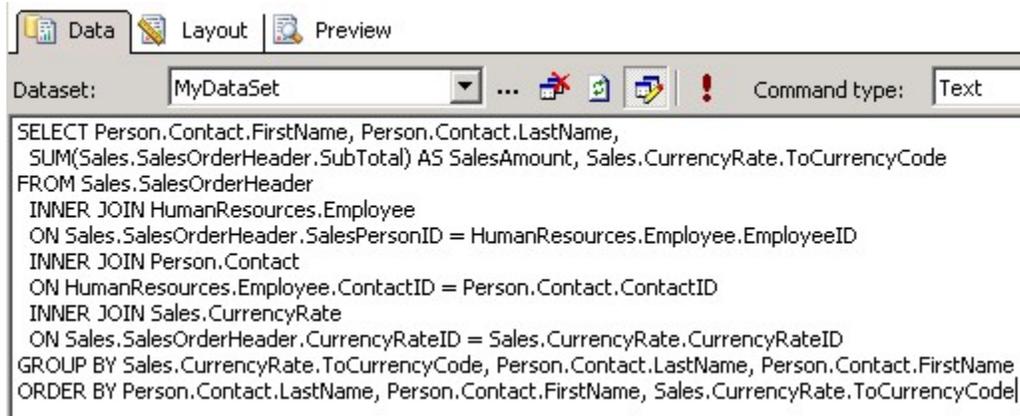# Adding a Template to an Existing Report

A report definition file (an RDL file) includes a set of layout instructions and a database query that gets report data when the file is executed by Reporting Services. RDL files are xml-based and are saved with the extension .rdl.

You can open a saved RDL file in Excel and add OfficeWriter template information to it.

Opening a Saved RDL File

This section assumes that the RDL file being opened was created in Visual Studio contains the following query:


To open the RDL:

1. Open Excel.

2. From the OfficeWriter Designer toolbar, select **Open Report**.

3. Navigate to the .rdl report file created in Visual Studio and open it.

If you go to **Data Markers** you will now see that the dataset is available in the **DataSets** drop-down and the fields from the query are available for use in the Designer. The fields can be added to the Excel report as data markers (data placeholders).
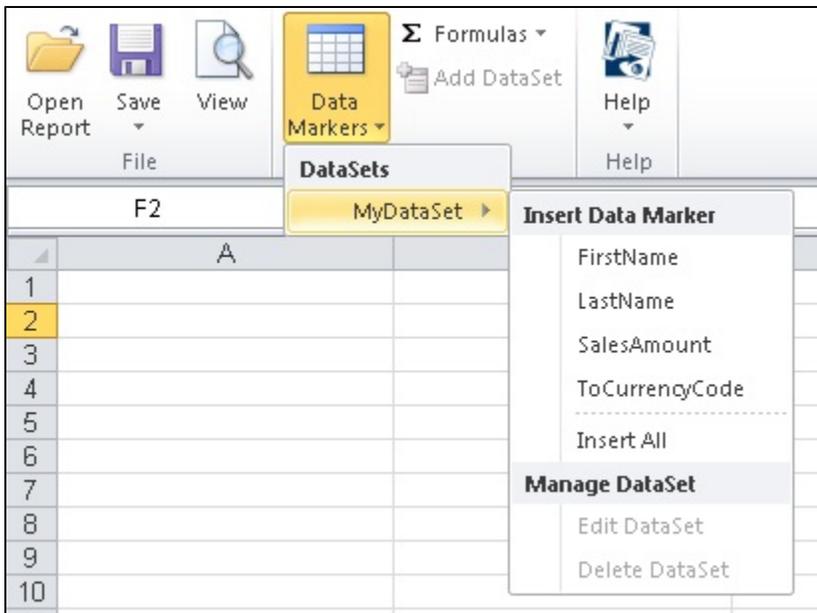
> ⓘ Since this report was designed in Visual Studio, the MS Query functions to Add, Edit, and Delete datasets are not available. They will only be enabled for reports that are created in the OfficeWriter Designer using MS Query.

Designing the Template

The next step is to design the report with the OfficeWriter Designer toolbar. We have several articles for how to develop reports with the OfficeWriter Designer in Excel:

- Adding Data Markers
- Adding Formulas to an Excel Report
- Excel Reports with Parameters
- Working with Charts
- Working with PivotTables
- Working with PivotCharts

Saving the Template Information to the RDL

When you save the file, the OfficeWriter template information will be added to the RDL file. To save the template information to the RDL:

1. Go to **Save** > **Save to Disk**
2. There will be three format options that represent Excel file formats: *Office 2003* (XLS), *Office 2007* (XLSX), *Office 2007 with macros* (XLSM). These determine what file format is used to render the report from Reporting Services.

See Saving and Deploying Your Excel Report for more information.

Deploying and Viewing the Report

1. To deploy a report from the OfficeWriter Designer select **Save** > **Deploy to Remote Server**.

2. From the Publish dialog box select the drop-down to display the Server or URL.

3. Choose the server on which Reporting Services is installed.

4. Click **Refresh**.

5. Select a folder for which you have publish rights and click **Ok**.

6. If your report published with no errors, you will receive a **Publish Successful** message dialog. Click **Ok** to continue.

Once the report has been deployed to the report server, you can view the report from within the OfficeWriter Designer by clicking **View** or going to Report Manager and exporting the report in the OfficeWriter for Excel rendering option.

Samples

Download the .rdl file described in this section.