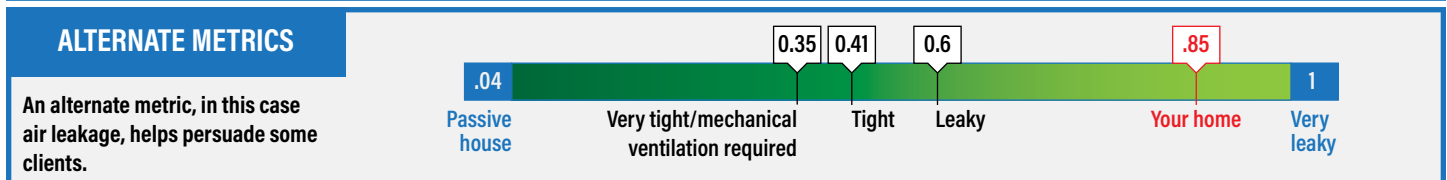
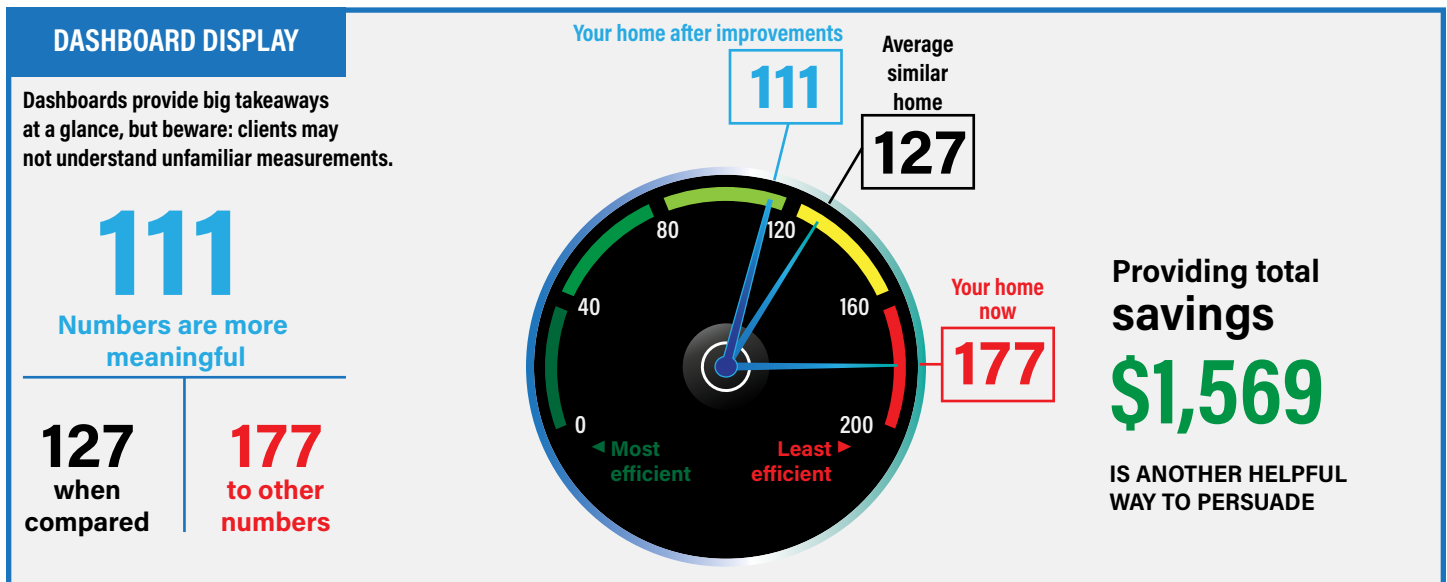


Not all home energy audit reports are created equal. A few well-designed elements can really help clients understand an assessor’s findings and recommendations. In a [new study](#), we zero in on the best designs and practices found in home energy audit reports.

So where to start? Right here, at the beginning. A personal **narrative summary** can help increase the trustworthiness and credibility of the report. When the assessor listens to the homeowner and reflects their concerns in the narrative summary using an honest tone and clear simple language, the homeowner will be more motivated to act. Here are some more effective ways to communicate the contents of a report:

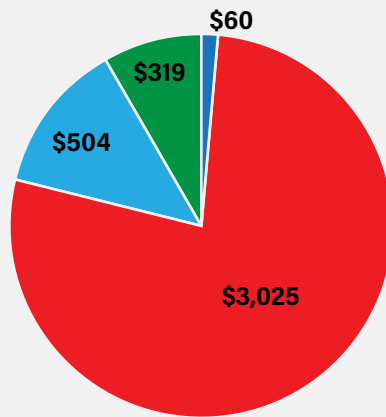
Priority	Recommendation
1.	Like narrative summaries, <b>results tables</b> like this one draw and hold homeowners’ attention.
2.	Avoiding clutter improves attention. Reports that only have about four to five elements (text blocks, diagrams, photos, graphs, etc.) per page, nicely spaced, tend to discourage viewers from skipping sections.
3.	Attention seems to wane from page 1 to page 5 and from top to bottom of each page. Put more important or dense information (critical for the customer to make a decision) at the beginning of the report, and pictures or less dense paragraphs toward the end.
4.	A mix of images and text helps catch, guide, and maintain attention. Too many images, though, could result in diffuse focus, with some images not registering on the customer.



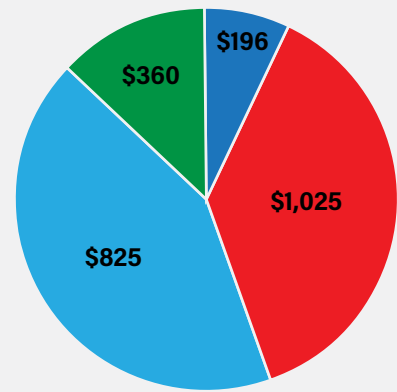
When reports present multiple metrics for financial and nonfinancial benefits, readers can find and use the information that matters to them and make an informed decision. This can help make reports more persuasive, especially if the information is presented in context of other homes, the average home, or the customer’s potential future home after improvements. The two examples above are adapted from a report by Neighborworks H.E.A.T. Squad (dashboard) and Envinity (leakage graph).

## COMPARISONS

- Comparisons
- Help
- Persuade
- Clients



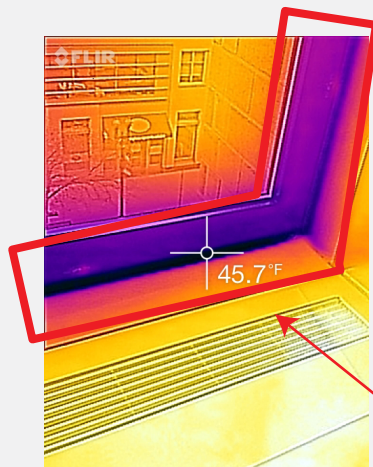
Comparing the assessed home...



...to the average of similar homes

Effective graphs simplify and clarify information. Information about the current home is more effective if it is put into the context of others or the average. This strategy also helps persuade the customer to take action by leveraging social norms. This example is adapted from a report by Envinity.

## THERMAL IMAGES



A good use of images includes clear photographs of the customer's home (rather than stock photos) alongside explanations or notations of the energy issue being depicted. Arrows or circles on top of the image can also direct attention and further enhance effectiveness. Images appearing to the left of text are more likely to be viewed. More evidence is needed, but thermal images appear to hold attention for a long time and may encourage readers to read the accompanying text.

Heat escapes your home from window edges.

Besides the design, other important factors will make your home energy audit report complete:

- ▶ Present the report in person as well as in written form.
- ▶ Present a variety of upgrade benefits including health, comfort, and cost savings.
- ▶ Use simple but vivid metaphorical language to bring the report to life. Avoid jargon and acronyms.
- ▶ Create a story and explain *why* upgrades are suggested, rather than just *what* is suggested.
- ▶ Remove barriers to action by providing specific information on how to take next steps.

For the full findings on structuring a home energy audit report, along with real-data examples, see *After the Audit: Improving Residential Energy Efficiency Assessment Reports* at

[aceee.org/research-report/b1901](http://aceee.org/research-report/b1901)