How to Crack Your Cases More Consistently

Spring Webinar Series
with David Ohrvall

Zintervū

CRACK THE CASE WEBINARS

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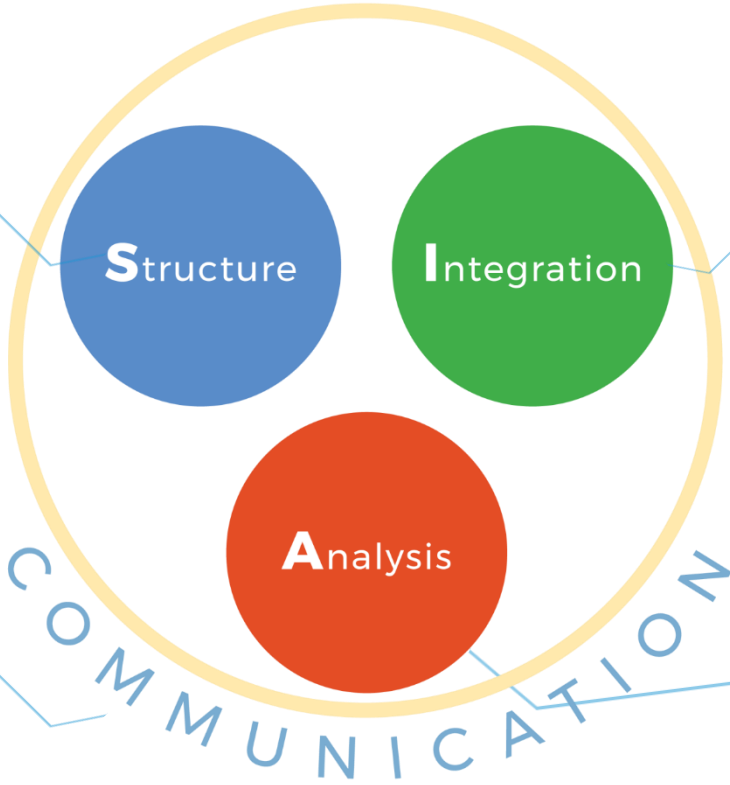
INTERVIEW LOGIC

What do interviewers look for?

CSAI Skills!

- **Show breadth and depth of thinking.**
- Know each lever of business and be able to apply it to a problem.
- Break down any problem consistently.



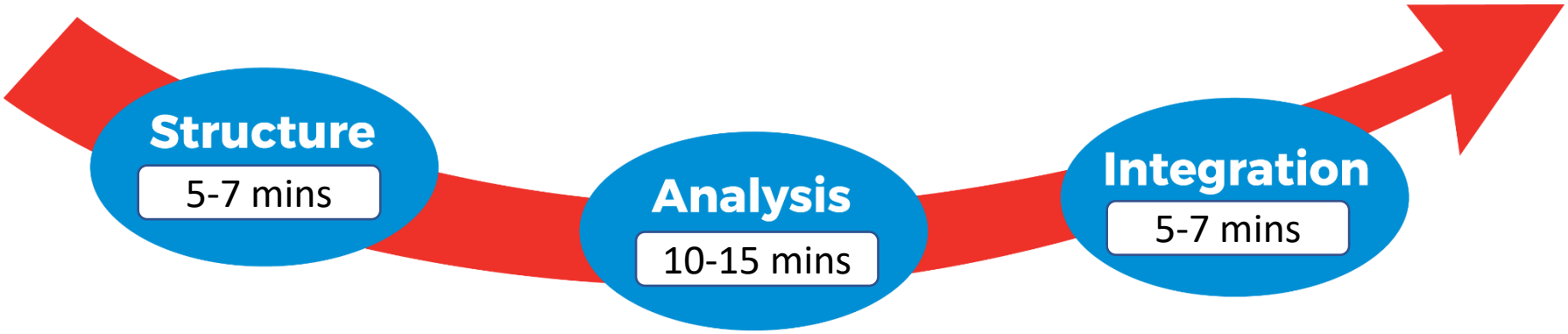
- Ensure that senior leaders have their "So what?" answered.
- Combine insights in an actionable, solution-based manner.

- Use a succinct, Answer First, confident style.
- Organize your language to explain data, thinking processes and insights.

- **Learn to ask data specific questions.**
- Prioritize analysis and find meaningful insights across data sets.

What's a case interview?

Question: Should our fashion retailer open pop-up stores?



- How would you approach this problem thoroughly and systematically?
- What data would you want to see to answer your questions?
- What have you learned in the case that can support a firm recommendation?

You real work will be a case

Question: How would you handle the private label marshmallow problem?

Structure
2-3 days

- How would you approach this problem thoroughly and systematically?

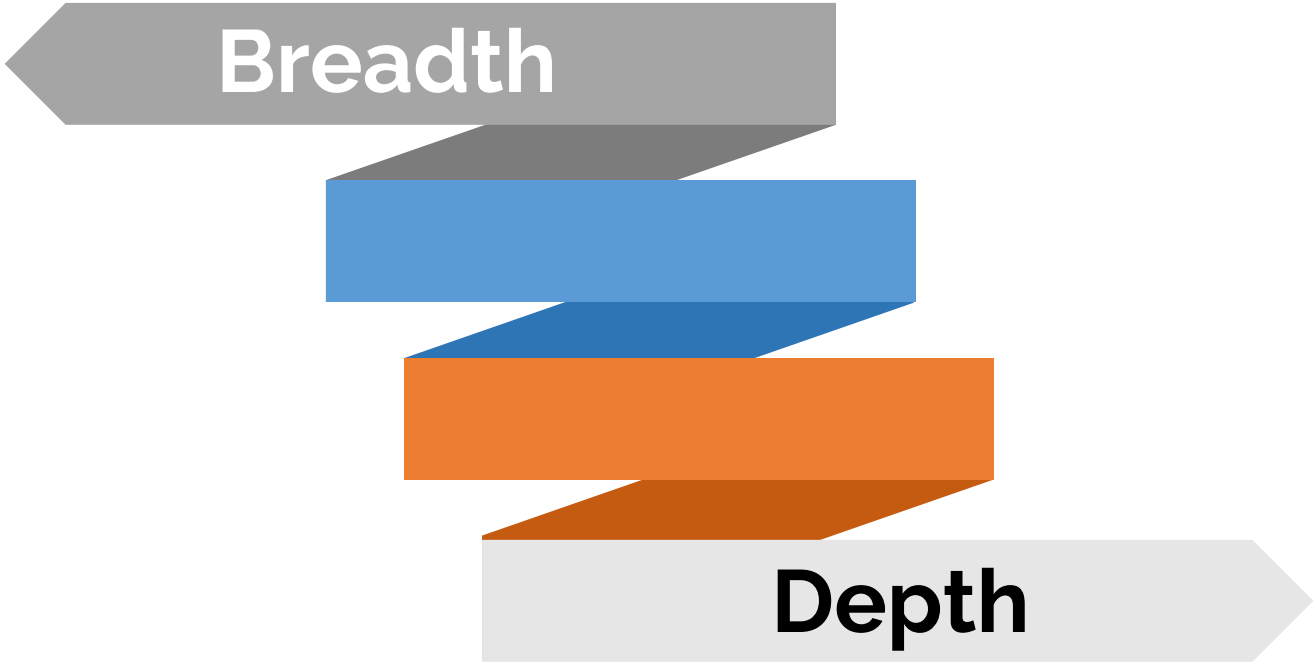
Analysis
3-4 weeks

- What data would you want to see to answer your questions?

Integration
2-3 weeks

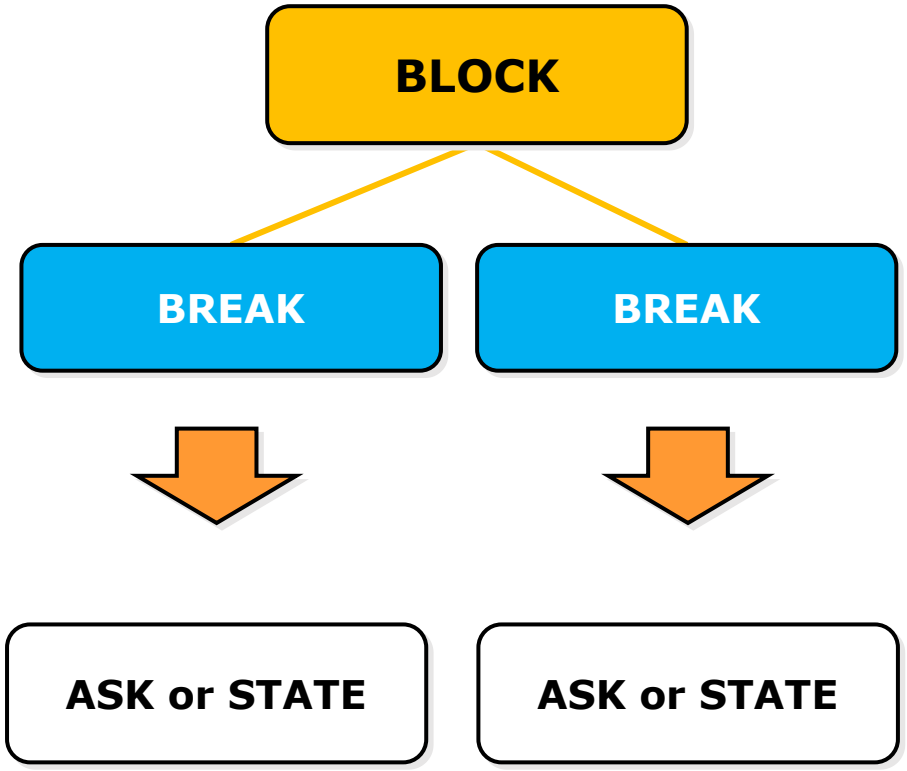
- What have you learned in the case that can support a firm recommendation?

Interviewers (& managers) want to see breadth and depth of thinking!



Block, Break & Ask

Use this technique to show breadth of thinking AND the ability to find relevant data

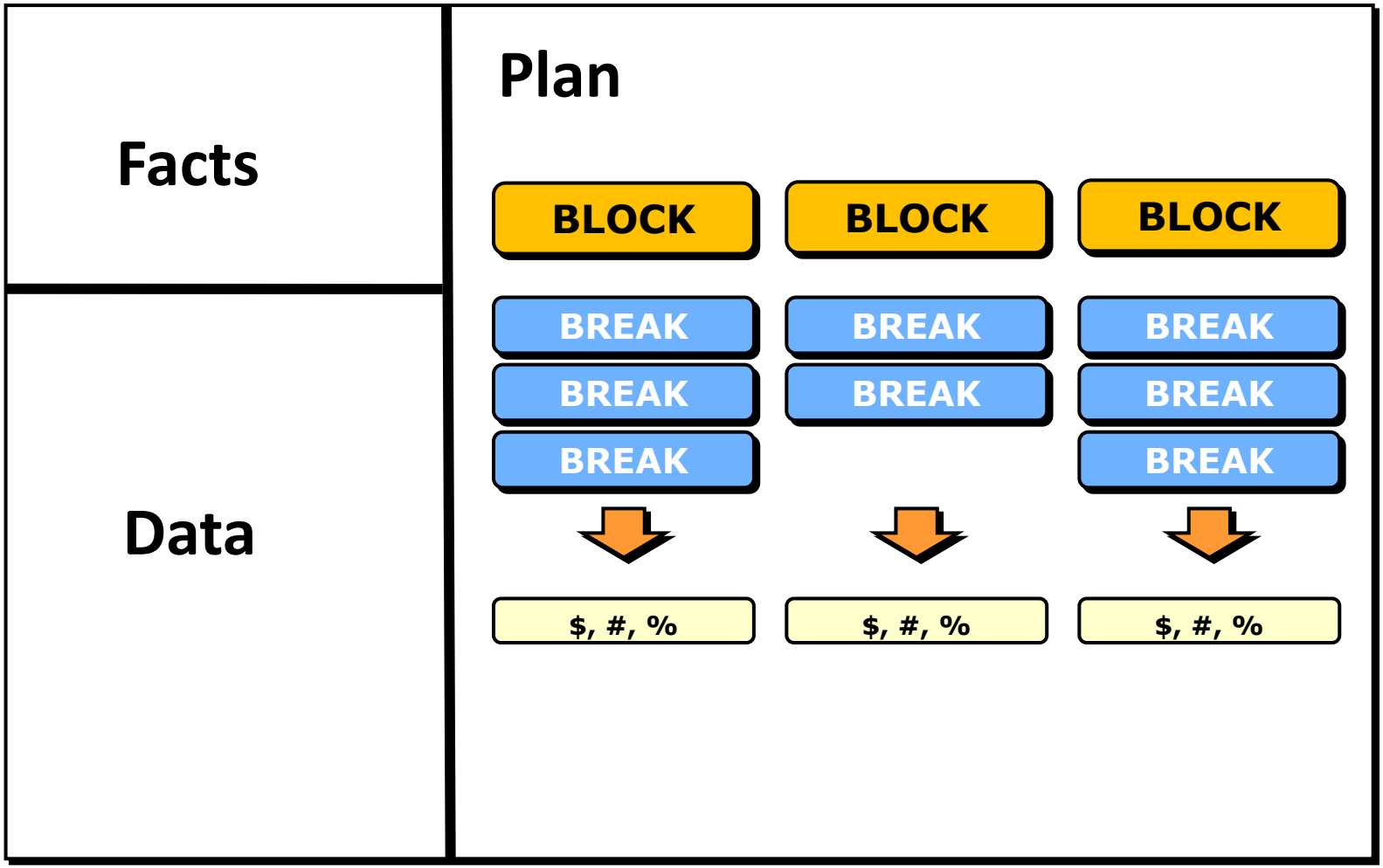


Gather and group your ideas. Do your categories make sense?

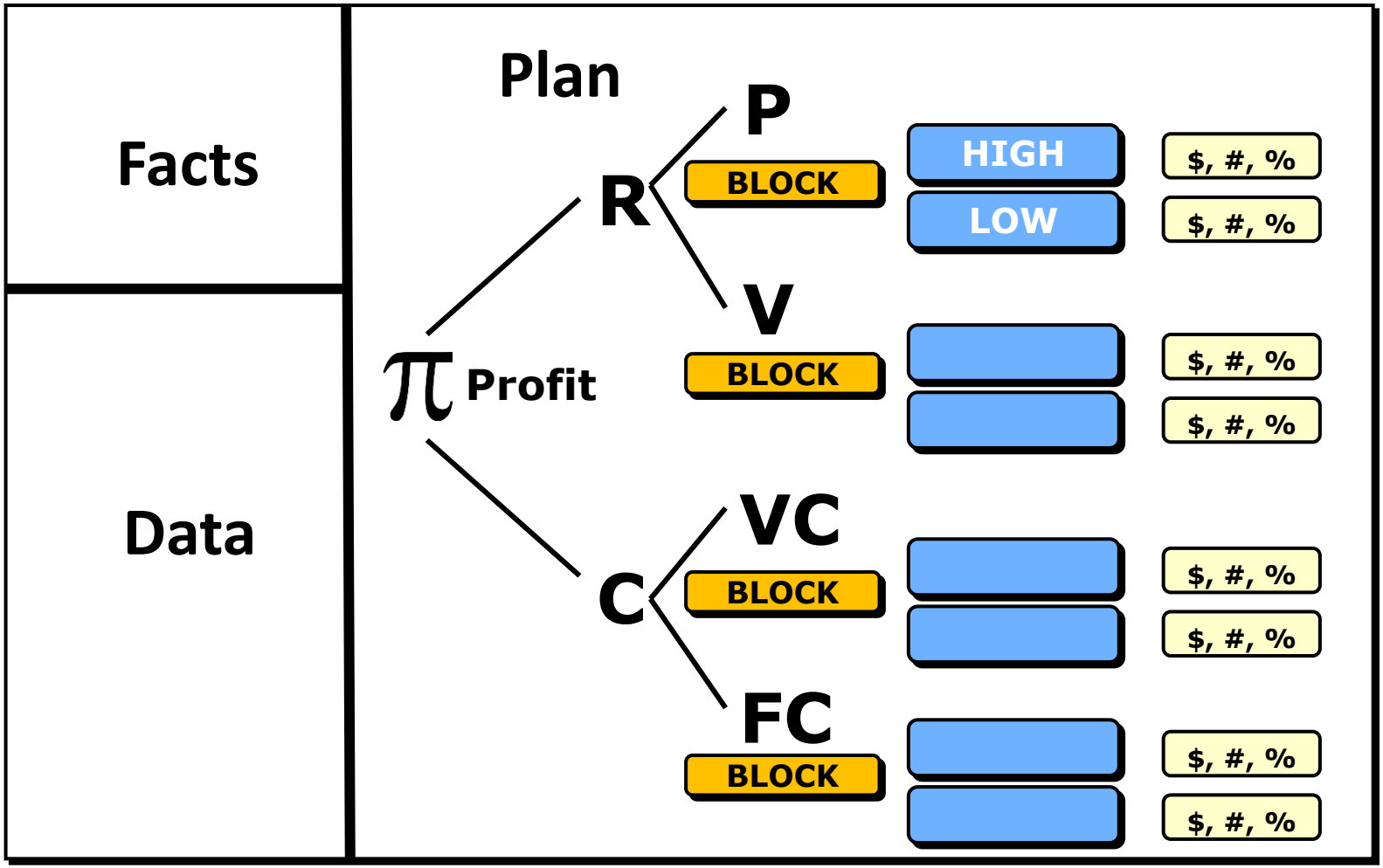
Be case specific to address what matters for THIS case. This shows you are thinking!

Mention the specific $, # and % that you need. Be ready to explain ALL of your thinking before the interviewer gives you data.

Use your plan to connect and explain. Write or talk it through.



You may choose to show it horizontally (profit tree example)



Exercise

Structuring Practice

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Our client is considering opening a bike shop on campus.

- ❑ **Get your brain moving**
  - What do they need to consider?
  - What data would help create a robust plan
- ❑ **Make Your Structure**
  - Group the ideas from above and make your blocks
  - Then make your case specific breaks
  - Think through what data would be a priority

Bike Shop – Sample Structure

Before opening this bike shop, I would consider…

Product	Sourcing/ Inventory Mgmt	Marketing	Store operations
Bikes (new/used/custom, price point, brands)	**Suppliers** (manuf. or dealers; order mins/vol discounts?)	**Mktg channels** (flyers, social media, brand ambassadors)	**Shop** (location, hours, buy v. rent?, pop-up or yr round)
Accessories (helmet, clothes)	**Shipping** (shipping method, speed & who pays?)	**Promotion strat** (discounts, loyalty)	**Employees** (salary, hourly, commission)
Services (rental, repair, insurance, storage, trade-in)	**Inventory** (stock levels, owned vs. consignment)		**Other** (IT systems, permits, insurance)
How will our pricing/offering compare to online and local competitors?	**What is our expected procurement cost per bike?**	**Which marketing platform is most effective for other on-campus businesses?**	**Can we lease space in the student center? At what cost?**

There isn't just one structure that will work per case

Our client wants to open a bike shop on campus.

Alternate structure #1

- **Sourcing**
- **Marketing**
- **Store operations**
- **After sales support**

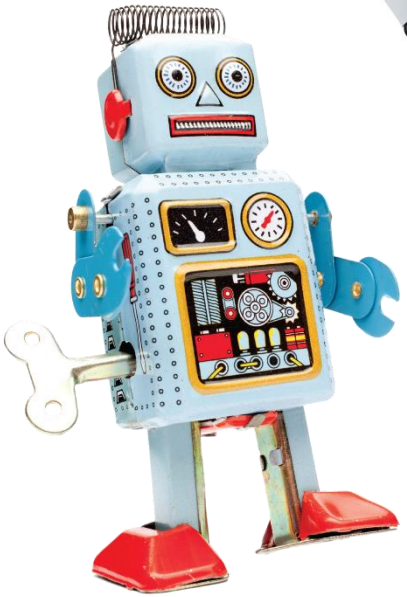
Alternate structure #2

- **Customer**
- **Competition**
- **Costs**

Alternate structure #3

- **Revenue potential**
- **Upfront costs**
- **Ongoing costs**
- **Risks & alternatives**

You'll start off robotic, but push for true advisory



Ask-Bot

List-Bot

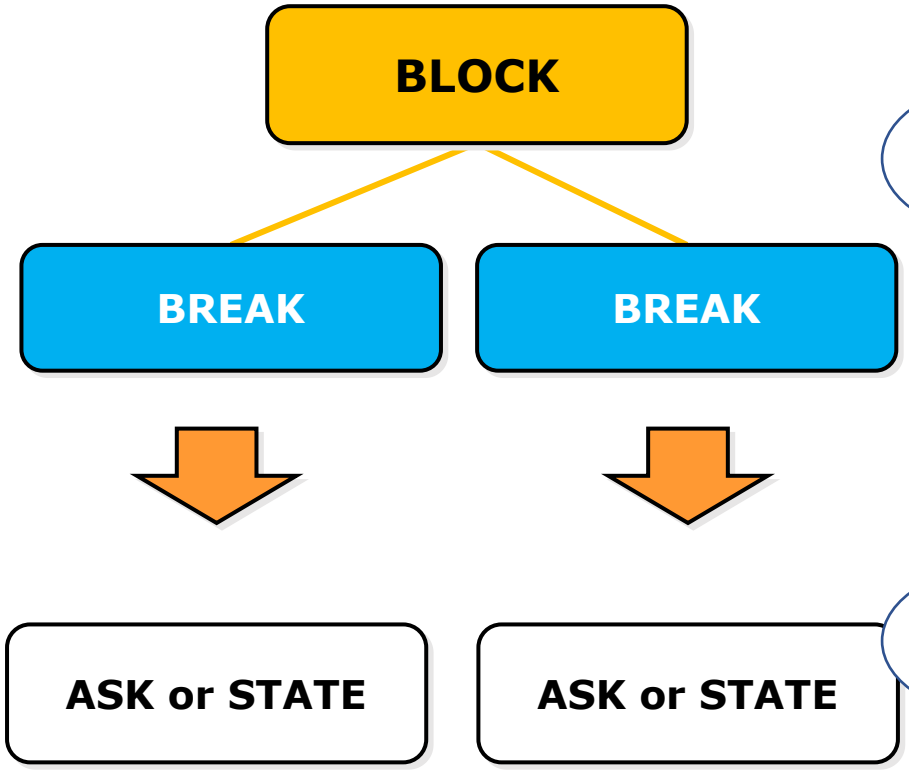
Hypothe-Bot

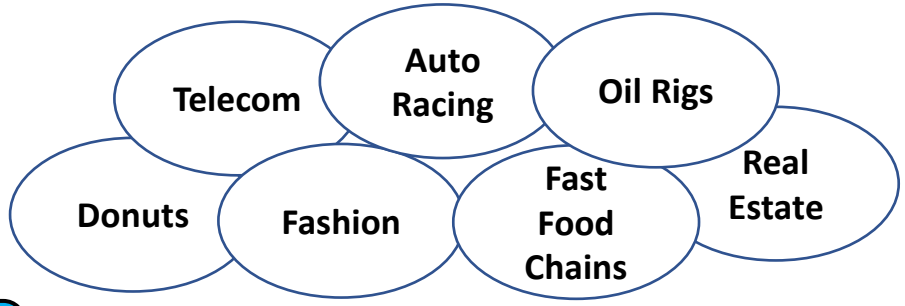
Business Advisor

Robot Evolution

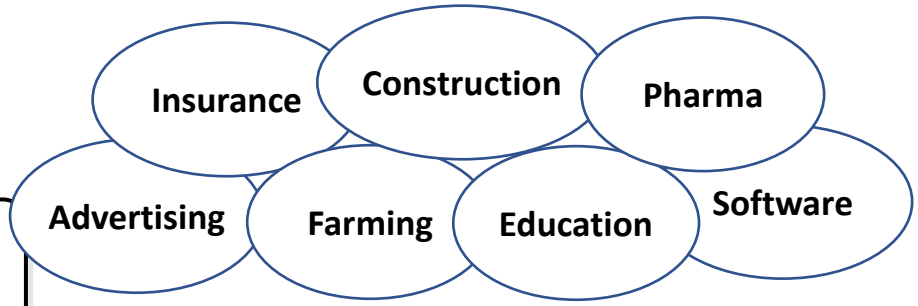
Show thinking with your breaks

Be <u>case specific</u> and <u>hypothesis driven</u>





This is where you can differentiate yourself in the interview!



Block, Break & Ask Tips

Remember these as you practice

BLOCK

- **Actively think -** Don't just recite something you memorized. How would you break up the work if this was an actual project?
- Practice structuring the same case multiple ways.

BREAK

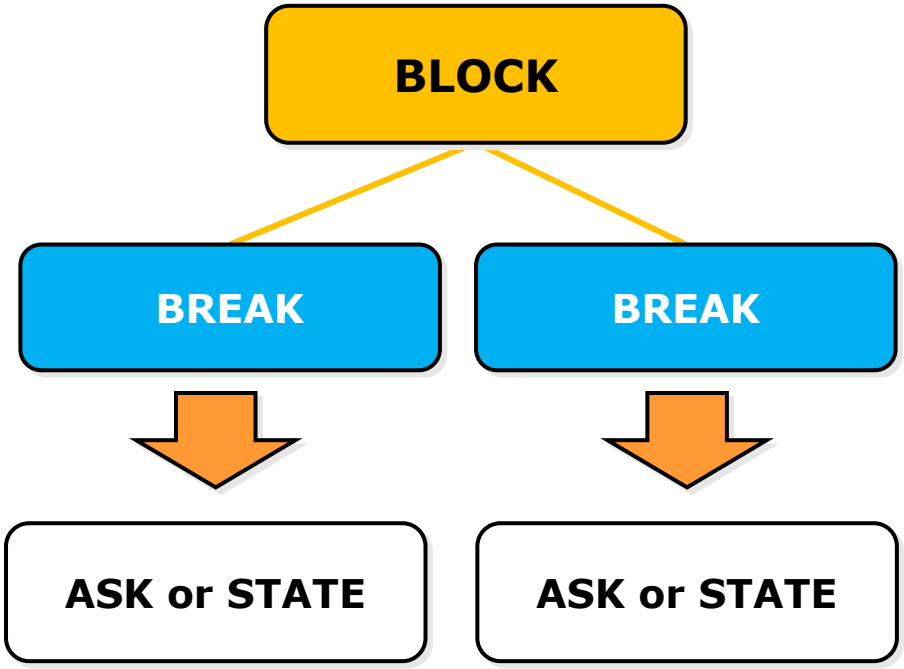
- **Self-assess -** Could I say exactly the same thing if we were talking about a completely different industry or product? If yes, you have NOT been case specific enough.
- Have your practice partners ask: *"What else?"*

ASK or STATE

- **Practice previewing -** Mention key data you'll want to analyze as you share your plan. Don't ask for the data until you've finished sharing your plan.
- After sharing your plan, dive into the data pool by proposing where to start and asking a question.

Prioritize your data

You can't ask for everything



**"If I got the data,
what decision could I make?"**

Specific questions help you anticipate what data is necessary.

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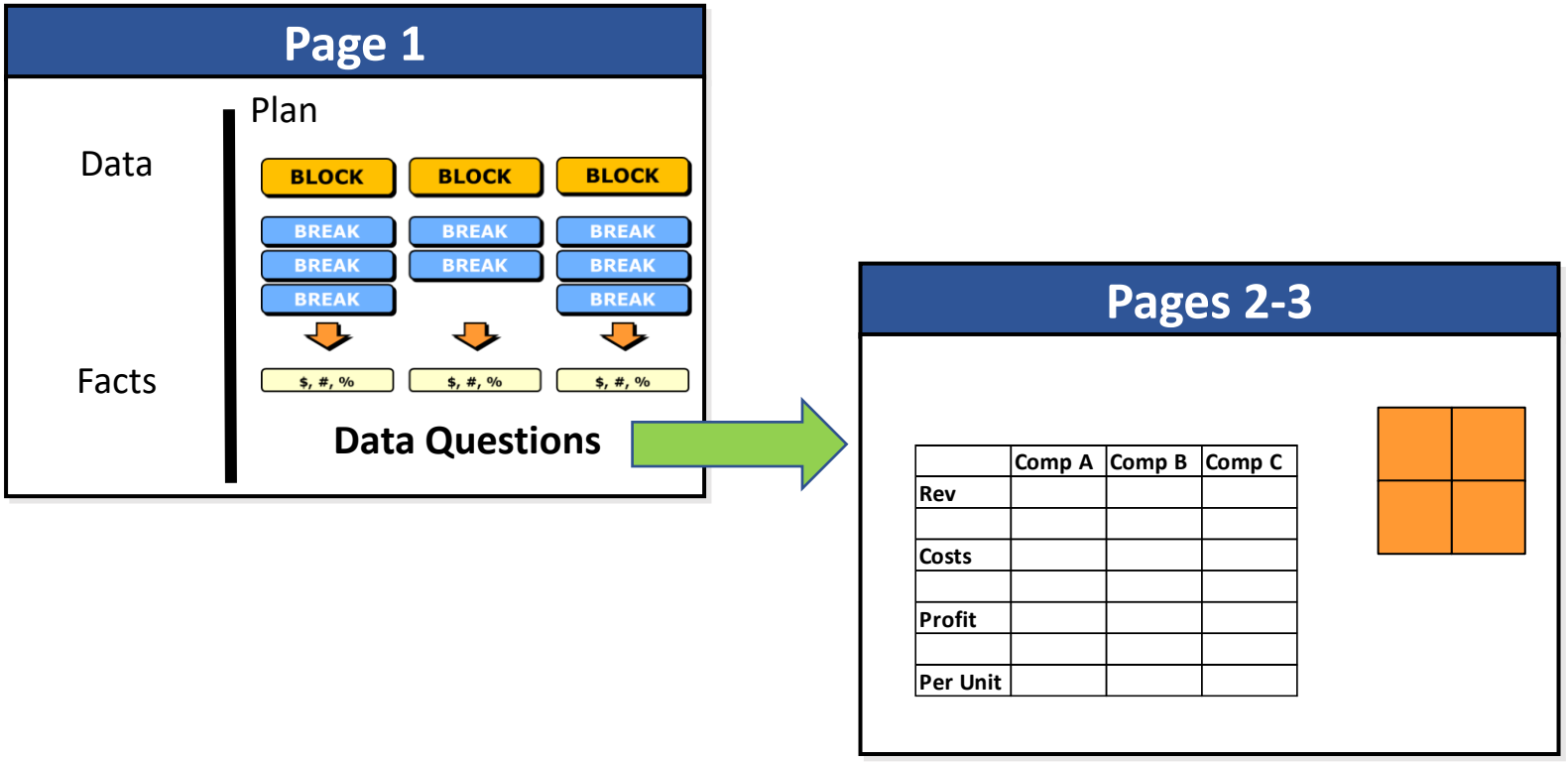
Competitors	Financial Goals	Supply & Distribution	Store Operations
What percent of bike sales in the market come from independent stores? Big box?	Which bikes offer us the highest dollar margin? Which equipment?	What percent will be large brands vs. independent brands?	How would you **rate the foot traffic** for our section of town?
Market share of each dedicated bike store?	What is **the typical ROI of an independent bike store?**	What is the **typical margin** we can expect with each source?	Do nearby businesses (e.g. restaurants, offices) draw potential customers?
Average time they have been in business?	How do the 6 month and 12 month profit goals vary?	Typical big brand equipment terms and is unsold stock returnable?	How many customers come in per day? Percent that buy?

Data Anticipation

Thinking ahead accelerates your analysis.



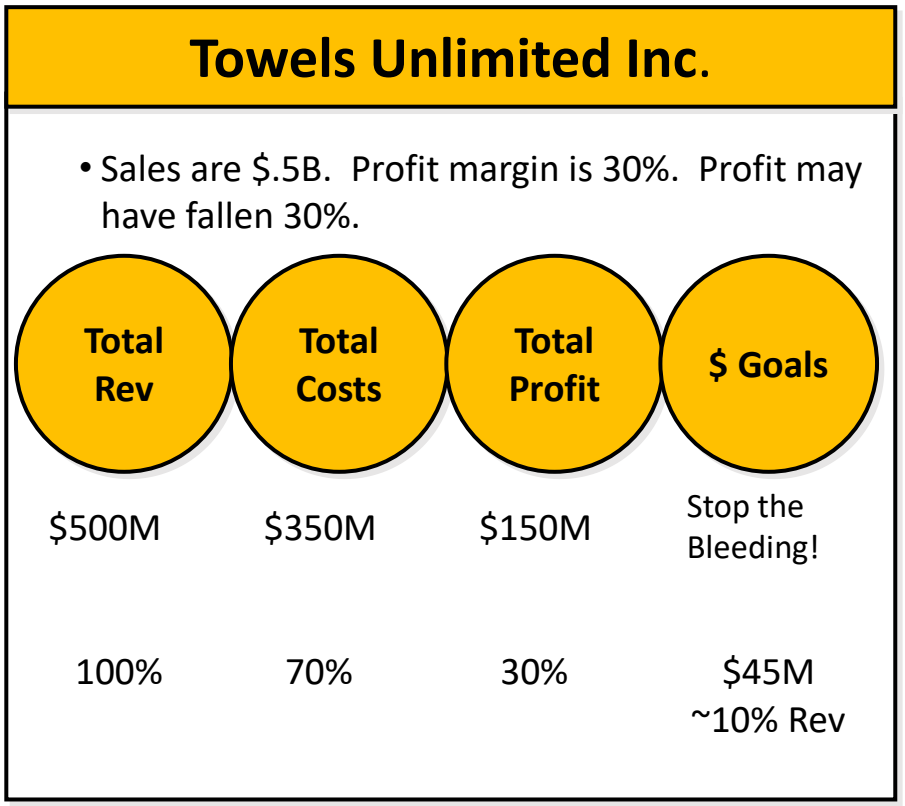
Here are three more analytical skills that will differentiate you.

Question: Should our fashion retailer open pop-up stores?

2 Get comfortable estimating and manipulating numbers.

Billions
Millions
& Thousands

Dollars &
Percentages



3 Become a data story-teller.

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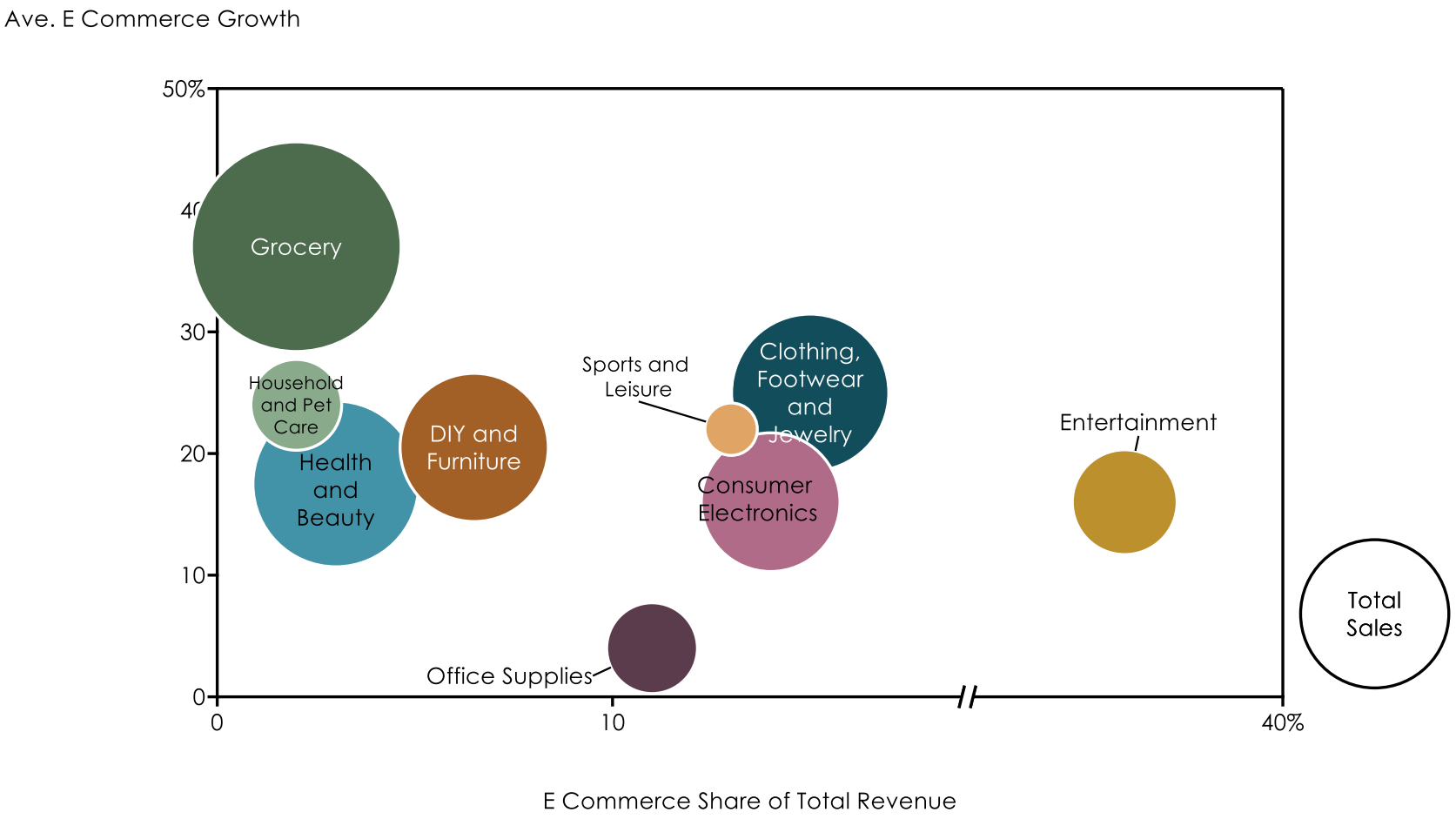
T-shirt production. What story do you see?

12 Month Projections			
	Level A	**Level B**	**Level C**
Green Moms shirts sold	**3000**	**2500**	**2000**
Eco Students shirts sold	**2000**	**1500**	**500**
Price per Shirt	28	32	37
Full Production Cost per Shirt	18	20	22
Loan Required (Equip. / Mkt.)	$43,000	$40,000	$38,000
Profit per Shirt			
Total Shirts Sold			
Total Revenue			
Total Profit (Tot. Rev - Loan)			

4 Find the slide storyline and connect it to the case.



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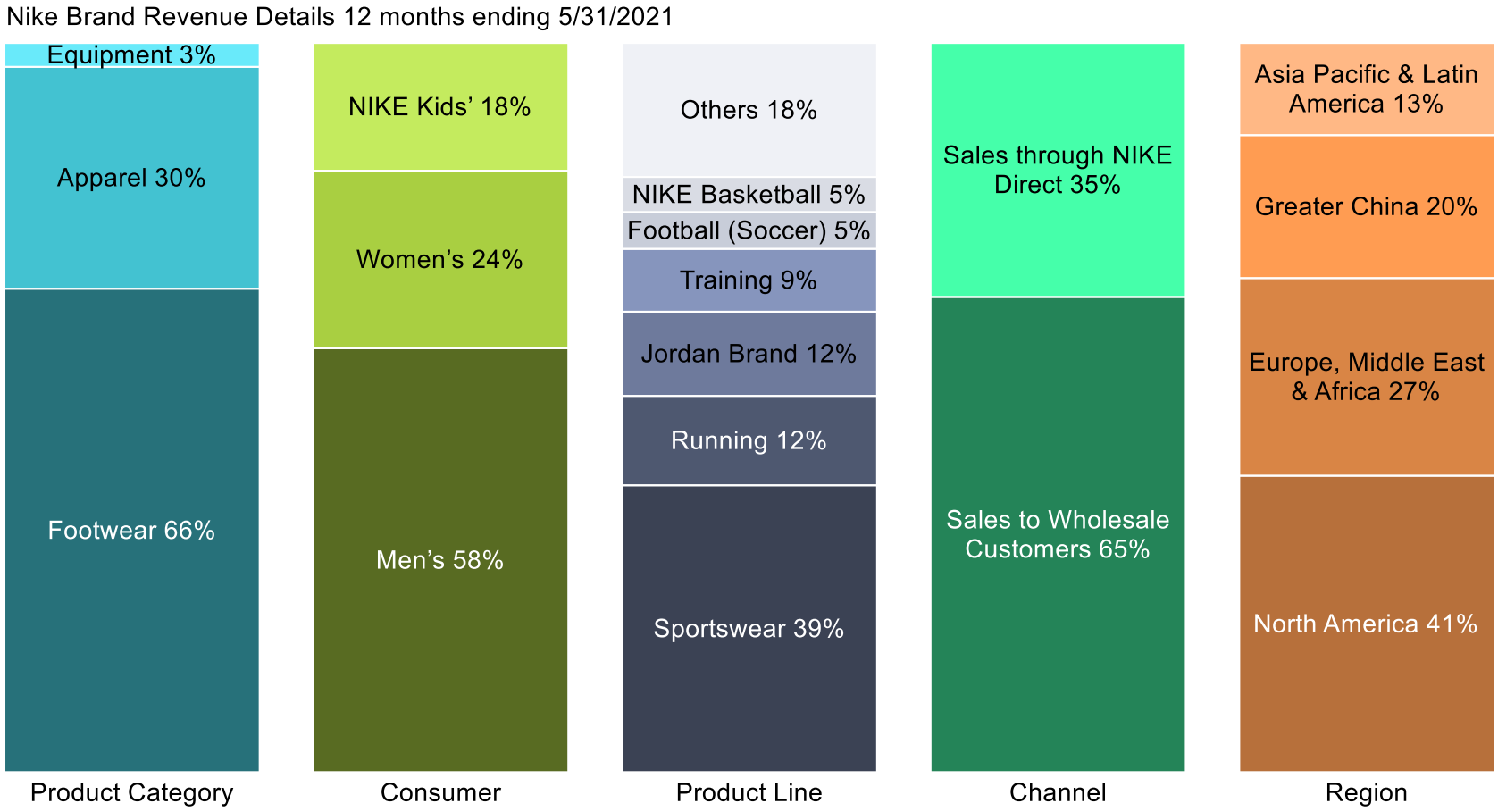

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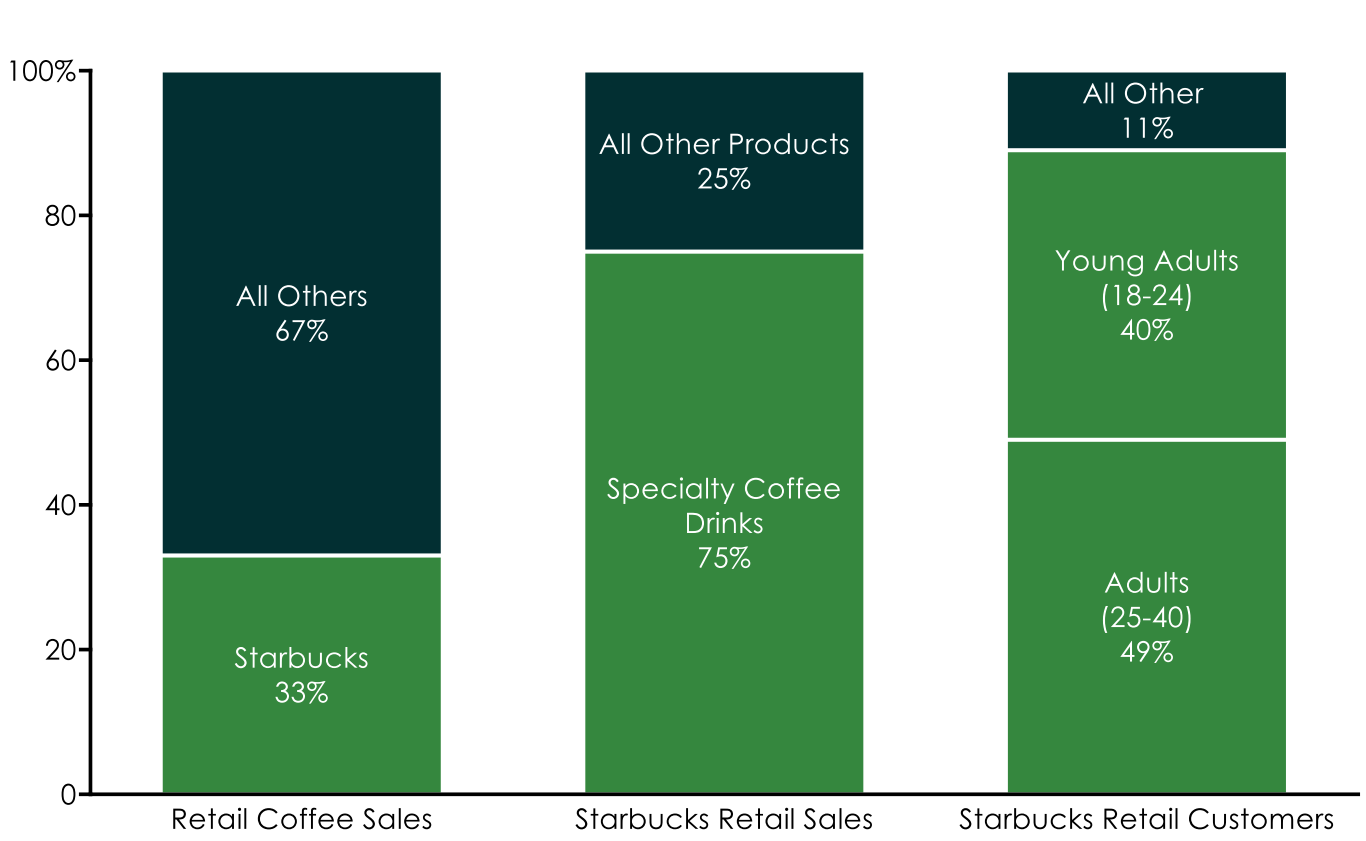


Recap

- **Structuring well with Block, Break & Ask**
  - Makes your first impression
  - Ensures you are thinking
  - Sets up your data search
  - Action > work on breaking down everyday objects

- **Data analysis requires multiple skills**
  - Data anticipation to accelerate your thinking
  - Estimating and number manipulation
  - Data story telling
  - Slide interpretation
  - Action > define the top three pieces of data for every case

Summer Camp

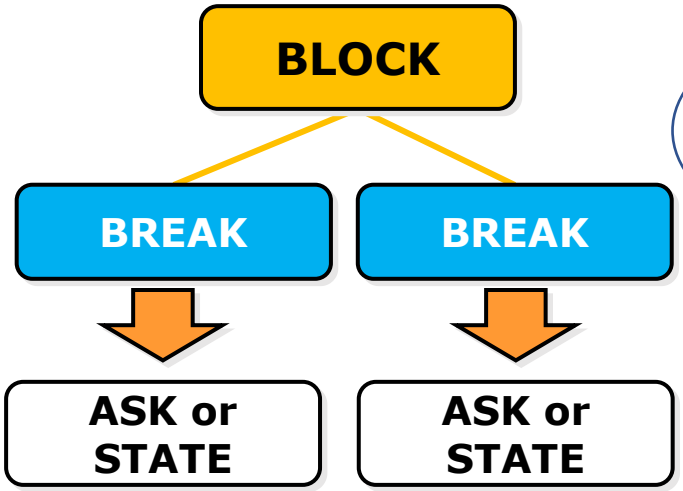
We'll learn so much together!

How to handle crazy "cow" questions

When to use a hypothesis and how to make it sound sensible

How to ensure you start your case confidently every time

When it might be appropriate to use a standard framework



When to skip a MECE break approach to ensure discussion

How to make sure your blocks are MECE

How to show you are data oriented but not directionless

How to create a structure that improves your recommendation

How to prioritize your data and speed up your analysis

What past campers are saying:

"Practicing with folks from other schools really helped me see different styles." (Tepper MBA, McKinsey offer)

"Summer Camp was instrumental in getting me here." (Stern, MBA, LEK offer)

"Thanks for pushing me so hard" (McCombs undergrad, McKinsey offer)

"I was able to power through their exhibits and extreme data . . " (Duke MBA, McKinsey final round, ZS offer)

"Thanks for setting such a strong foundation." (Amherst undergrad, Bain final round, Oliver Wyman offer)

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Crack the Case Summer Camp 2023!

- Be “offer ready” by August.
- **7 weeks / 7 topics**. Presented 2 different times each week. Recordings available.
- **Bonus:** Interview LOGIC workshop and 12-month subscription included.

- Summer Camps typically have 100+ campers from all over the world!
- World class trainers: David (ex-Bain) or Deborah Resnick (ex-McKinsey).
- Learn/See/Do. Each week there’s an assignment and 1-2 new cases.
- Work with your assigned team partners or others.
- Four Case Arenas with Q&A.
- Focus is on building consistent skills that lead to offers.

- **SAVE THE DATE: Camp begins Saturday, June 4th.**
- **Registration opens May 21st.**

https://camps.mbacase.com/ctc-summer-camp-23/

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