

How to Display Value and Percentage on Power BI Bar Charts

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In the realm of business intelligence and data visualization, Power BI is a foundational tool for transforming raw data into actionable insights. A frequent request from analysts is the ability to present both the absolute value and the relative contribution (percentage) of a category simultaneously within a single visualization. While traditional bar charts are excellent for displaying values, integrating the percentage of the grand total requires a specialized, yet simple, technique that leverages the flexibility of Power BI's visualization options, moving beyond standard visual formatting controls.

The standard visual formatting options in Power BI often limit the user to displaying either the raw data label (the value) or a percentage derived from the total, but rarely both in a clean, integrated manner on a standard bar chart visual. To overcome this limitation and achieve a truly comprehensive data display, we must utilize a creative workaround involving the standard **Table** visual combined with powerful Conditional formatting features. This methodology ensures that viewers can quickly grasp both the magnitude of each data point and its proportional significance within the overall dataset.

The Dual Challenge: Displaying Value and Percentage in Power BI

Analysts frequently encounter situations where visualizing both the raw measurement (the dollar value, the unit count, etc.) and the relative proportion of that measurement to the total dataset is critical for a complete narrative. While standard bar charts excel at visualizing magnitude, combining this with proportional context traditionally requires multiple charts or complex custom visuals. Our primary objective here is to achieve this dual representation within a single, cohesive visual component in Power BI, maximizing dashboard efficiency and clarity without sacrificing data precision.

The solution pivots on manipulating the standard **Table** visual to function as a pseudo-bar chart. This unique technique leverages the robust organizational structure of the Table visual and pairs it with the graphical representation provided by Conditional formatting, specifically utilizing **Data bars**. By treating the Table not merely as a numerical grid but as a canvas for visualization, we gain the necessary flexibility to display multiple types of metrics side-by-side, overcoming the inherent display limitations often encountered in basic visualization types.

This methodology is particularly effective because it allows the data values themselves to remain visible while the Data bars provide immediate graphical context, showing the magnitude relative to other categories. Furthermore, by duplicating the measure column, we can apply a distinct calculation--the percentage of the grand total--to the second column, presenting the proportional information clearly alongside the absolute measure. The resulting visualization, which is demonstrated by the final output, provides a highly efficient and intuitive way to consume complex data relationships in a single glance.

Store	Sum of Sales	%GT Sum of Sales
A	20	4.13%
B	26	5.37%
C	40	8.26%
D	47	9.71%
E	40	8.26%
F	39	8.06%
G	35	7.23%
H	35	7.23%
I	42	8.68%
J	49	10.12%
K	50	10.33%
L	61	12.60%
Total	484	100.00%

Understanding the Technique: Why We Utilize the Table Visual

The selection of the **Table** visual is the foundation of this advanced dual-metric visualization technique, offering capabilities that dedicated graphical visuals lack. Unlike standard bar or column charts, which typically enforce a strict single-metric display style, the Table allows for highly granular control over individual columns, enabling us to display the raw text value, apply graphical elements (the data bar), and include percentage calculations derived from the same underlying measure--all within the context of a single row. This feature is paramount for bypassing the restrictive formatting menus of conventional charts which force a choice between displaying the label value or the percentage contribution.

The inherent design of the Power BI Table visual supports the inclusion of multiple instances of the same measure, which is essential for achieving our objective. We essentially require three distinct display components: the categorical identifier (e.g., **Store Name**), the graphical representation (the **Data Bar** showing Sales value), and the numerical proportional context (the Percentage of Sales total). By dragging the primary measure (Sales) into the Table visual's Columns panel twice, we create two independent column containers. These containers can then be formatted uniquely, setting the stage for applying the necessary visual and numerical transformations without interfering with each other.

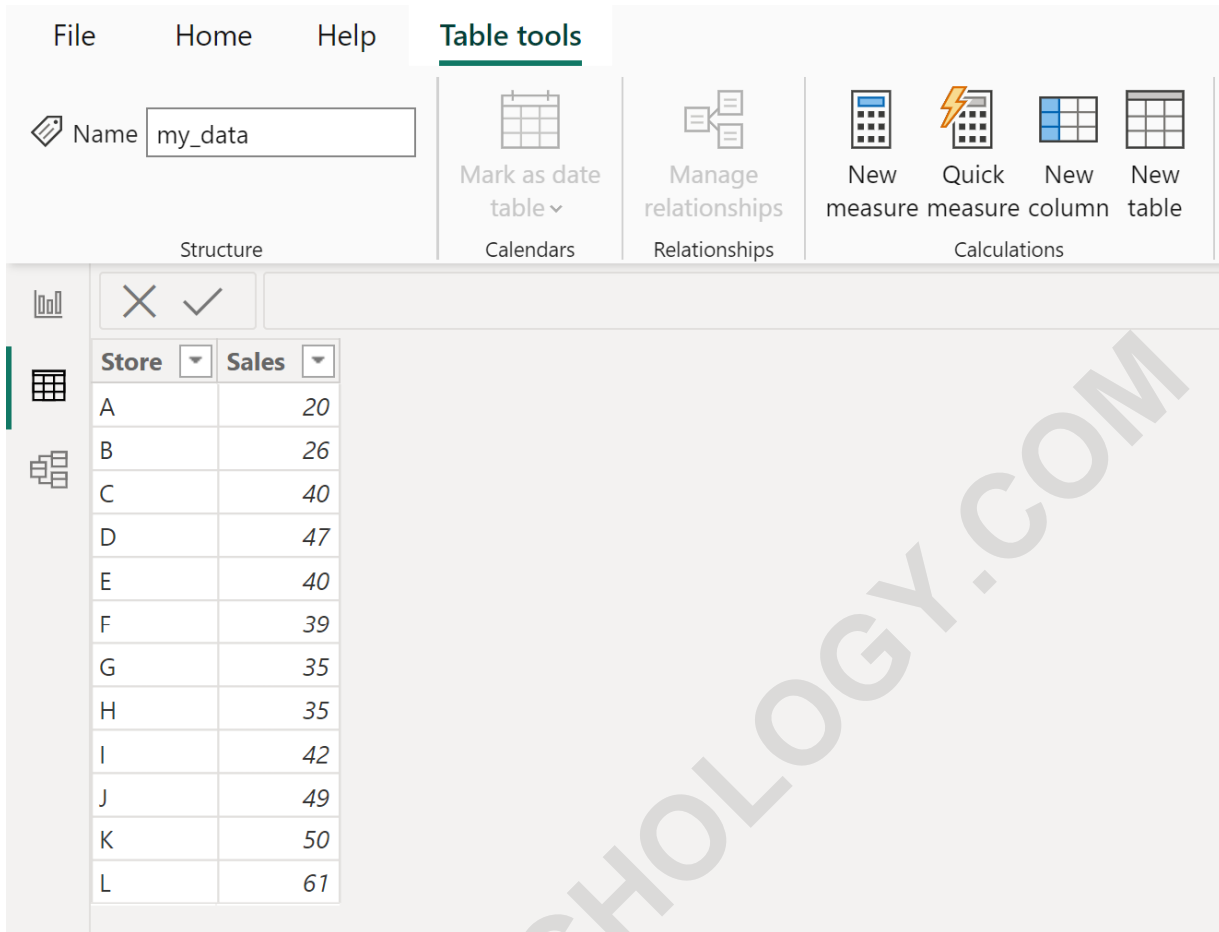
Furthermore, the use of Conditional formatting via **Data bars** is the crucial element that simulates the aesthetic and interpretive function of a standard bar chart. Data bars dynamically scale based on the measure's value within the data range displayed, effectively transforming a dull column of

numbers into a clear visual hierarchy. This approach maintains high data fidelity because the actual sales values are retained and visible alongside the bars, thus providing immediate visual comparison alongside precise numerical validation, a combination difficult to achieve otherwise.

Step 1: Loading the Data and Initial Setup in Report View

To initiate this visualization project, we must confirm that the necessary data is correctly loaded and accessible within the Power BI environment. Our example uses a straightforward dataset containing information on total sales across various retail locations. This dataset must contain a key categorical field (e.g., **Store**) and the associated quantitative measure (e.g., **Sales**). Precise data preparation and modeling are essential, as the integrity and accuracy of the resulting visualization depend entirely on correct data aggregation and grouping of these figures.

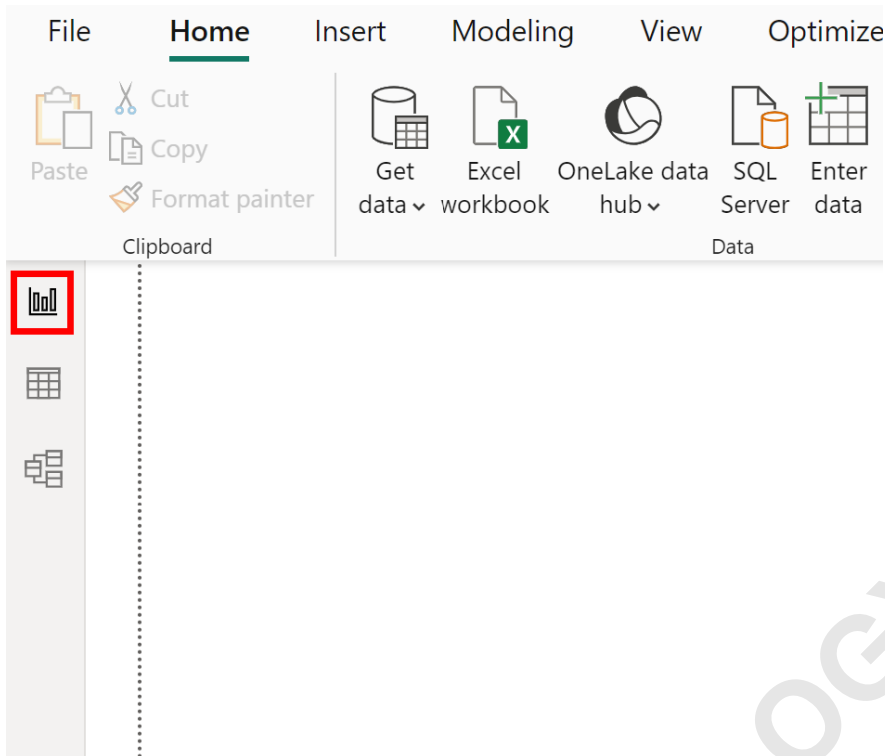
We assume the data has been loaded and modeled, resulting in a table structure where each row represents a distinct store and its aggregated total sales. The goal is to visually represent the absolute sales figure while concurrently calculating and displaying the proportion of these sales relative to the grand total generated by all stores combined. The visual below demonstrates the fundamental structure of the data we are starting with before visualization begins, confirming that the subsequent aggregation steps within Power BI will produce the anticipated numerical results.



The screenshot displays the 'Table tools' ribbon in Power BI. The ribbon includes a 'Name' field set to 'my_data', a 'Structure' section with a 'Mark as date table' dropdown, and a 'Calculations' section with options for 'New measure', 'Quick measure', 'New column', and 'New table'. Below the ribbon, a table is shown with two columns: 'Store' and 'Sales'. The 'Store' column lists letters A through L, and the 'Sales' column lists corresponding numerical values from 20 to 61. A watermark 'ARABPSYCHOLOGY.COM' is visible across the table.

Store	Sales
A	20
B	26
C	40
D	47
E	40
F	39
G	35
H	35
I	42
J	49
K	50
L	61

Once data preparation is complete, the first navigational step is to transition to the report design interface. Locate and click the **Report View** icon on the left-hand navigation pane of Power BI Desktop. This action moves the user away from data modeling or transformation workspaces and into the report building canvas, preparing the environment for the insertion and configuration of our foundational **Table** visual. This environment is where all visualization elements are placed and styled.

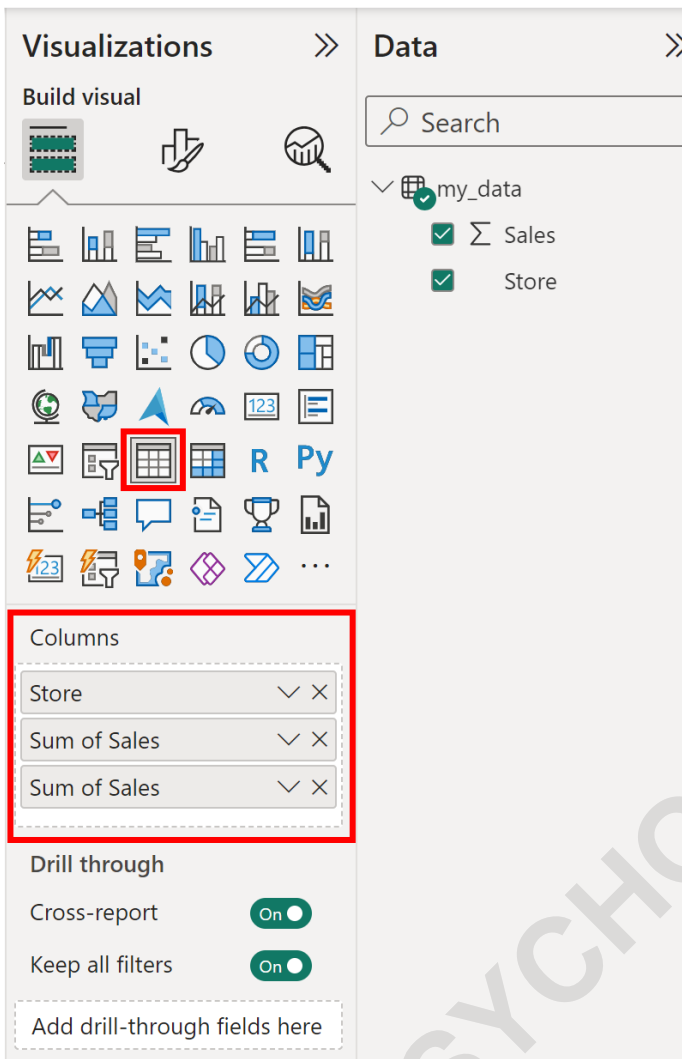


Step 2: Configuring the Table Visual and Duplicating Sales Measures

With the Report View active, we proceed to instantiate the visualization container. Navigate to the **Visualizations** pane, typically situated on the right side of the screen, and select the **Table** icon. This action places an empty Table visual onto the report canvas, immediately prompting for field inputs. The utilization of the Table is mandatory for this technique due to its specific capabilities regarding column formatting and measure flexibility.

The configuration begins by defining the table's axes. First, drag the categorical field, **Store**, from the Fields pane and place it into the Columns panel of the Visualizations pane. This defines the vertical structure of our table, establishing rows for each unique store. Subsequently, drag the quantitative measure, **Sales**, into the Columns panel. This initial inclusion automatically creates a measure column labeled "Sum of Sales," displaying the aggregated sales value for every store.

The critical step for achieving the dual display is the measure duplication. Drag the **Sales** field again from the Fields pane and drop it immediately after the first "Sum of Sales" entry in the Columns panel. The Visualizations pane must now clearly list the category, **Store**, followed by two separate instances of the aggregated measure, **Sum of Sales**. This structural redundancy is what allows us to assign independent display properties--graphical bars to the first measure and percentage calculations to the second--all stemming from the same underlying sales data.

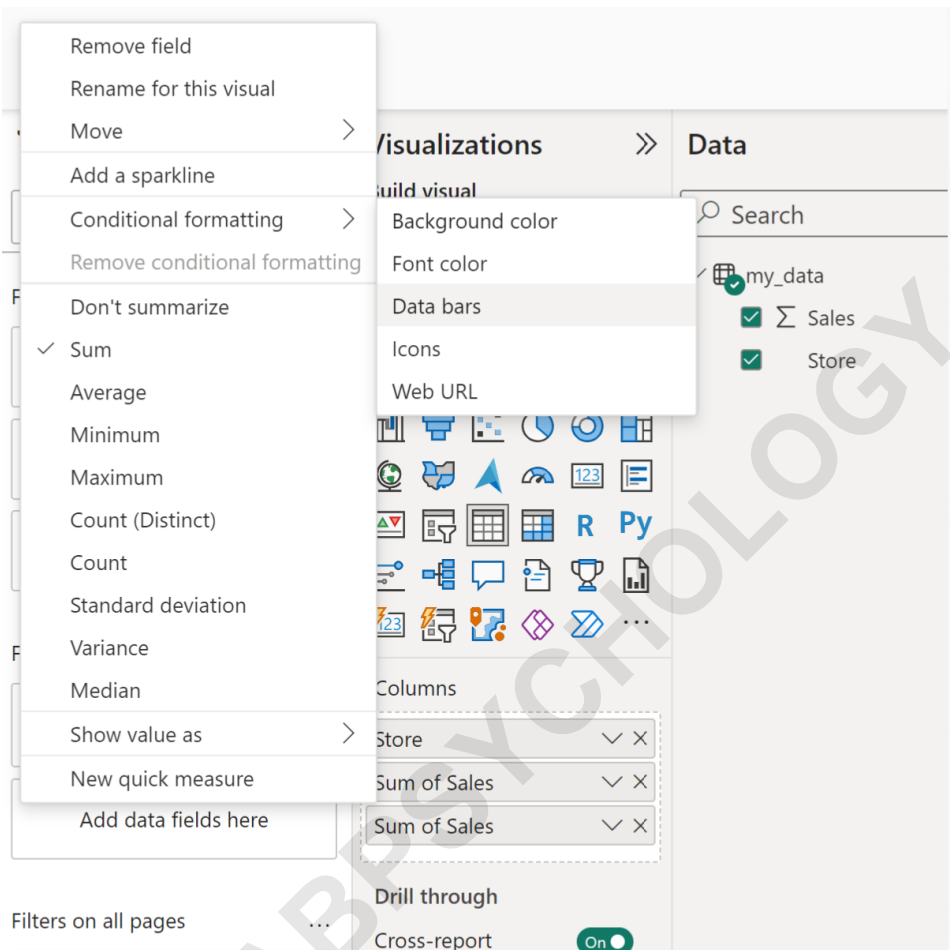


Step 3: Applying Conditional Formatting for Data Bars

The first instance of the "Sum of Sales" column is designated to become the graphical component, simulating the physical bars of a bar chart. This transformation is executed using the robust feature set of Conditional formatting, which enables dynamic styling based on the column's data values. To access these settings, right-click directly on the header or field well entry for the first **Sum of Sales** measure within the Columns panel, which will bring up the measure's contextual menu.

From the contextual menu that appears, hover the mouse cursor over the **Conditional formatting** option. This action expands a secondary menu displaying various formatting types, including options for background color, font color, and data icons. Crucially, select **Data bars** from this list. The immediate effect of selecting Data bars is the appearance of horizontal bars behind the numerical values in that column, where the length of each bar is automatically scaled in proportion to the sales value relative to the maximum sales figure present in the data set.

While the **Data bars** option typically allows for extensive customization, such as adjusting colors, setting minimum and maximum values, and choosing the bar direction, the primary goal is simply to apply the visualization element. Once applied, this column instantly provides the visual impact of a bar chart, allowing for quick, visual comparisons of the absolute sales magnitude across the different stores, transforming raw numerical data into an intuitive visual ranking system.



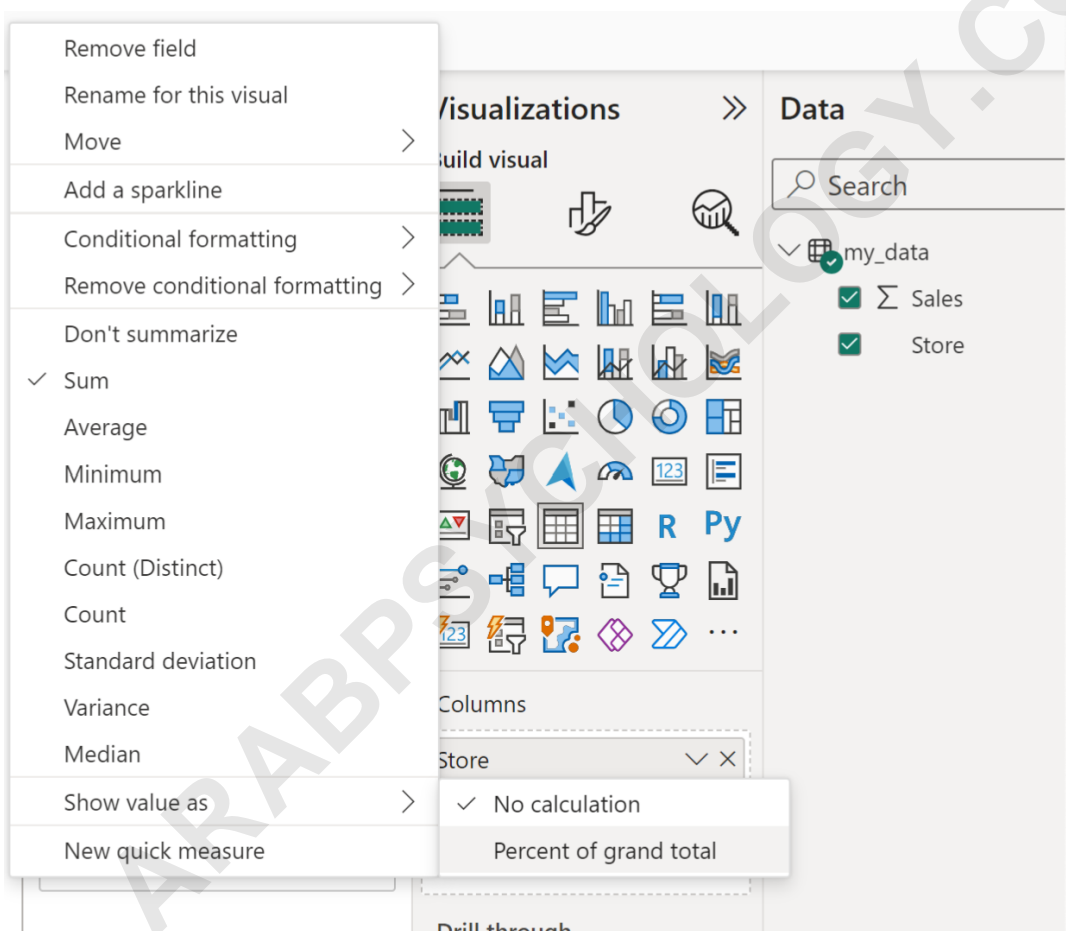
Step 4: Calculating and Displaying the Percentage of Grand Total

We now turn our attention to the second instance of the "Sum of Sales" column, which is specifically tasked with providing the proportional context. This column must be transformed from displaying the absolute sales value to showing the sales figure as a percentage of the overall grand total. This step is pivotal for providing the necessary context for thorough data analysis and interpretation.

To initiate this crucial calculation change, right-click on the header or field well entry for the second **Sum of Sales** measure within the Columns panel. This action reveals the measure's contextual menu. Within this menu, navigate to the **Show value as** option. This particular menu is designed to

modify the aggregation methodology of the measure, offering alternatives to the default summation operation.

From the expanded **Show value as** sub-menu, select the option labeled **Percent of grand total**. This command instructs Power BI to perform a calculation for every row in this column: the individual store's sales divided by the sum of sales across all stores, then expressed as a percentage. The column is instantly updated to reflect the store's percentage contribution to the entire dataset. At this juncture, the visualization is structurally complete, featuring the category, the bar visualization of the value, and the numerical percentage, achieving the core requirement of the project.



With both the Data bars and the percentage calculation successfully implemented, the table now clearly communicates both the absolute value and the relative proportion of sales. However, upon initial viewing, the default column width often restricts the visibility and impact of the Data bars, making visual comparisons less impactful. The table at this stage is functional but requires aesthetic refinement to maximize its effectiveness as a dual-metric visualization.

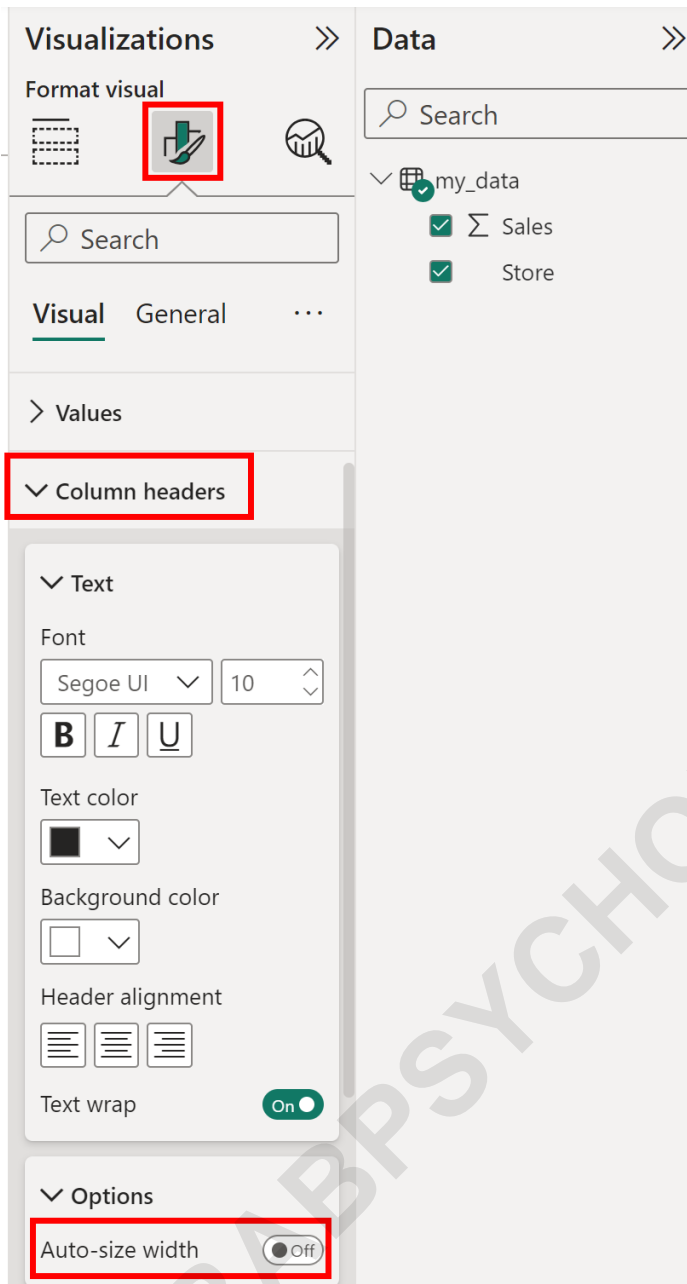
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Step 5: Refining the Visualization by Adjusting Column Widths

Although the data formatting is technically complete, the effectiveness of the **Data bars** as a visual representation is heavily dependent on the available column space. If the simulated bar is too narrow, the visual distinction between categories becomes difficult to perceive, undermining the visual comparison benefit. Therefore, manual adjustment of the column width is a critical final step to ensure optimal readability and visual impact.

To access the necessary visual formatting controls, select the Table visual on the canvas and navigate to the **Format your visual** tab within the Visualizations pane. Locate and expand the settings group for **Column headers**, and then proceed to expand the **Options** submenu contained within. In this section, the setting **Auto-size width** will typically be enabled by default, automatically attempting to minimize column widths based on content size.

It is essential to turn off **Auto-size width**. Disabling this automatic control grants the user manual authority over the column dimensions, preventing Power BI from continually resizing the column based on the numerical data within. If this step is neglected, any subsequent manual resizing attempts may be overwritten by the automatic feature, leading to consistently narrow and ineffective Data bars.



Once auto-sizing is disabled, manual resizing can be performed directly on the report canvas. Position the mouse cursor over the vertical dividing line on the right edge of the header for the first **Sum of Sales** column (the column housing the Data bars). The cursor will transform into a double-headed arrow icon, signaling resize capability. Click and drag this boundary to the right, significantly increasing the column's width. This expansion provides ample space for the Data bars, making them substantially larger, easier to read, and immediately comparable, finalizing the effective transformation of the table into a dual-metric visualization.

Conclusion: Interpreting the Comprehensive Visualization

Through the strategic application of measure duplication and conditional formatting, we have successfully implemented a powerful, combined visualization utilizing the **Power BI Table** visual. This final visual output seamlessly integrates both the absolute quantitative measure and the relative proportional metric into a single, cohesive view, significantly enhancing the analytical depth available to the end-user for data analysis.

The resulting table provides three distinct, integrated layers of information for each category: first, the categorical label (Store); second, the graphical bar representing the actual sales value, offering an immediate, intuitive visual ranking; and third, the precise numerical percentage in the adjacent column, representing that store's proportional contribution to the grand total sales. This comprehensive synthesis allows stakeholders to answer complex comparative questions efficiently, facilitating a deeper understanding of both magnitude and relative performance simultaneously.

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This method demonstrates that by creatively leveraging built-in features such as the **Table** visual and **Data bars**, analysts can bypass the default limitations of standard charts and deliver highly informative reports. We have successfully created a visualization that clearly displays both the value and percentages of each bar, providing a clean, professional, and data-rich display suitable for rigorous business reporting. This mastery of specialized visualization techniques is key to maximizing the potential of Power BI as a comprehensive platform.

The following tutorials explain how to perform other common tasks in Power BI: