

# How to compare future budget forecasts side-by-side in a conversation with Claude.

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## 1. Job Description

Scenario planning is more time-consuming than difficult, as it mostly involves opening spreadsheets, copying tabs, adjusting figures, and comparing. When the board meeting is only an hour away, what you really want is to compare multiple future scenarios side-by-side and get a quick look at which one is most damaging.

Tell Claude about your budget in one sentence along with any possible changes, and stacked bar charts will appear side-by-side with the option to switch between amounts and percentages. Clicking on any scenario will give you a brief summary of its true meaning for the organization, usually the sentence you need to tell the board.

An executive might lose a large grant and need to walk into a board meeting with a clear picture of what that would look like compared to steady, moderate growth. Claude draws the charts side-by-side, and rate cuts for those programs will pop up as a warning even before the executive clicks.

Chúng ta có thể mất khoản tài trợ 400.000 USD vào năm tới. Ngân sách hiện tại là khoảng 2,1 triệu USD: Khoảng 60% dành cho chương trình, 25% cho hoạt động, 15% để gây quỹ. Hãy cho tôi xem ba kịch bản cạnh nhau: Chúng ta mất khoản tài trợ, ngân sách giảm nguyên, và tăng nhẹ. Tôi muốn chuyển đổi gì? Tôi cần và phải làm gì? Khi nhấp vào một kịch bản, hãy cho tôi biết biến động và ý nghĩa thực sự của nó.

## 2. Provide context for Claude.

The numbers you enter in the question are context-sensitive, and approximations are fine since this is a shape comparison, not a budget. A total figure with percentages allocated to your main categories is sufficient, and if you know which categories are fixed (e.g., "operating expenses are primarily rent"), mention that so Claude can maintain that curve across scenarios.

## Required context

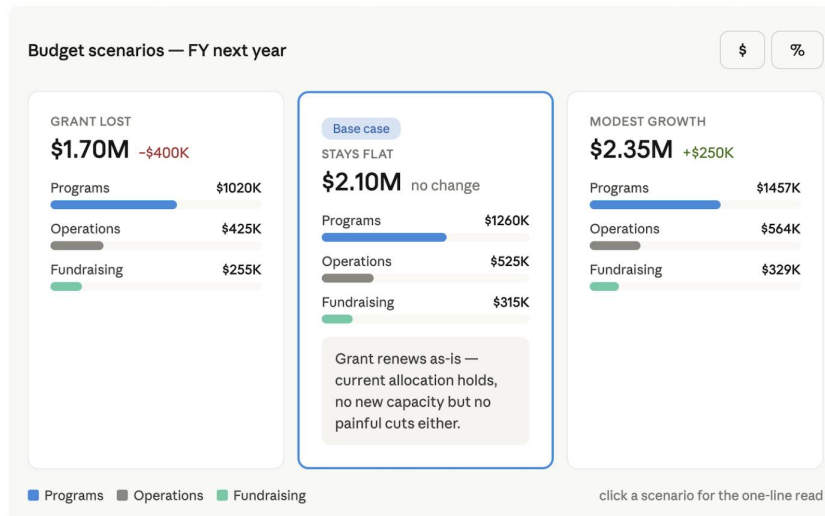
No uploading is required. Simply enter the numbers directly into your question.

## 3. What Claude created

Claude draws three stacked bar charts side-by-side with a toggle button at the top to switch between monetary and percentage views. The monetary view shows you what decreased, while the percentage view shows whether the organization's balance changed or simply decreased proportionally. Items that decreased are highlighted, and clicking on any scenario opens a brief note below, explaining the practical meaning of the numbers for the operation.

Built three scenario cards from your budget split

Three futures, each from your current 60/25/15 split. The \$ / % toggle at top-right switches between what gets smaller and whether the shape of the organization changes — those tell different stories to the board.



**Grant Lost (\$1.70M):** Programs drops to \$1,020K — roughly \$240K down, which is 2-3 FTEs. Operations at \$425K is tight if most of that is rent. Fundraising at \$255K is the function you'd need *most* to replace the grant.

**Stays Flat (\$2.10M)** is your base case — the center card is ringed in blue because everything else is measured against it. **Modest Growth (\$2.35M)** adds \$250K, with Programs getting most of it (\$1,457K). Click any scenario and a one-line read opens below: the sentence you'd actually say to the board.

Flip to percentages and all three cards keep the same 60/25/15 shape — which is itself worth telling the board: this is a *scale* problem, not a *strategy* problem.

Hold fundraising flat →

Show me the two-year taper →

## 4. Subsequent prompts

Continue the conversation with Claude to refine, expand, or learn more.

### **Click the button to redraw with a constraint.**

Cutting proportionally is rarely something you'll actually do, so this button keeps one item fixed and reallocates the spacing, showing you where the real pressure is concentrated.

Ch?y l?i K?ch b?n A nh?ng gi? nguyên m?c gây qu? v?i s? ti?n hi?n t?  
i. Cho tôi biết khoản cắt gì?m thêm s? ?i ?âu và viết lại câu cho ng?n g?n.

### **Claude was asked to extend a script over time.**

A one-time cut is different from a gradual reduction in the budget, so asking Claude to redraw the scenario for the second year could change the understanding of what the organization can withstand.

?i?u gì s? x?y ra n?u kho?n tài tr? không gì?m cùng m?t lúc? Gi? s?  
chúng ta m?t m?t n?a trong n?m ??u tiên và ph?n còn lại trong n?m th?  
hai. V? l?i K?ch b?n A trong hai n?m và cho tôi biết liệu ?i?u ?  
ó có làm thay ??i cách hi?u v?n ?? hay không.

### **Thanks to Claude for writing the board-ready version.**

The bar charts show you the shape, but what the board needs is a concluding sentence, and Claude can translate each scenario into what you would actually say.

??i v?i m?i tùy ch?n trong ba k?ch b?n, hãy viết cho tôi m?t câu mà tôi s?  
nói v?i h?i ??ng qu?n tr?. S? ?ánh ??i th?c s?, ch? không ph?i các con s?.

## 5. Tips, tricks, and troubleshooting

### **The way you phrase your question will shape what you get in return.**

Requiring scenarios to be placed "side-by-side" with a toggle switch "between amounts and percentages" creates a comparative view instead of three separate charts. Naming the decision context ("board meeting in an hour") tells Claude that this is about quickly seeing the shape, not building a model you'll give to the finance department. The same approach applies to any multi-scenario question, whether it's staffing planning, program expansion, or anything else where you're considering three future scenarios and need to see which one causes more damage.

### **Compare the image to your own understanding.**

The allocation ratio Claude initially presented is merely a starting point, not a recommendation, as you know which items have contingency resources and which are primarily fixed costs. If the summary of Scenario A doesn't align with your perception of where the actual damage will occur, tell Claude what you're seeing, and the

next version will be closer to what you truly want to present.

## **The next step is to work with the images.**

Hover over the screen to see options to copy the 3-bar comparison chart as an image for your board presentation, or save it as a document if you want to display it directly in the meeting and click through the scenarios while monitoring the board's reaction. You can also ask Claude to write a one-sentence summary of the key points for each scenario so you're ready to present.

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