

Another Power BI Dashboard: or a Better Way to Ask Questions?

Not every business question needs another dashboard. Here's how to decide.

As organizations invest in Microsoft Fabric, the opportunity isn't just to modernize data: it's to rethink how people access insights. Power BI excels at consistent, repeatable reporting, while Claude AI dashboards let users ask questions in plain English, explore data and uncover insights without waiting for a new report to be built. Both leverage the same governed data foundation, but serve different business needs.

So how do you decide what to build in Power BI versus Claude?

Use this guide to determine the right approach for your analytics needs.

Two ways to turn data into decisions

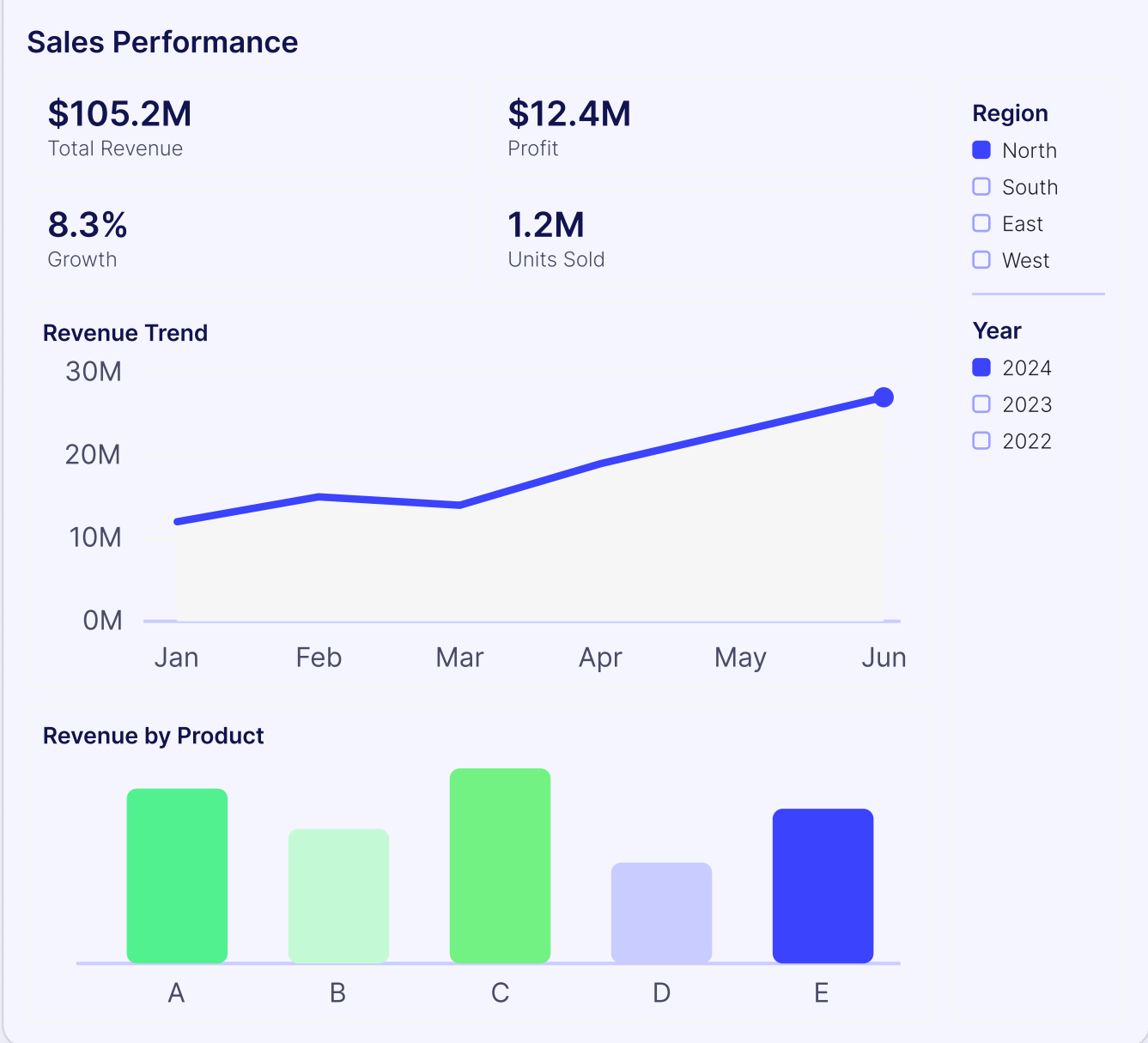
One trusted Microsoft Fabric data foundation. Different experiences for different needs.

Power BI dashboards:
Monitor the business

Curated, consistent and trusted reporting.

EXAMPLE QUESTION:

"What were sales, margin and revenue by region this month?"

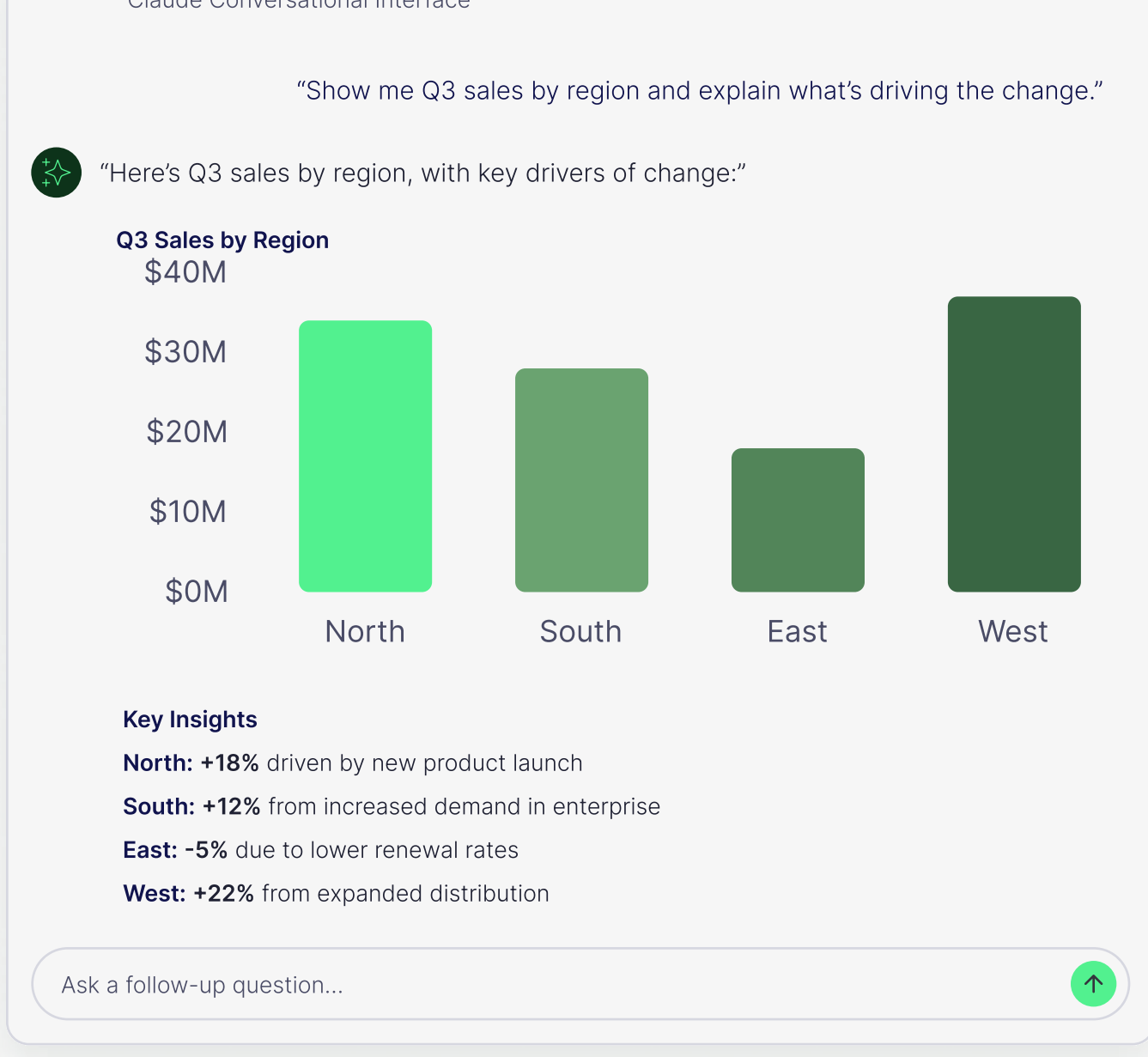


Claude dashboards:
Investigate the business

Conversational, on-demand analysis.

EXAMPLE QUESTION:

"Why did margin fall? What's driving it and what should we investigate next?"



7 questions to help you decide

ASK YOURSELF...

Question	Choose Power BI when...	Choose Claude when...
1 Will the same question be asked repeatedly?	• Yes, daily, weekly, or monthly	• No, questions change frequently
2 Is the primary goal monitoring or investigating?	• Tracking KPIs and performance	• Understanding why something happened
3 Are reporting requirements predictable?	• Metrics, filters and layouts are established	• The analysis evolves through follow-up questions
4 Who will use it?	• Many users need a consistent, shared report	• Leaders or analysts need flexible, personalized exploration
5 Is the output a formal reporting deliverable?	• Standardized reporting, scheduled distribution, or audit evidence	• Exploratory analysis or executive decision support
6 How quickly do answers need to change?	• A stable report can be maintained over time	• Users need to pivot immediately without a new development request
7 Will users need to ask questions in plain English?	• Primarily guided visual interaction	• Natural-language questions and conversational follow-ups are central

Pros and cons

Power BI dashboards

PROS:

- + Consistent, certified KPI reporting
- + Rich, interactive visualizations
- + Scheduled and repeatable reporting
- + Mature sharing and governance
- + Broad user adoption

CONS:

- Requires design and development time
- Less flexible for unexpected questions
- Updates can increase BI backlog
- Ongoing maintenance required

Claude dashboards

PROS:

- + Ask questions in plain English
- + Rapidly explore changing questions
- + Conversational follow-ups and contextual explanations
- + Can reduce one-off BI requests
- + Uses governed Fabric data

CONS:

- Requires AI-ready semantic models and guardrails
- Generated answers and queries need validation
- Usage-based token and compute costs
- Less suitable for rigid, recurring reports
- Governance and access controls require careful implementation

Licensing and Azure MACC commitment

One Microsoft data foundation.
Two analytics experiences.
More value from your Azure investment.

ELEMENT	Power BI dashboards	Claude AI dashboards
Licensing	Typically requires Power BI Pro, PPU, or qualifying Fabric capacity for report consumption	Claude through Microsoft Foundry uses consumption-based model pricing; application and hosting costs may also apply
Cost model	User licenses and/or capacity-based costs	AI token usage, Fabric consumption and supporting Azure services
MACC alignment	Eligible Azure/Fabric consumption may count toward MACC; standalone Power BI licenses generally do not	Eligible Claude model consumption through Microsoft Foundry can contribute to MACC
Microsoft integration	Native Power BI and Microsoft Fabric integration	Claude connects to governed Fabric data through supported MCP and semantic-model interfaces
Investment value	Scales standardized reporting	Expands AI-powered analytics and creates incremental Azure consumption

Important distinction: MACC eligibility depends on the specific purchasing channel, service and agreement. Claude consumption through eligible Microsoft Foundry offerings should not be confused with a standalone Claude subscription.

Explore in Claude. Standardize in Power BI. Govern it all in Fabric.

