

# Crystal Ball Software and Risk Analysis Tips

## (#53) Creating a Switch Cell for Ranges of Assumption Values, Part 1

The following tip was submitted by Bill Haskett of Decision Strategies as part of an ongoing discussion on our online Crystal Ball Users Group (CBUG). In response to a question on cell references in assumption definitions, Bill Haskett wrote:

"You are correct, you cannot enter Excel range names or formulae in the Crystal Ball (CB) dialog boxes. What you can do though, since the CB entries are only expecting values, is to use the range name or formula in the cell that you have told CB to reference. Here's an example...

"I have three variables representing the means of three different distributions that are being used on a mutually exclusive basis to reference three different scenarios that I want to model.

"First, we can create what I call a 'switch cell.' That is a cell that allows us to specify what scenario we are modeling. In our case it will be either a one, a two, or a three. Let's put that in cell c2. In the cell that CB will reference for the mean of the distribution to be used, we'll put in a choose formula...

```
=Choose(c2,scenario1,scenario2,scenario3)
```

Where scenario 1...3 are the different means for the distributions you want to input.

"What this does is brings the data to CB rather than sending CB out looking for different cells for the value (which doesn't work, as you have pointed out).

"As a side benefit, it allows you to congregate all of the parameters for your different scenarios into a single 'control panel' on your worksheet. This affords greater surety in what the scenarios are running and fewer mistakes means fewer runs and more time with your family, or friends, or whatever."

As with the previous tip, we have posted a spreadsheet example of these methods. [To download this example, visit the useful techniques section of our Example Model Library.](#)

For more information or to contact us, browse to <http://helpdesk.crystalball.com>

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