



Excel Power Query: Useful for Investment Banking and Advisory Roles?

The Magic of Text Parsing and Automatic
Updates from Websites



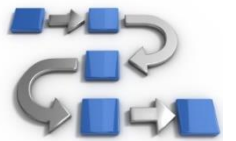
Common Question About Certain Excel Features...

“I noticed that you now cover [Power Pivot / **Power Query** / VBA / Internal Data Models] in Excel. Do I **need** to know this feature?”

“Will I be tested on it in interviews? How could it possibly be useful for deal-based roles like IB or PE?”

Short Answers to These Questions:

- You don't "need" to know these features for interviews, but they can make your life **on the job** much easier
- And you don't need to spend hours and hours learning these features – even **basic knowledge** can be super-useful
- **Why:** Although you mostly build financial models in IB, PE, and related fields, you also have to **analyze data** and find ways to present it effectively
- **Example:** We'll look at a situation that I encountered the other day, where I had to look up and classify a company's sales transactions by **state**



How Power Query Might Be Useful

- **The Problem:** I had the **abbreviations** for each state or territory, but I needed to find their full names... and they were inconsistent
- **Also**, there were some non-standard/less-common ones, such as “MP” for the Northern Mariana Islands, “AP” for U.S. Armed Forces – Pacific, etc.
- **One Solution:** Could Google it, find all the terms, and then copy and paste them into Excel and try lookups based on that...
- **Better Solution:** Use **Power Query** to pull in and update the data automatically and then look it up from this data source



Will Power Query Work?

- **Mac Excel Desktop Versions** (2011, 2016, 2019, etc.) – “Power Query” is not implemented at all, so your data import options are limited to the older methods



- **Mac Office 365** – Power Query is partially implemented, but doesn't work for web crawling; just locally stored files



- **PC Excel** – Power Query *should work* in modern/recent versions, such as Office 365, Office 2016+, etc. – and in older versions, you can download the add-in from Microsoft



A Step-by-Step Power Query

- **First:** Go to Data → Get Data → From Other Sources → From Web and enter the Wikipedia or other URL you want to use:

https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/List_of_U.S._state_abbreviations

- **Next:** Click “OK” and then “Connect” and select the Table that you want to use
- **Then:** Go to “Transform Data” and delete the columns that you do not need (here, based on the best matches for abbreviations)
- **Finally:** Press “Close & Load”

A Step-by-Step Power Query

- **And:** Now we can go in and write an INDEX/MATCH function to retrieve the state/territory name from the appropriate column...
- **Or:** If the data is really messy, we could rearrange all the abbreviations in Excel and put them into one column so that each row is *one* possible abbreviation for each state
- **And:** Now, if something ever changes, we can refresh all the data automatically and keep our “transformations” in place
- **Think About:** How you could use this same feature to automatically update data sheets for presentations, company profiles, etc.



Recap and Summary

- **Power Query:** Can be very useful because it **eliminates** the need to do manual copy-and-paste from websites and lets you automatically update spreadsheets based on data changes
- **Most Common Use Cases:** Looking up names and abbreviations, company stores by location, employees or buildings by city, etc.
- **Time Required:** ~5 minutes to set up and use
- **Programming Knowledge Required:** None!
- **ROI:** Potentially very high for certain types of jobs

