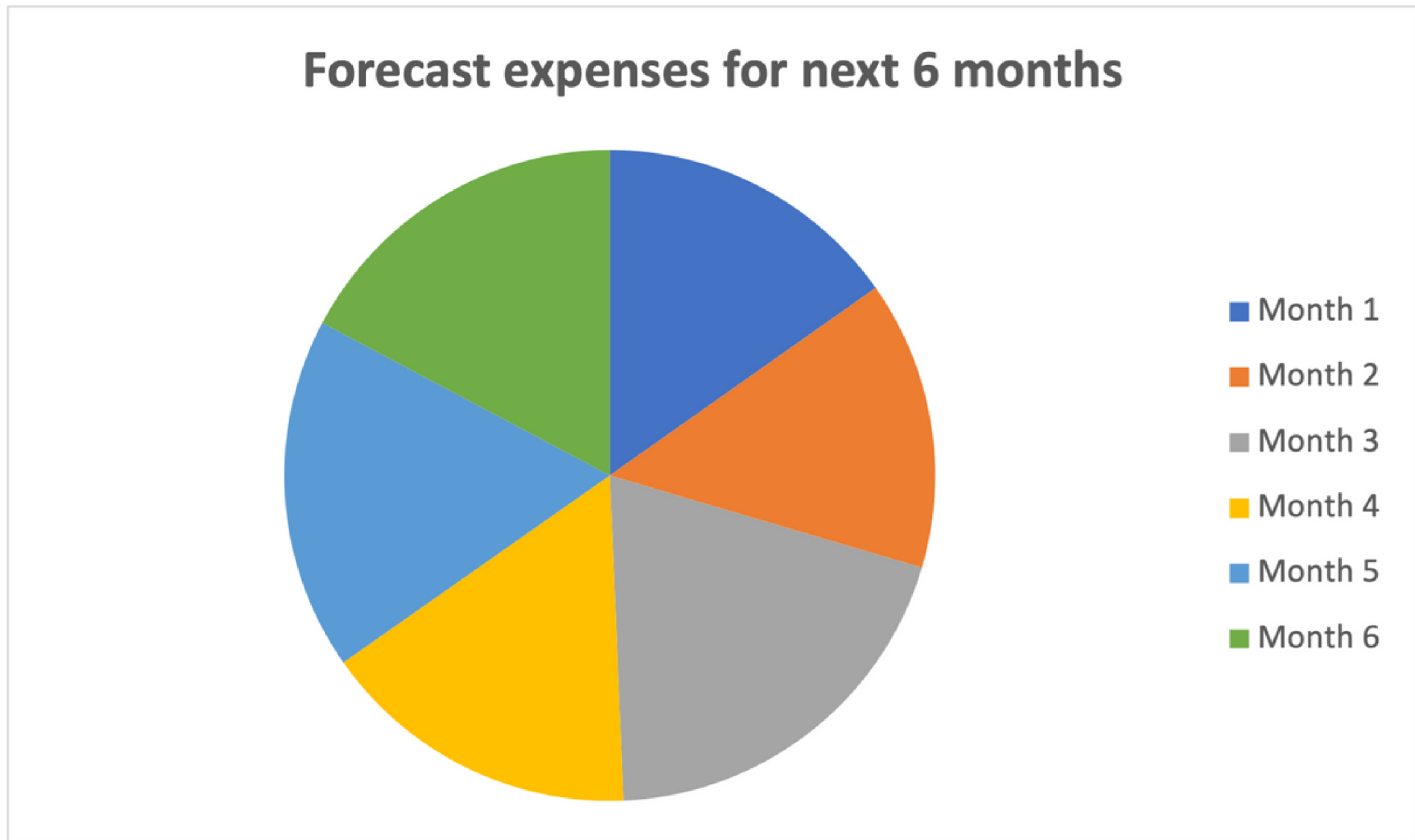# HOW TO FORMAT A CHART

Here are some principles to follow if you want the charts in your documents to be easily understood by your reader

First choose your chart style

Forecast expenses for next 6 months

But, almost always, a pie chart is the wrong choice ...

… and a 3-D chart will never be right.

Forecast expenses for next 6 months

A 2-D column chart works for this data

Forecast expenses for next 6 months

	Month 1	Month 2	Month 3	Month 4	Month 5	Month 6
300,000						
250,000						
200,000						
150,000						
100,000						
50,000						
0						

Remove all the unnecessary lines

Forecast expenses for next 6 months

300,000	
250,000	
200,000	
150,000	
100,000	
50,000	
0	

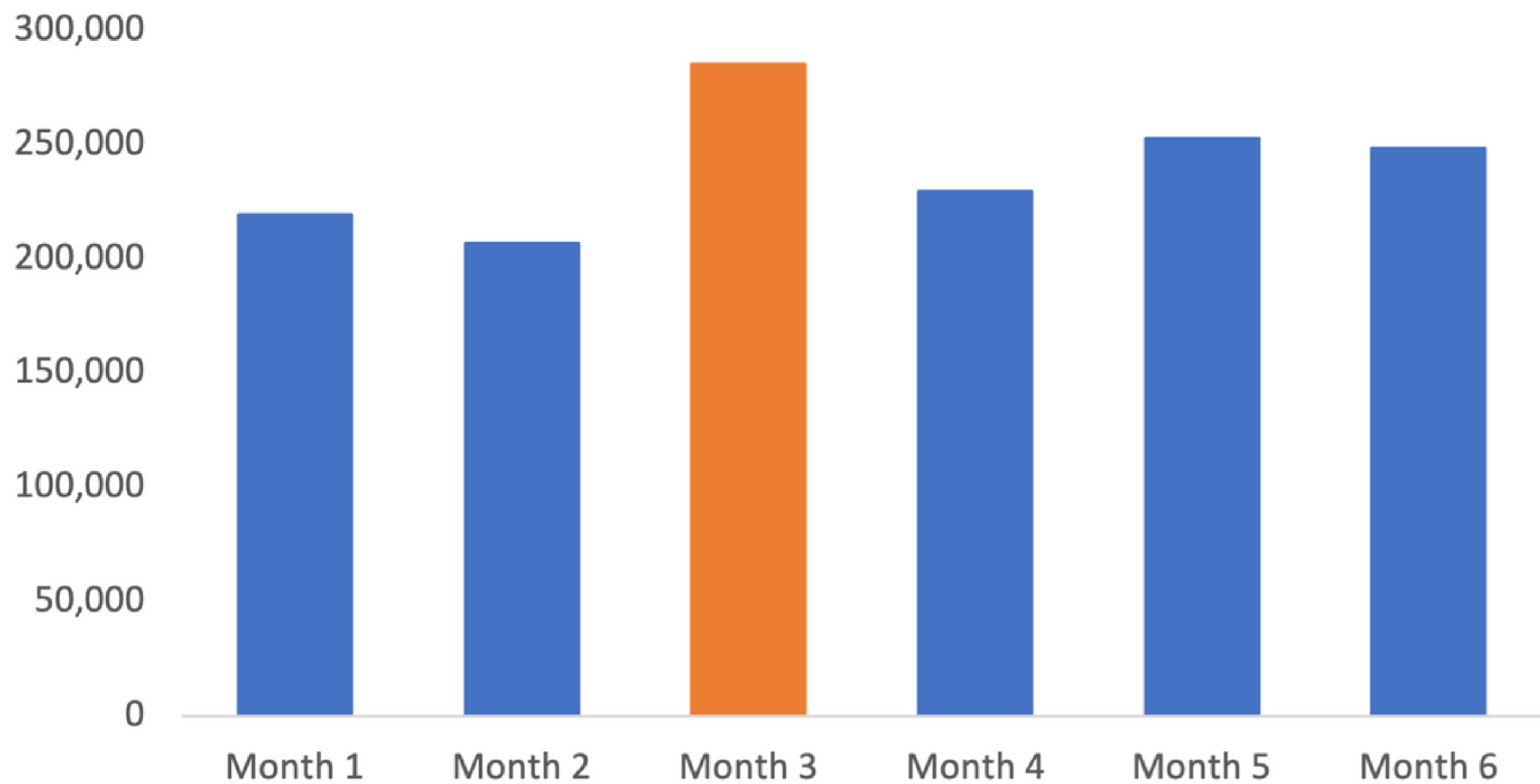Month 1   Month 2   Month 3   Month 4   Month 5   Month 6
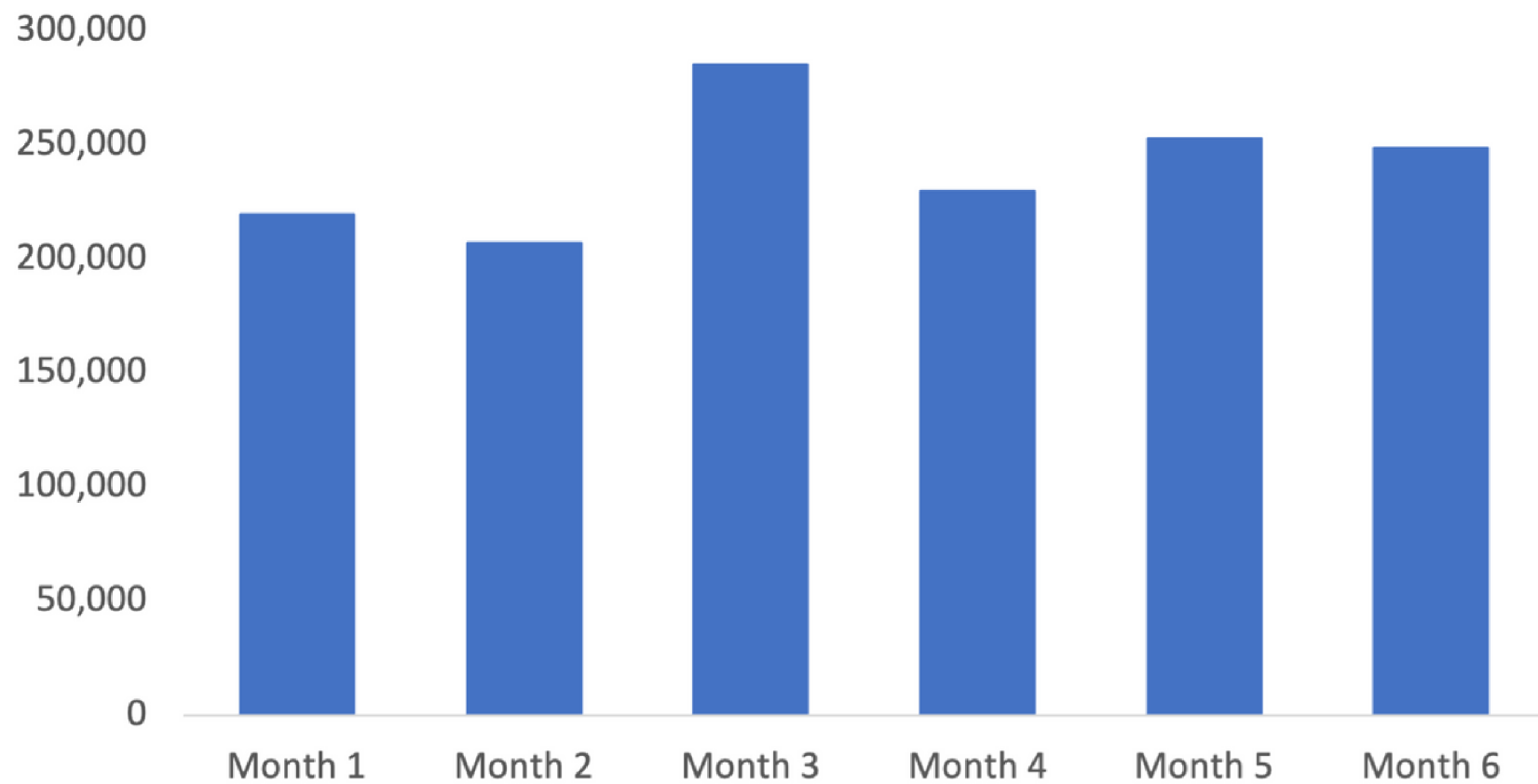
Use a headline as the title

Monthly expenses will peak in Month 3
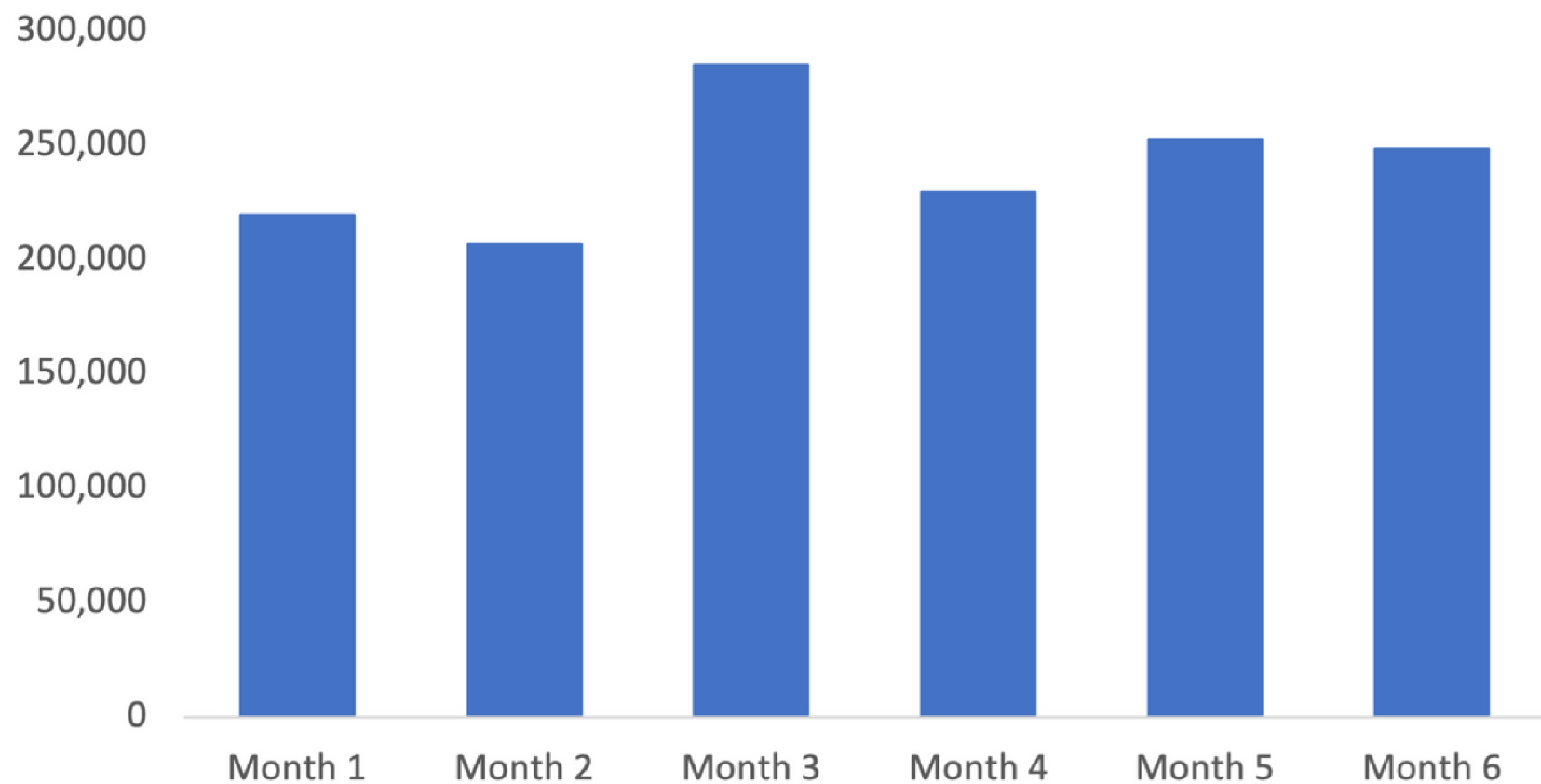
Use colour to help the reader focus

Monthly expenses will peak in Month 3

Which is clearer?

Forecast expenses for next 6 months

Monthly expenses will peak in Month 3
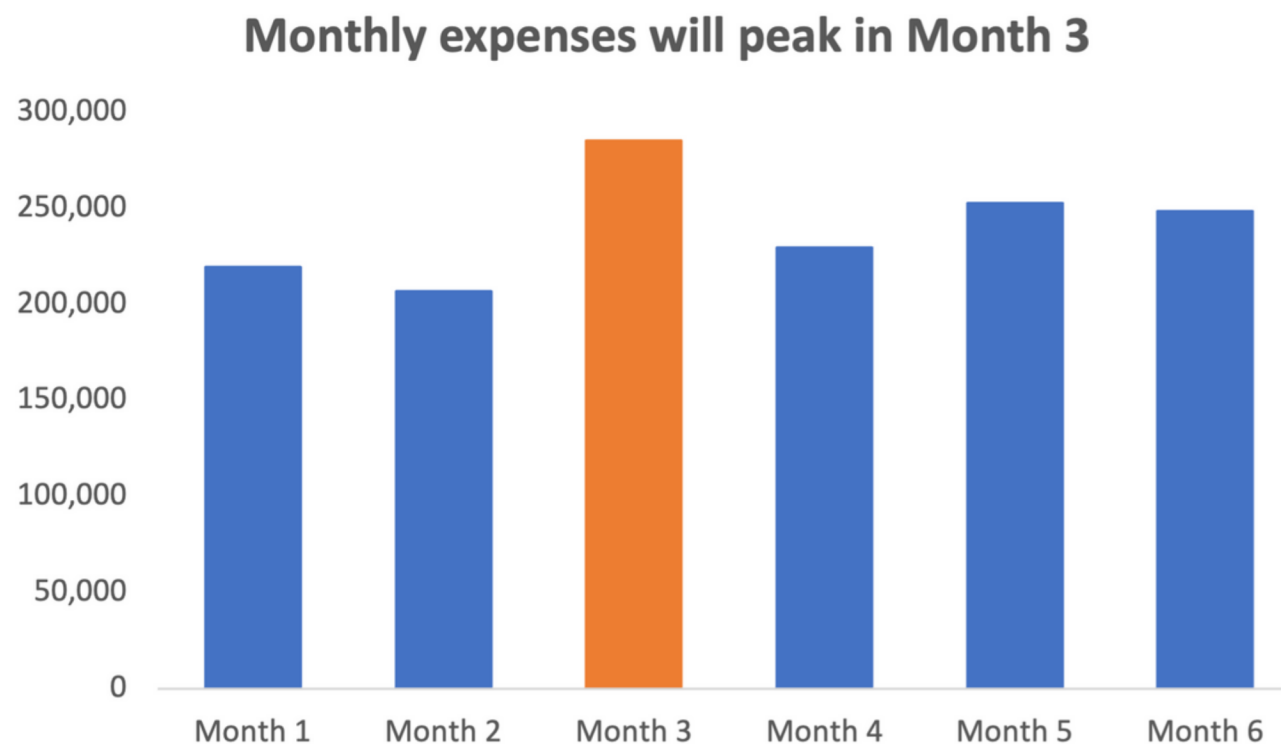
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