



Claudyne Wilder

# Your graphics should tell the story behind the numbers

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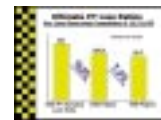
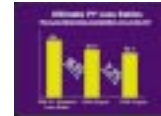
**P**ilgrim Insurance is bidding to be the insurance carrier for Commonwealth Automobile Insurers. They have turned in their proposal and now must give a presentation — complete with persuasive graphics.

The “before” examples are charts imported from Excel. Each of the charts has an important story to tell, but in each case the graphics don’t communicate the story as clearly or as compellingly as they could. The “after” visuals are designed to emphasize key points and make

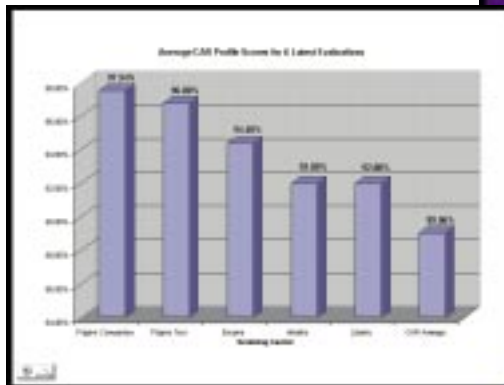
sure the audience understands Pilgrim’s essential message: Pilgrim Insurance outperforms the competition.

When designing the new charts, a decision had to be made about how the background should look. At right is an example of the same chart with two very different looks: one with a conservative purple background, the other with a checkerboard design that plays off the taxicab aspect of Pilgrim’s business.

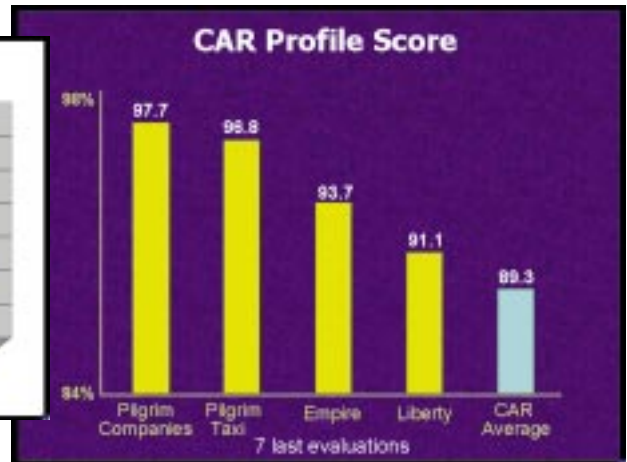
The deep purple background is classic and simple. It contains a little bit of texture, but that’s about all. The black-and-yellow checkered look suggests automobiles and adds an element of whimsy to the presentation. In real life, Pilgrim Insurance chose the purple, but wanted to have a yellow cab zip across the screen on the first and last slide.



## EXAMPLE 1: Build a bolder, simpler chart



**BEFORE:** This chart was imported from Excel. While they may be nice to look at, 3D bars can be confusing because some people read the front of the bar and some read the back. For precision and clarity, 3D isn’t always the best choice.



**AFTER:** Notice that we made the “CAR Average” a different color to emphasize how much better Pilgrim is performing by comparison.

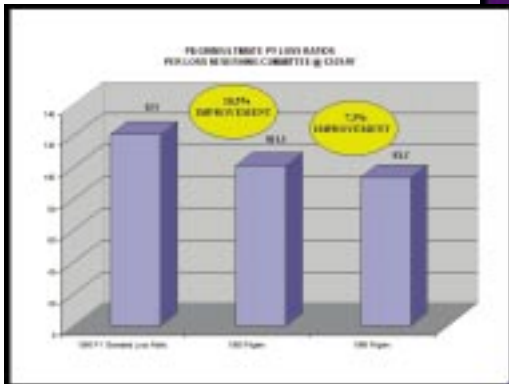
**THE BUILD:** The blue “CAR average” is the first element on the screen. Then “Liberty” and “Empire” (Pilgrim’s primary competitors) appear together using WIPE UP (from CUSTOM ANIMATION). Then “Pilgrim Taxi” uses a WIPE UP, followed by “Pilgrim Companies.” The company’s story is told concisely with Pilgrim’s bars soaring past the competition.



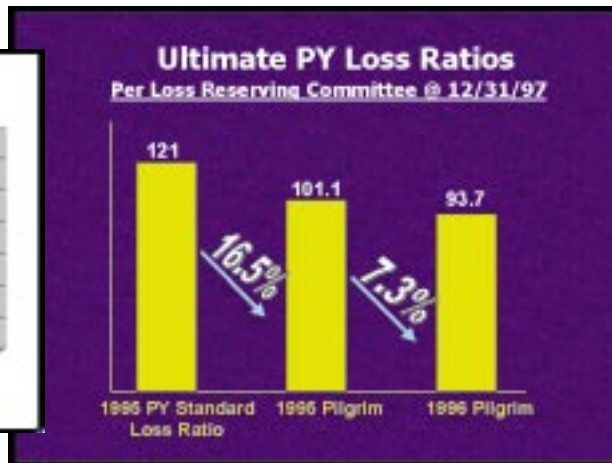
### Get your presentation critiqued free!

Do you have a presentation that falls flat or blends into the crowd? It may simply need an injection of energy, organization or individuality. To have your material considered for a Before & After redesign, send your presentation on a Windows-compatible floppy disk to Claudyne Wilder, Wilder Presentations, 57A Robinwood Ave., Boston, MA 02130; 617.524.7172; claudyne@quik.com. Only presentations selected for redesign will be returned to the sender.

## EXAMPLE 2: Make the numbers tell a story

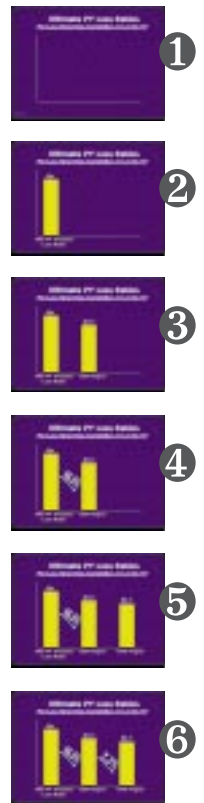


**BEFORE:** This Excel chart has an important story to tell, and that story could be much easier to understand and appreciate. As with the first example, the 3D effect — among other things — gets in the way.

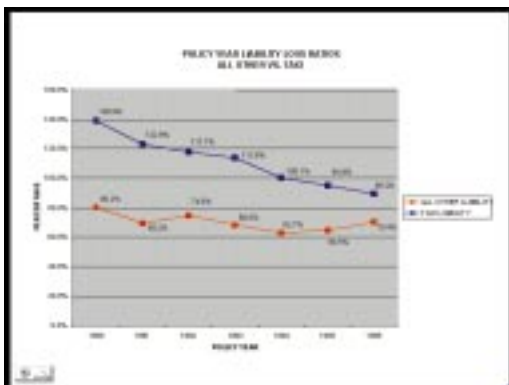


**AFTER:** There's a crucial story to tell here in the declining loss-ratio numbers, but for maximum impact the statistics need to be broken down and presented sequentially. In this case, it is much more effective to reveal the statistics one by one and connect them with an arrow that reinforces the key message.

**THE BUILD:** First, the "1995 PY Standard Loss Ratio" WIPES UP, followed by "1995 Pilgrim." The story gets interesting when "16.5%" WIPES DOWN, illustrating how impressively Pilgrim has beaten the standard loss ratio. To continue the story, "1996 Pilgrim" WIPES UP and the "7.3%" arrow WIPES DOWN, showing how Pilgrim has beaten its own 1995 record.



## EXAMPLE 3: Break out important information



**BEFORE:** This chart also comes from Excel. It includes lots of numbers — are always a challenge in charts. Notice also that the legend is backwards from the colors, adding further confusion.

**AFTER:** The original chart had too many numbers to show all at once. The chart's story is that the numbers have gone down. To make the percentages stand out, we put them in a box. Otherwise, they must compete with the lines on the chart.

**THE BUILD:** "138.9 and "113.6" APPEAR. Then "18%" ZOOMS IN. Next we go to the bottom trend line, where "80.2" and "68" APPEAR first, then "15%" ZOOMS IN. After that, "89.2" APPEARS and "21%" ZOOMS IN. Finally, "70.4" APPEARS, then "-4%" ZOOMS IN.

