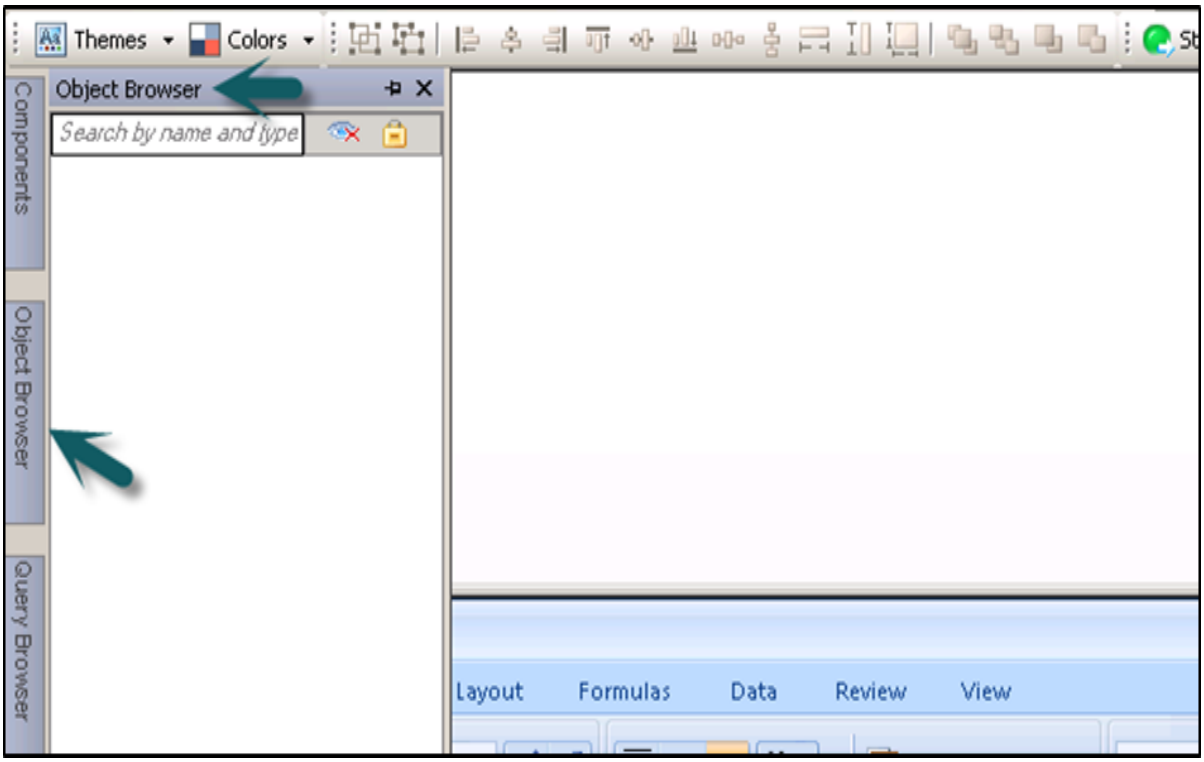


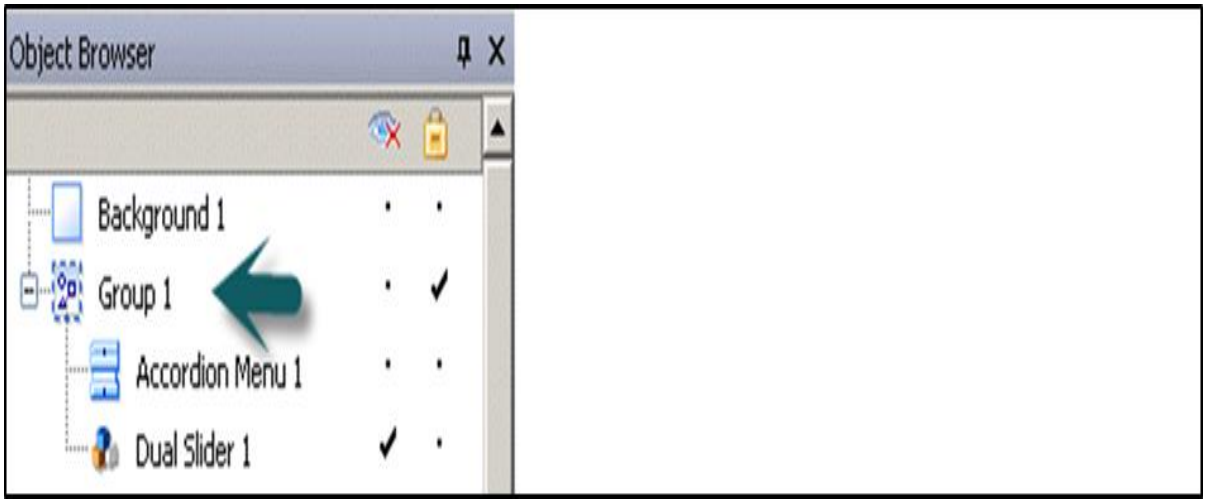
Tree View: In tree view, the components are organized in folders as per their category. You can click on the folders to see what all categories are there and check the list of available components as well.

List View: In list view, the components are arranged in alphabetical order and they are not grouped based on the category.

6. SAP Dashboards – Object Browser

An Object Browser provides you with list of all the available components that you can add to your model. You can use Object Browser to add and change these components and to lock or hide the components in the canvas.





To select a component in the Object Browser, click the component name to make it active on the canvas. To select multiple components, you can use the CTRL key.

Renaming and Hiding the Components

You can also rename a component that you add to the Canvas in Object Browser. Click on the component that you want to rename. The name is highlighted and the cursor is in the text box. Enter the name of the component and press ENTER.

You can hide the components on the Canvas to prevent any interaction with them. To hide or show all the components in the Object Browser, do the following –

Locking the Components

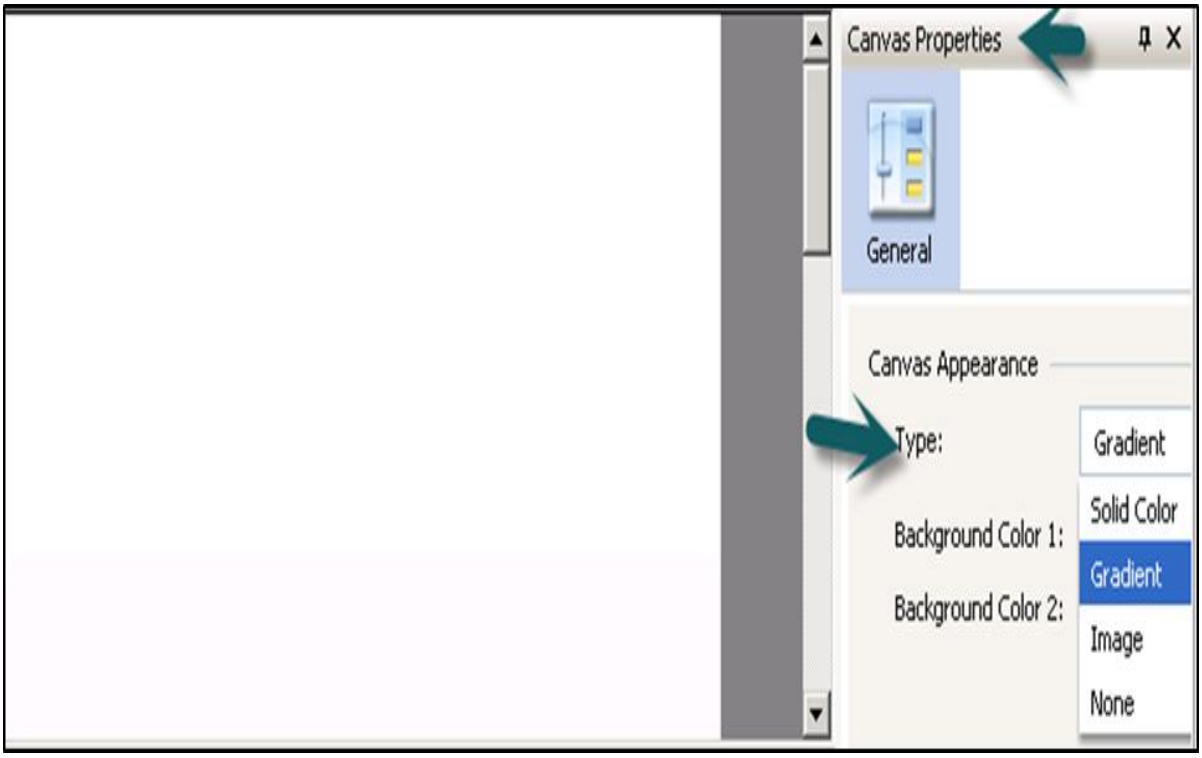
You can also lock the components and groups in the Canvas so that they can't be used in the model.

To lock all the components or group, you can click on the lock icon.

Setting up the Canvas Background

You can change the color of the canvas background and can add grid to help you arrange items on the Canvas. You can adjust the size of the canvas to get more space to work. You can set the canvas background as solid or gradient background.

To set a transparent background, under the Canvas properties, select type as None. If you can't see the Canvas property pane, open a model. You can set the following value for type:

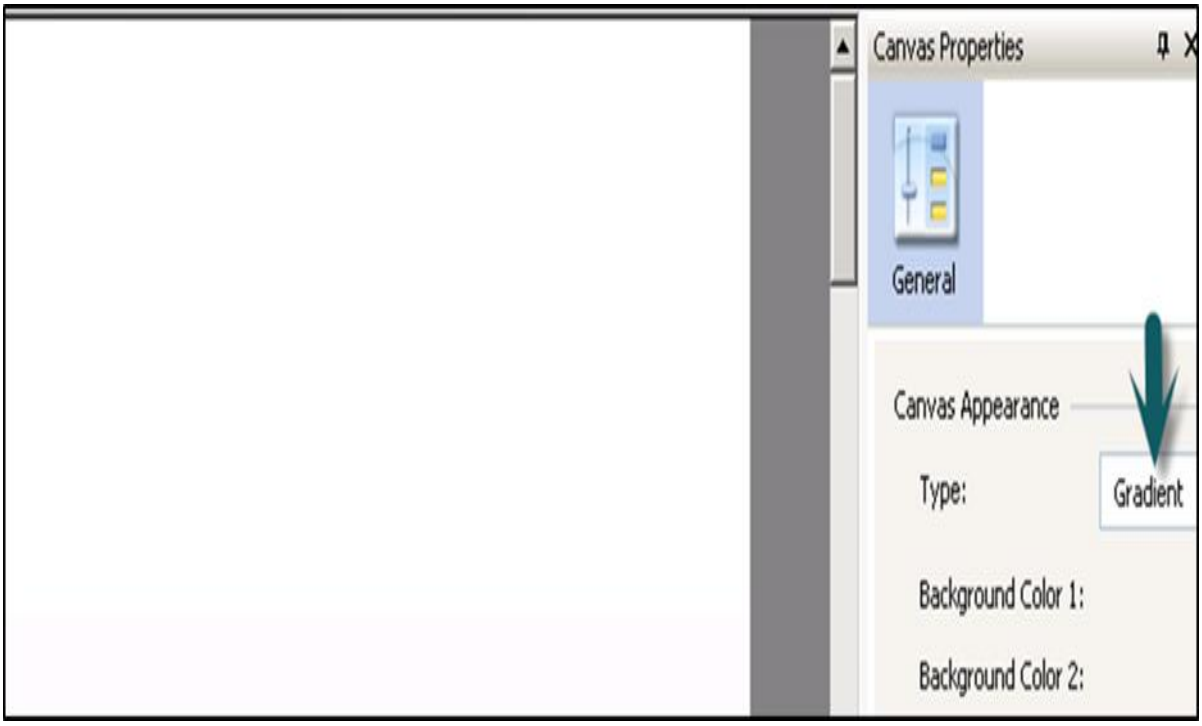


Solid	A single solid color
Gradient	Two colors that fade together from top to bottom
Image	A JPG or SWF file. Select the file to import as the background
None	A transparent background

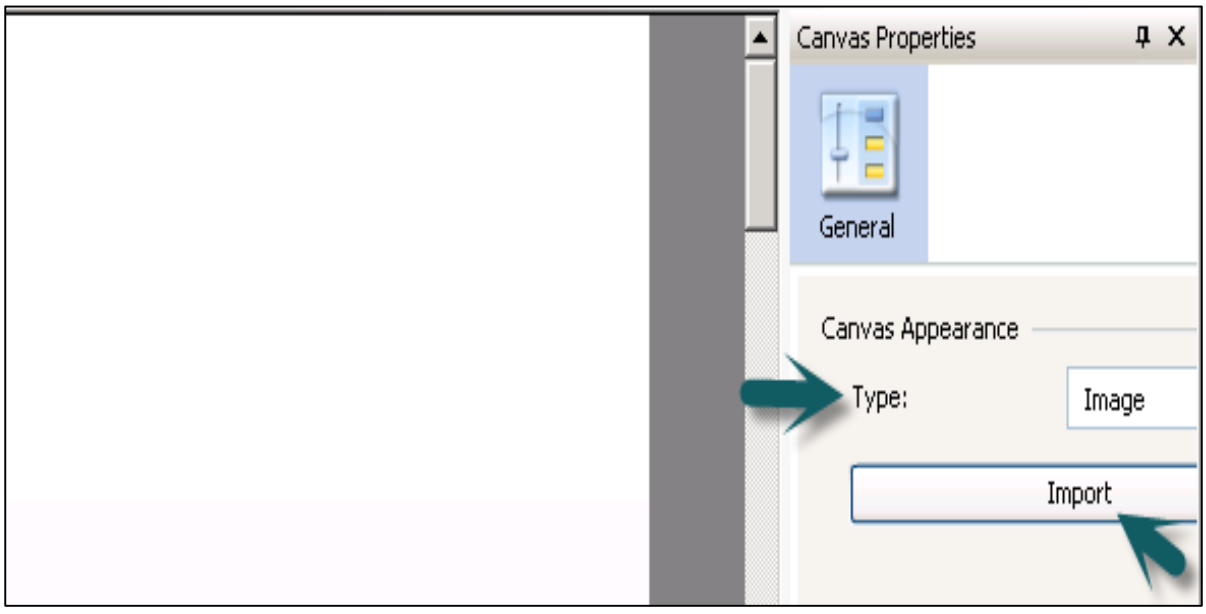
Background Color

When you select solid or gradient type, you can select the background color box to set the colors to be used in the background.

For Solid Background, select a single color and or Gradient background select Background color 1 and Background color 2.



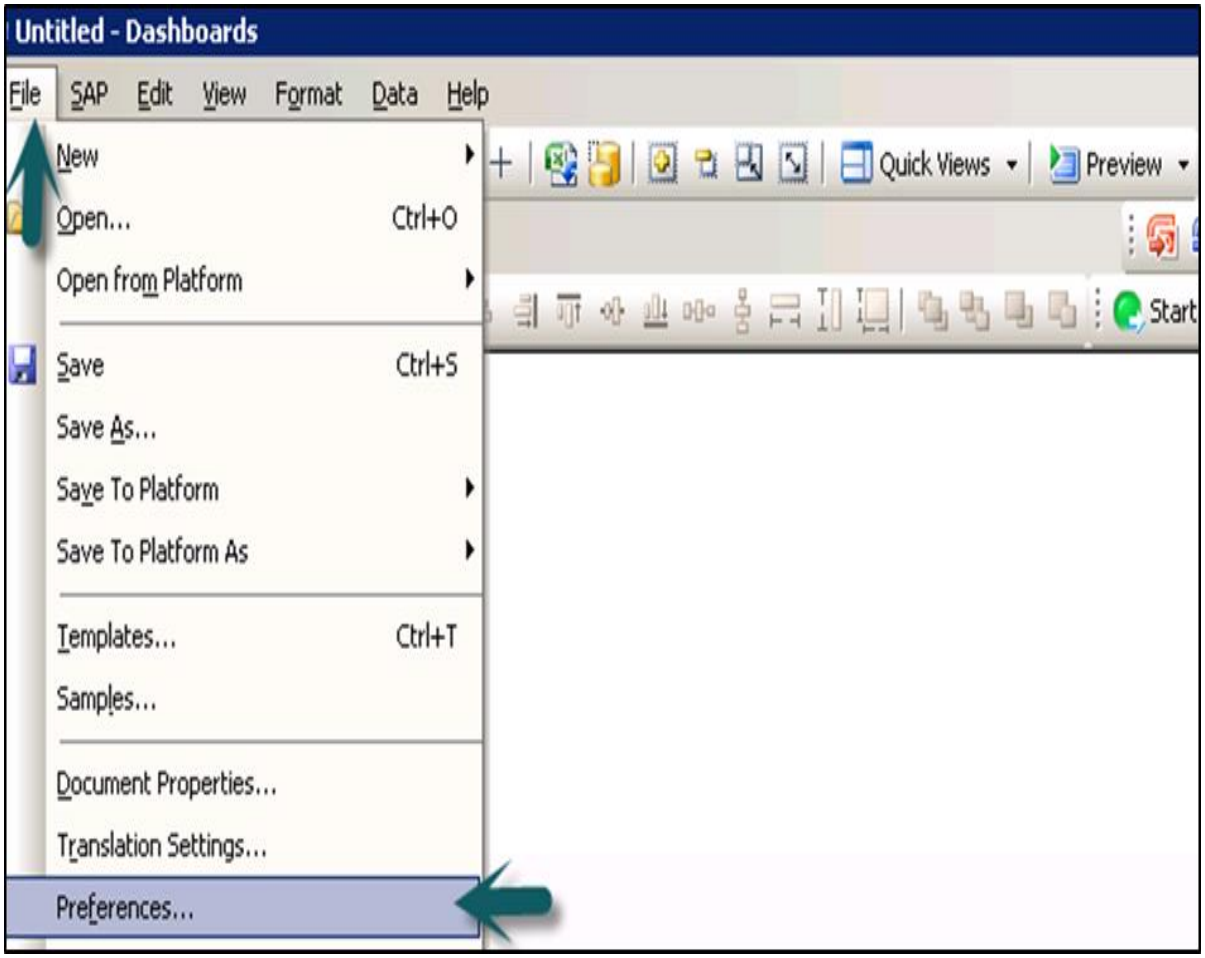
When you select type as Image, you can get an import option to add an image from your local computer. You can add a background in your data model that may match your company logo or any other image represents objective of the model.



Display Grid on Canvas with Components

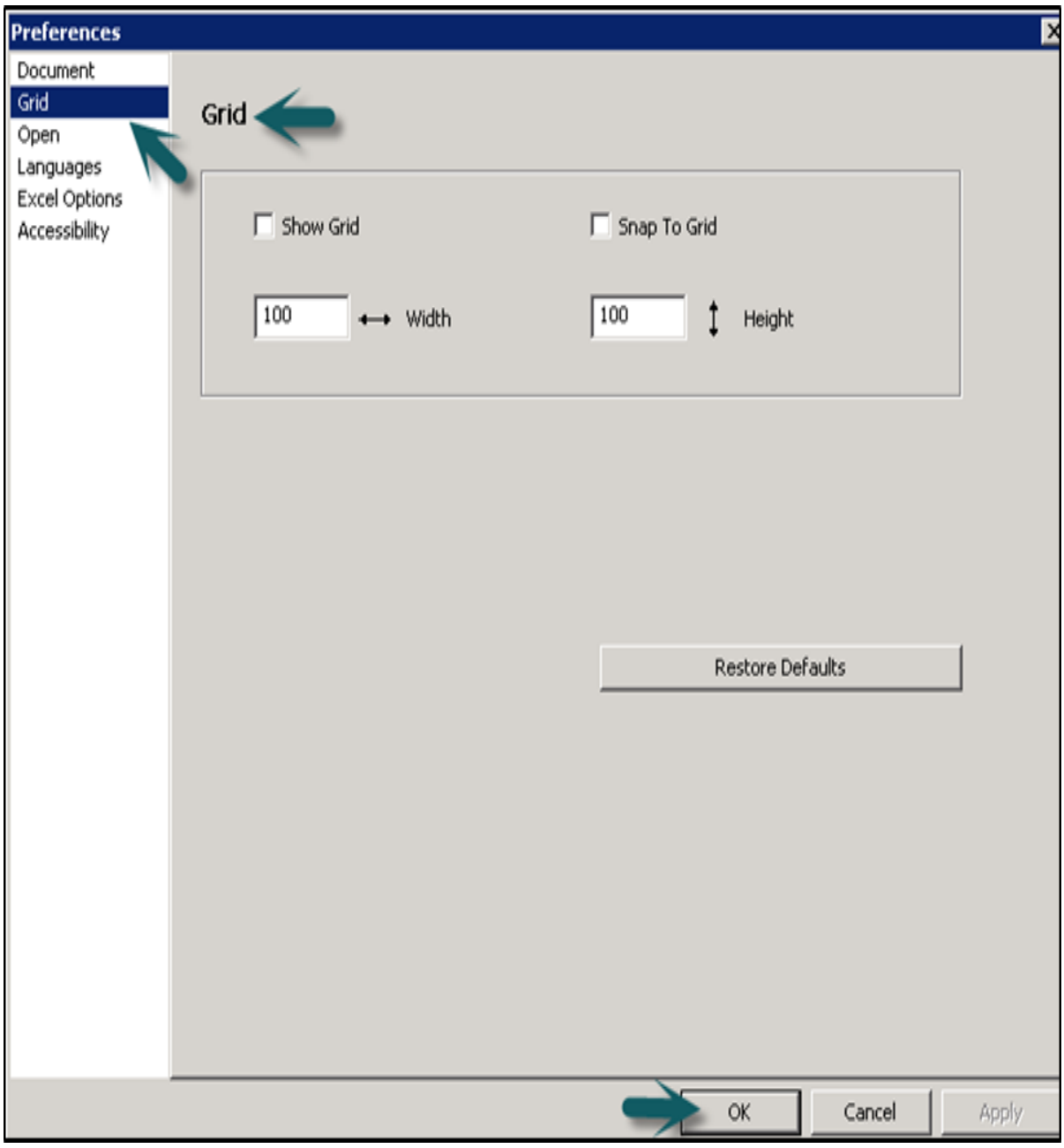
You can also line items along with gridlines. You can use grid manually to position each component.

Go to **File -> Preferences** –



On the left side, select Grid and you can choose from the following options –

Show Grid	Select to display a grid on the canvas.
Snap To Grid	Select to have components automatically align to the nearest gridlines.
Width	Specify the spacing between grid columns in pixels.
Height	Specify the spacing between grid rows in pixels.



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