

CRACK
THE CASE

FACING THE CASE

Introduction to
Case Interviews

Led by David Ohrvall
Zintervu CEO





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Author of Crack the Case & Interview LOGIC



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IU Kelley
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Kellogg
Maryland
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MIT
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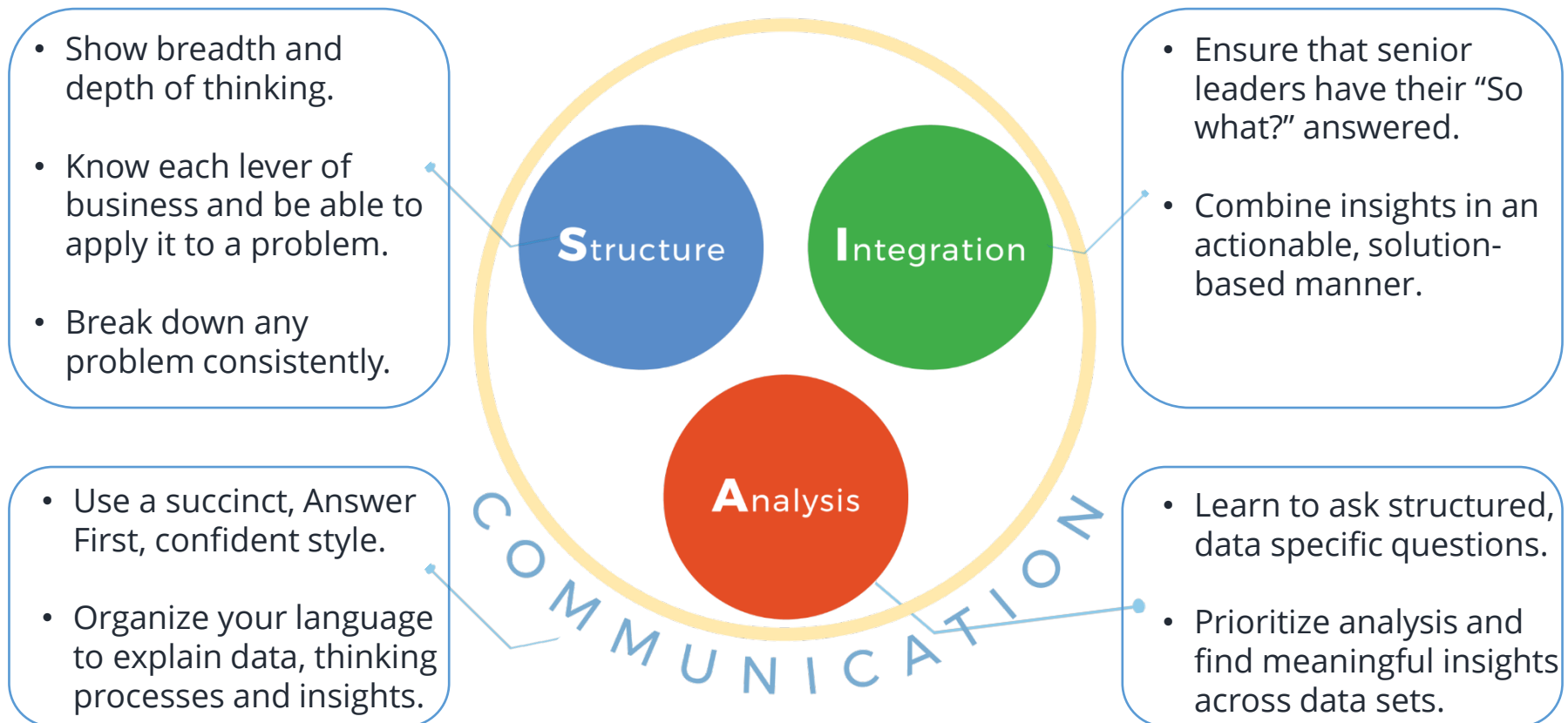
Today's Agenda

- Why do companies use cases?
- What's a case interview?
- What type of cases will I face?
- How do I prepare?
- What does it take to get an offer?
- How do I get started right now?

Why do companies use cases?

They want to see a full set of skills.

CSAI: Communication, Structure, Analysis & Integration

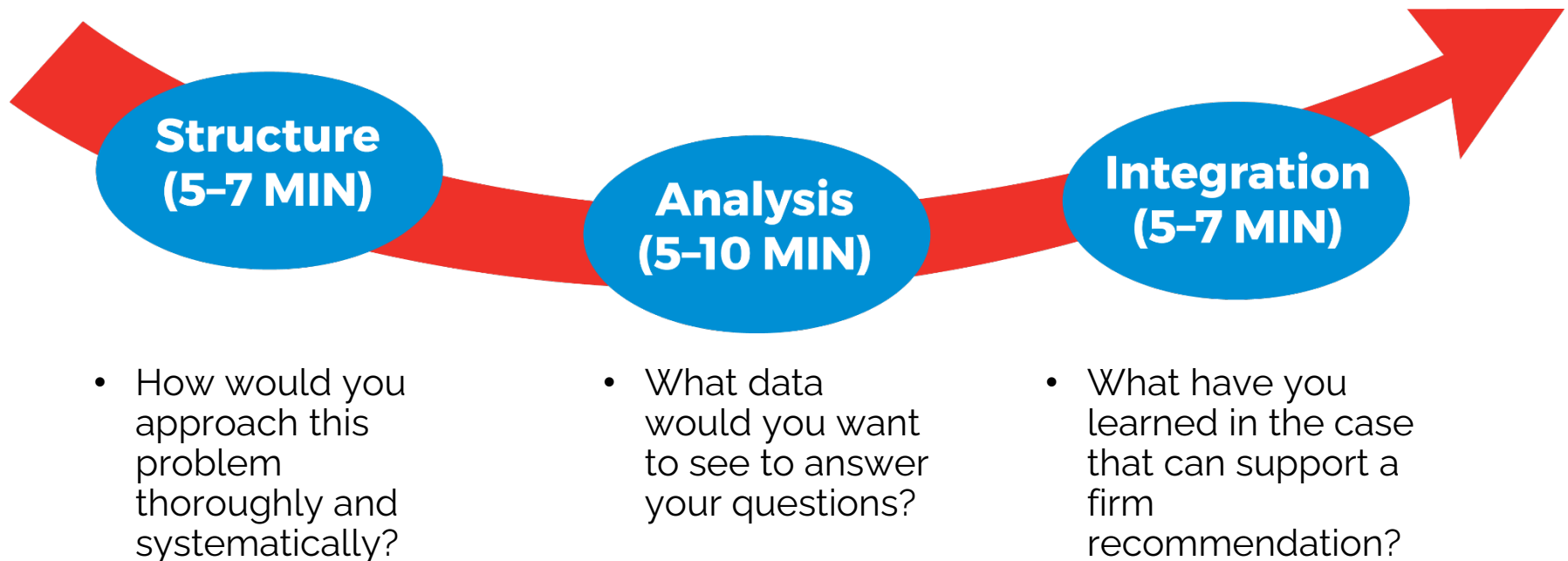


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What's a case interview?

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



CASES are EVERYWHERE

Consulting

- Strategic decisions
- Market entry
- Profit maximization
- Declining market
- Organizational redesign

Finance

- M&A transactions
- Private equity buy-outs
- Business sell-offs
- Time value of money

Marketing

- New product
- Lagging product
- New industry
- Branding remedies

Industry

- Airlines
- Health care
- Internet/telecom
- Government
- Internal strategy

How would you answer these business scenario questions?

Tech

“**What information** would you need to help develop the implementation strategy?”

“Talk me through the options. What is your rationale for **choosing this application.**”

“Our roll-out is **resource constrained.** What would you do first?”

“How would you determine if this product is worth **turning into an app?**”

How would you answer these business scenario questions?

Marketing

“Walk me through a **favorite marketing campaign** and why you liked it.”

“Let’s think through how to **increase overall brand awareness**.”

“Let’s **evaluate the roll-out** of our holiday scent air freshener. Should we do it next year?”

“Using the **4P’s framework**, let me know how you would market a new line of high-end headphones.”

How would you answer these business scenario questions?

Finance

“Let’s walk through **a recent acquisition**. Name one that recently happened, what you think went well, and what should have done differently.”

“I’ll give you a million dollars. How **would you invest it and why**? What kind of return would you expect to get?”

“If you had to advise on a **merger between two food companies**, what would you want to know?”

“Think through **the trade-off** between these two investments.”

How would you answer these business scenario questions?

Consulting

"Our client is **facing declining profits**. Should they shut down two of their five plants?"

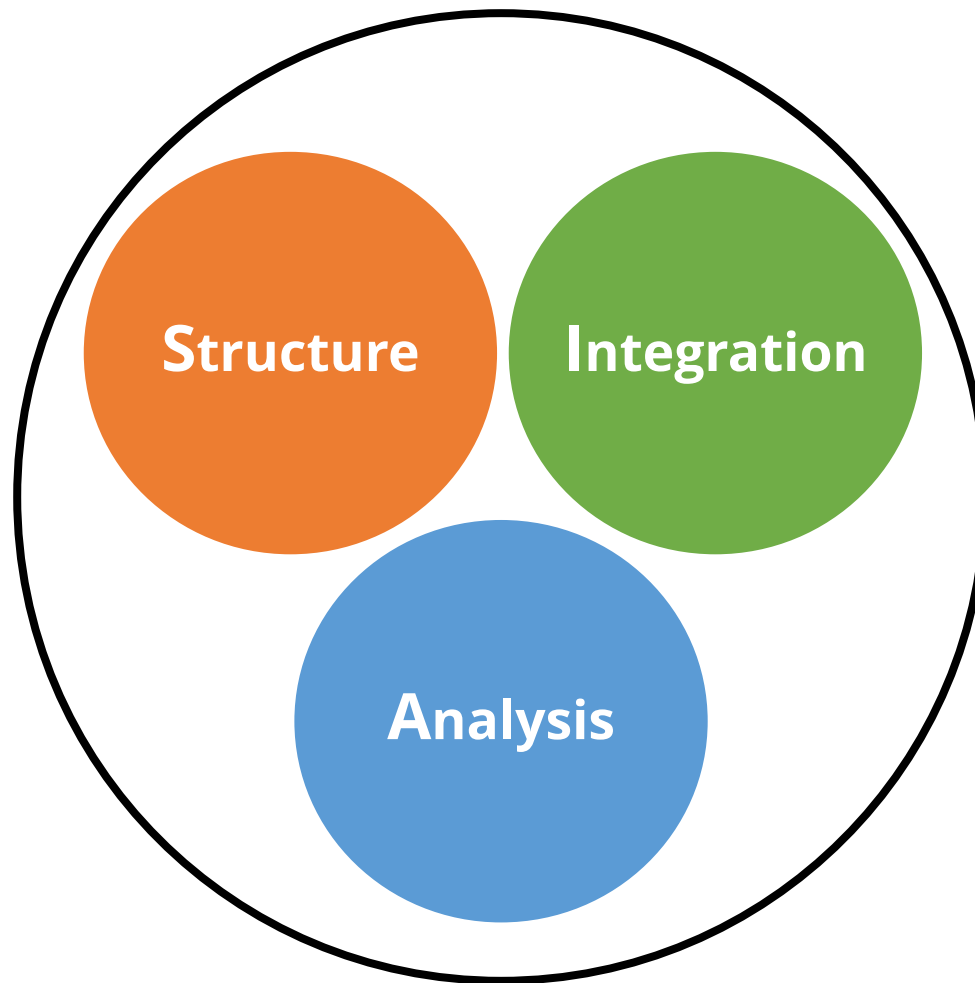
"A global beer company is looking at **acquiring** several smaller craft beer companies. **Should they do it?**"

"We are working with a company who is facing increasing competition from **private label pretzels**. What should they do?"

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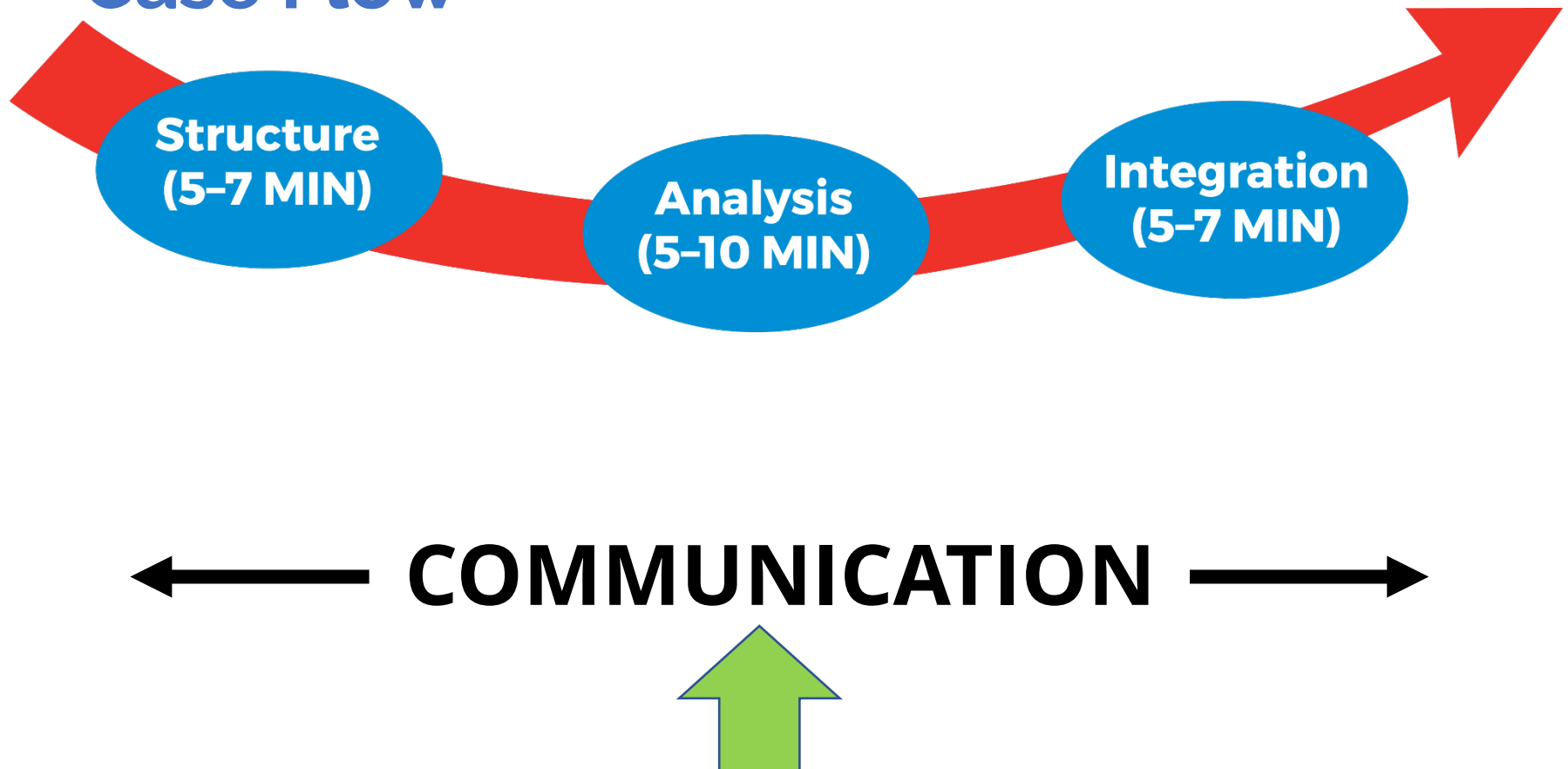
Prepare by working on skills



COMMUNICATION

Let's focus our attention on each part of the case.

Case Flow



Be Answer First

to engage quickly



- **Bring the main point to the front.**
- **Use data to engage your interviewer. Add in \$, # and %.**
- **Apply Answer First to speed up the conversation.**

1. Communication – Answer First

- **Clear and Direct** – “There are two key issues I want to address.”
 - Interviewers understand where you are going
 - You seem like a confident business advisor
- **Interaction Increases** – “Can we go back to your first point”
 - Interviewers want to test you thoroughly
 - When they quickly understand your thinking they can ask questions and converse with you like a peer
- **Your Speed Accelerates** – Time is one of your enemies
 - With AF you move faster through both your behavioral and case thinking
 - There's more time to go deeper, analyze data, answer questions and cover more ground in your behaviorals

Use Answer First for your behavioral prep

Individual Contribution

Manage or Lead

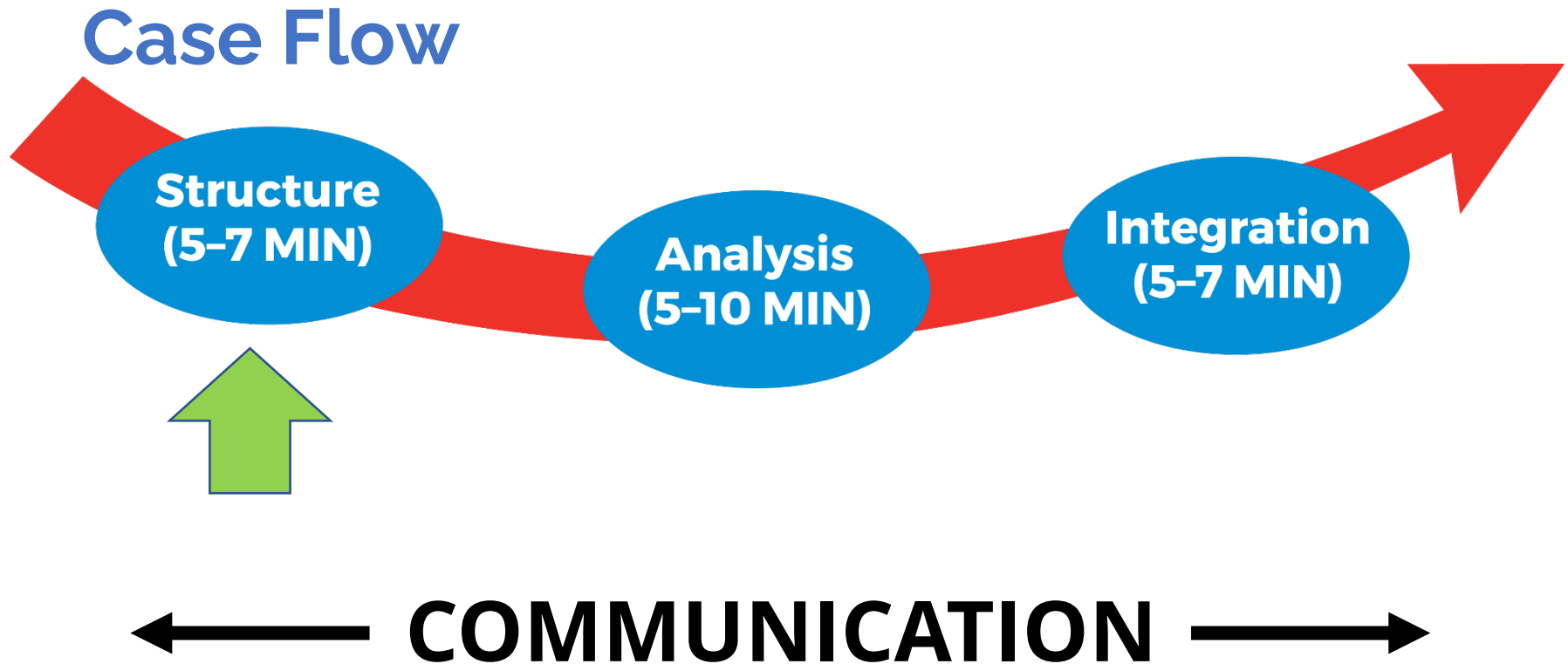
Persuasion

Analytics

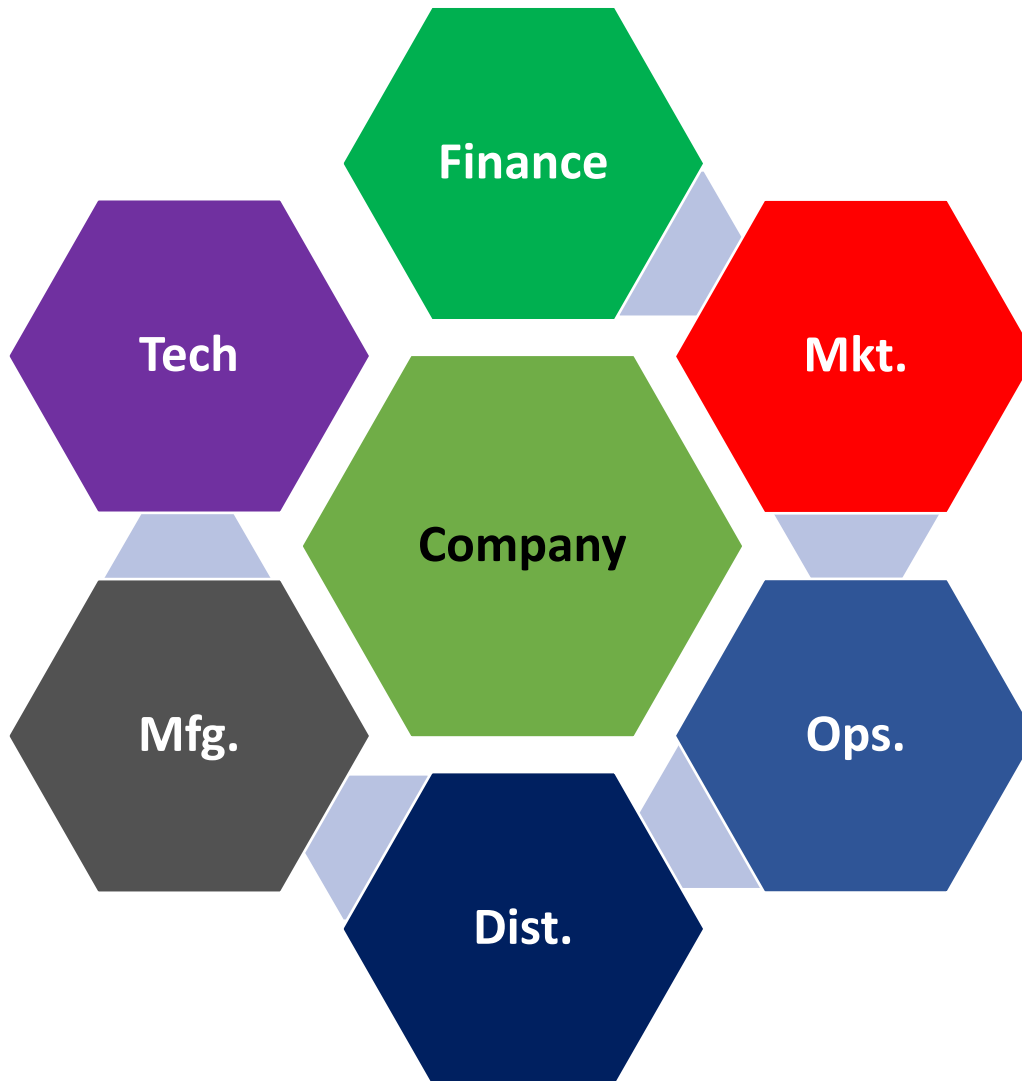
Challenge or Failure

Teamwork

Let's focus our attention on each part of the case.



2. Structure – Consider all the angles



**BREADTH \neq reciting a
memorized laundry list**

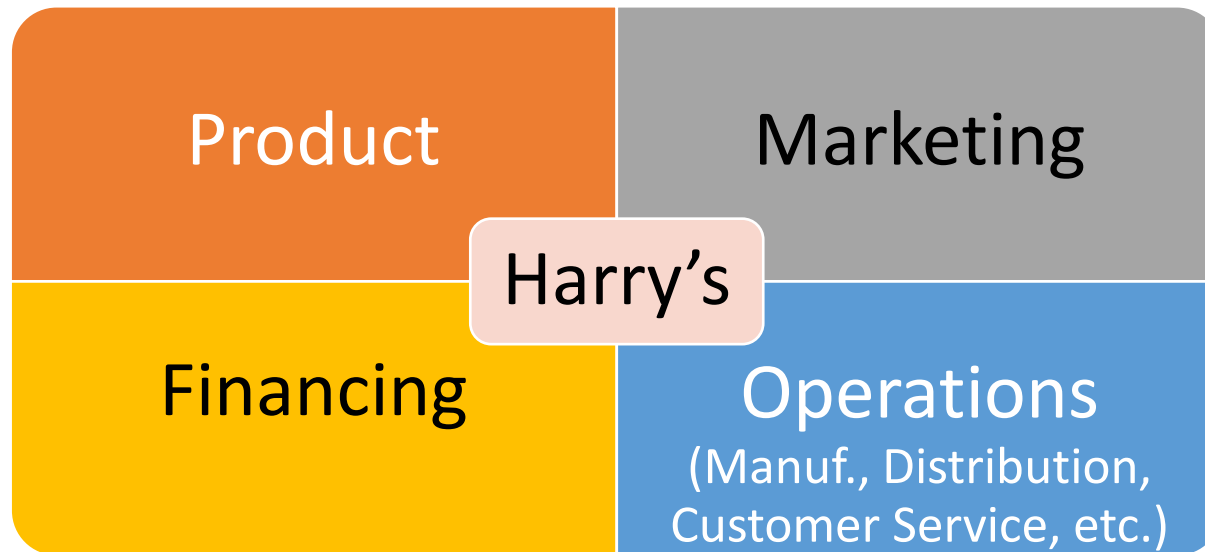
**Top candidates curate
& prioritize in real time**

Harry's - a stylish, cheaper men's razor

How do you help them win?

- **Function** - quality of shave, feel in hand, durability of blades, ease of cleaning
- **Style** – color options, sleek design
- **Portfolio** – multiple types? Shave cream?

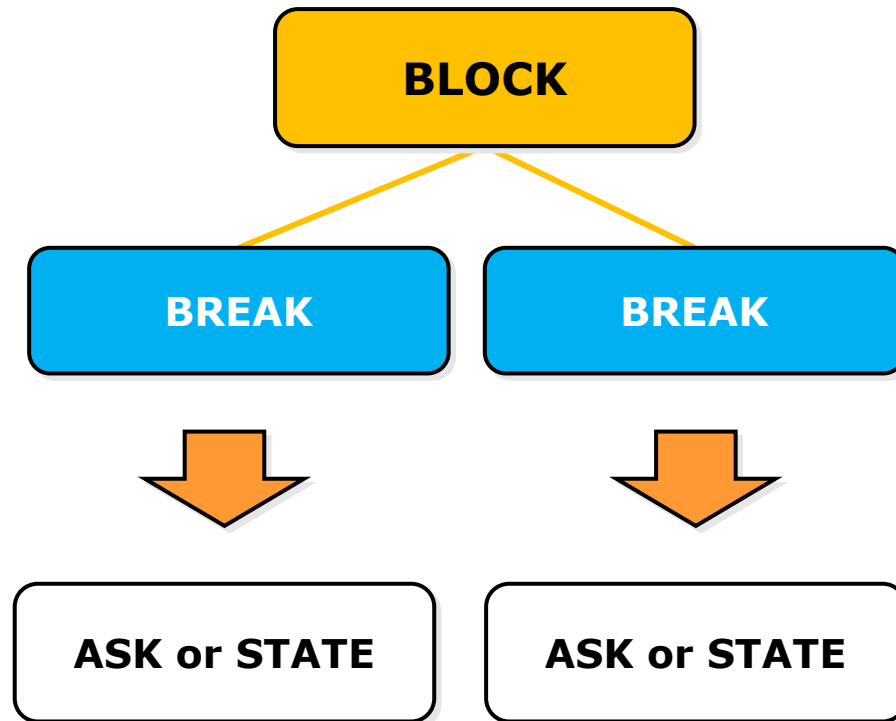
- **Mtg channel:** Social media for a Gen X/Z target
- **Messaging:** “You’re paying too much!”, socially conscious
- **Pricing:** Trial offer. Subscription discount



- **How much money do we need?:** Initial investment, marketing budget, incremental capital to scale
- **How are we going to fund it?:** debt, equity, self-fund?
- **ROI:** Expected product margins / breakeven point
- **Exit strategy:** Get acquired by large CPG? IPO?

- **Manuf:** In-house production or outsource? Where to do the manuf
- **Sales channels:** Direct to consumer, through retail stores, or Amazon/other online partners
- **Back office support:** Where to put HQ? Remote workforce?

Block, Break & Ask is the foundational skill



Separate categories

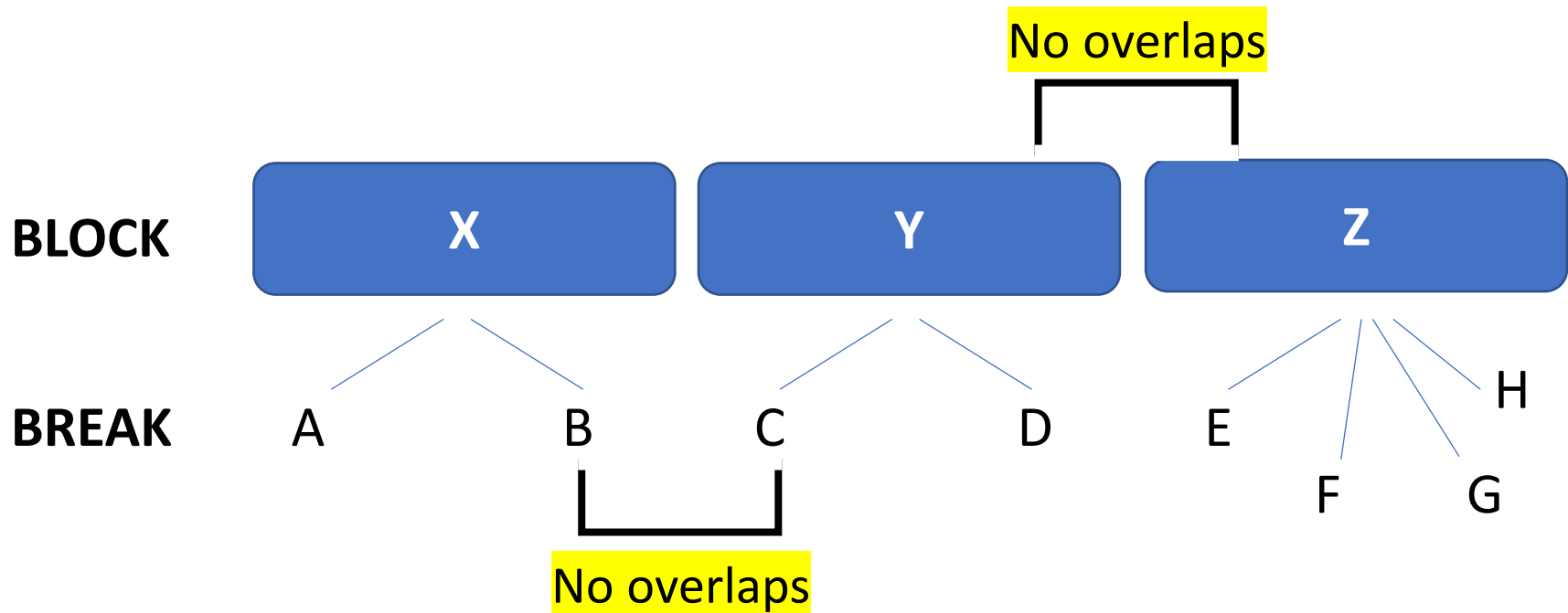
Being case specific preps you to anticipate data. "Micro" hypotheses start to bubble up.

Mention the specific \$, # and % that you need. Be ready to transition to the analysis portion of the case.



2. Structure – Be MECE when possible

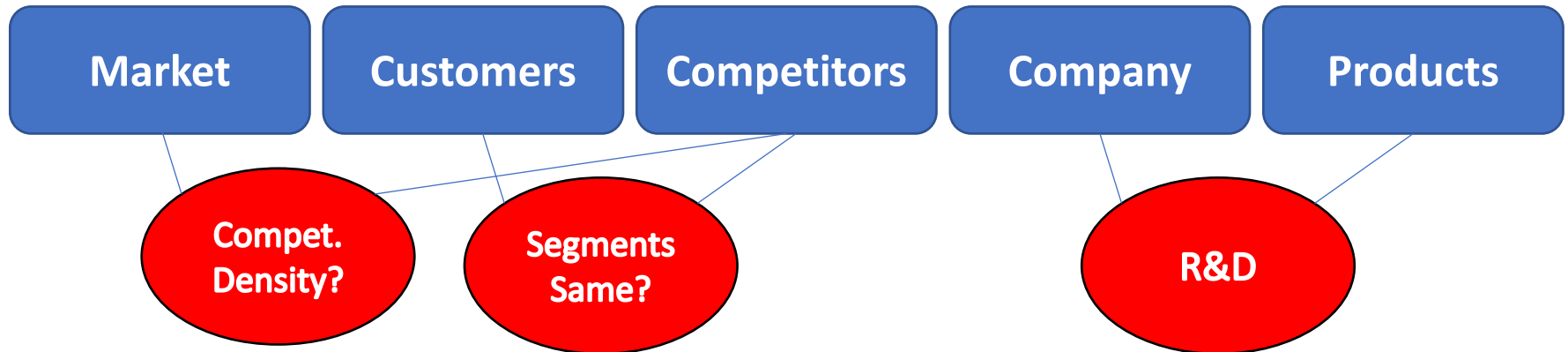
Mutually Exclusive, Collectively Exhaustive



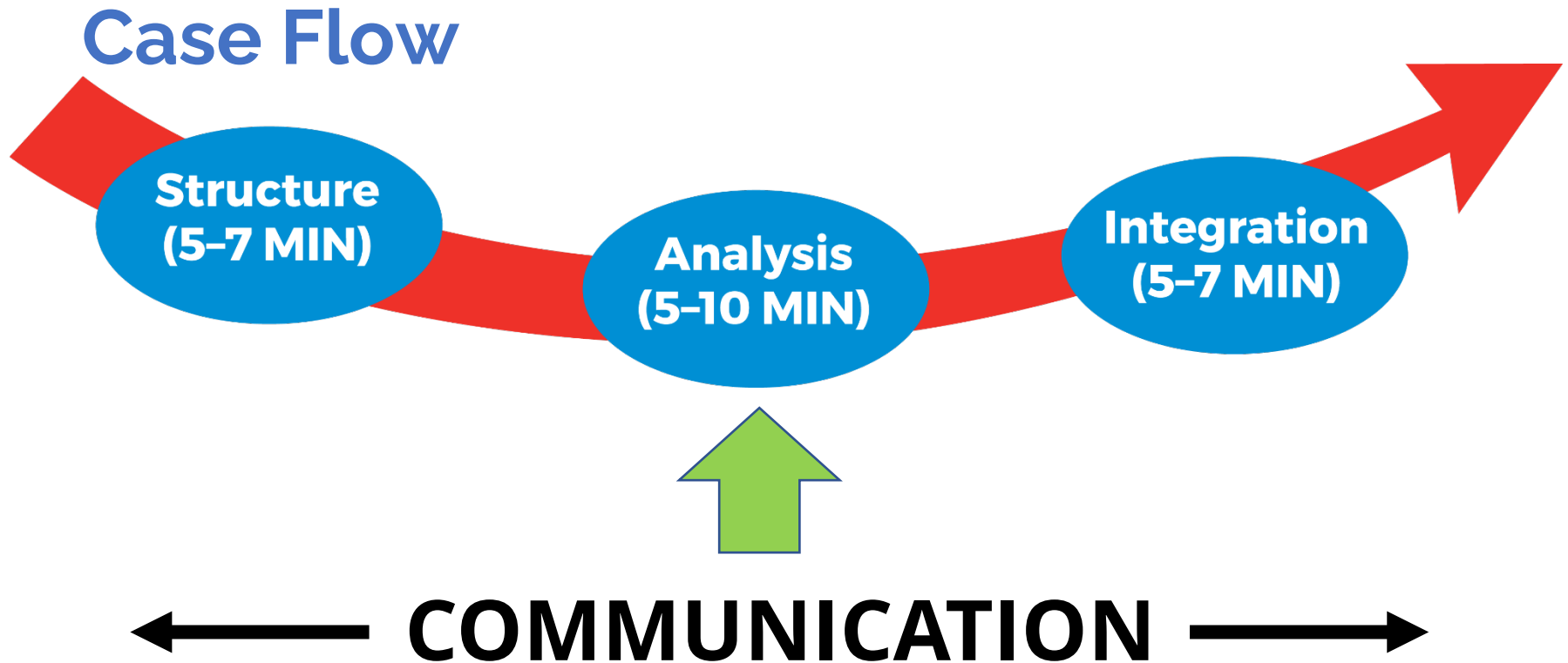
ASK \$, # and %

2. Structure – It takes practice to avoid overlaps

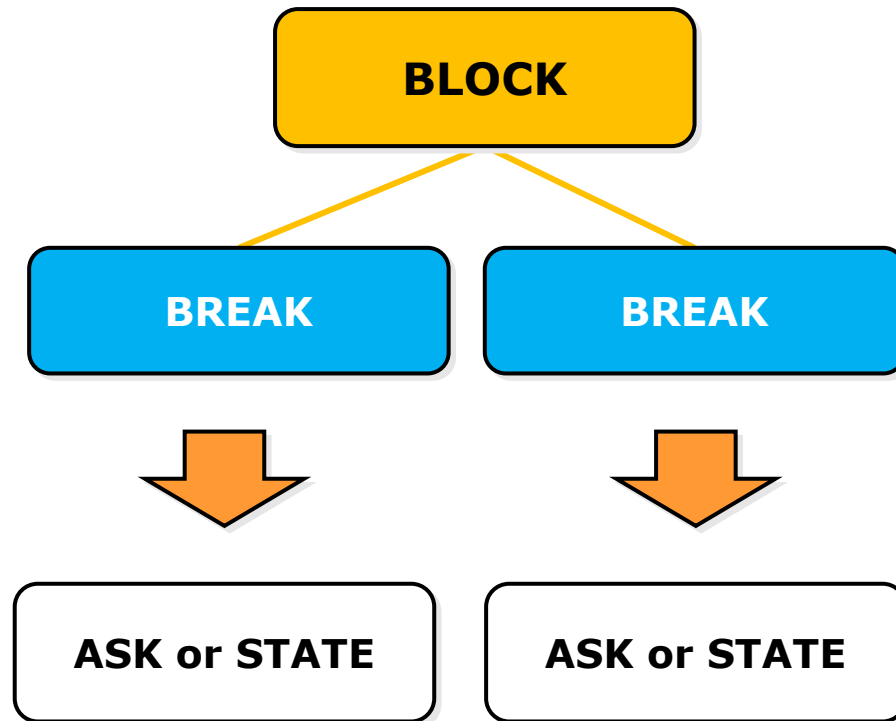
Let's enter a new market. I want to find the most attractive market.



Let's focus our attention on each part of the case.



3. Analysis – It begins with data anticipation

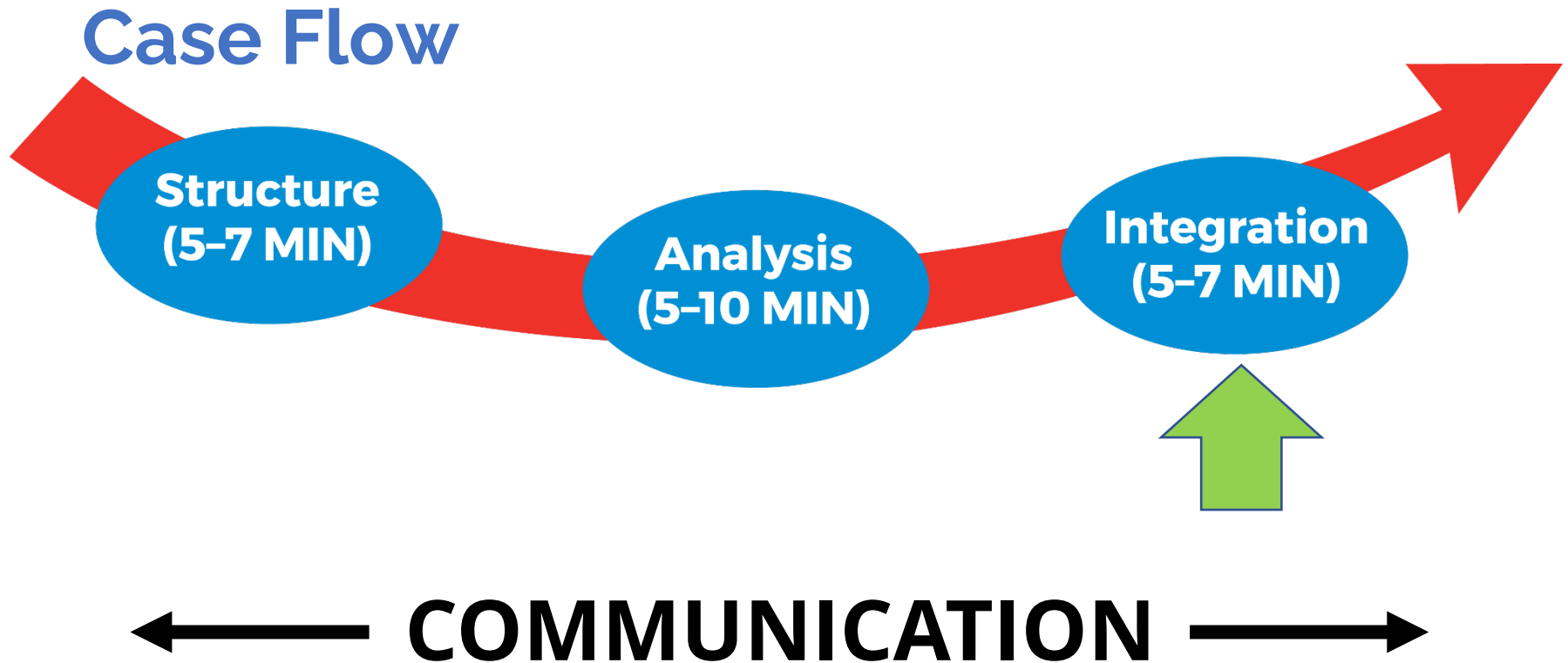


Separate categories

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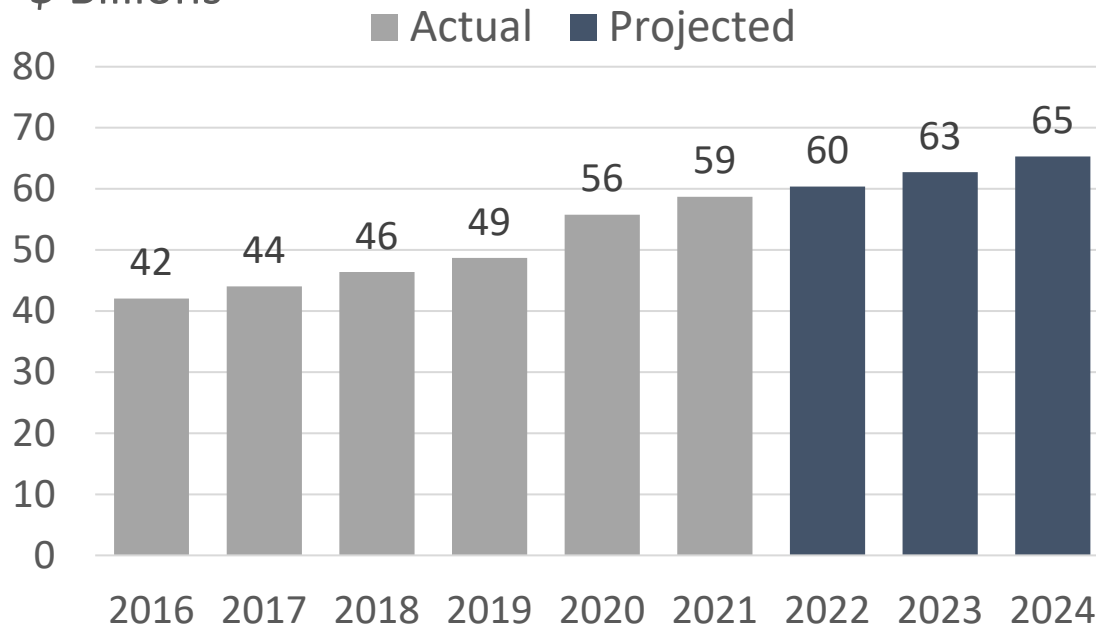
4. Integration – Focus on insights

Nutritional Supplement Market Trends

(Vitamins, minerals, herbal supplements, sports nutrition, meal supplements, etc.)

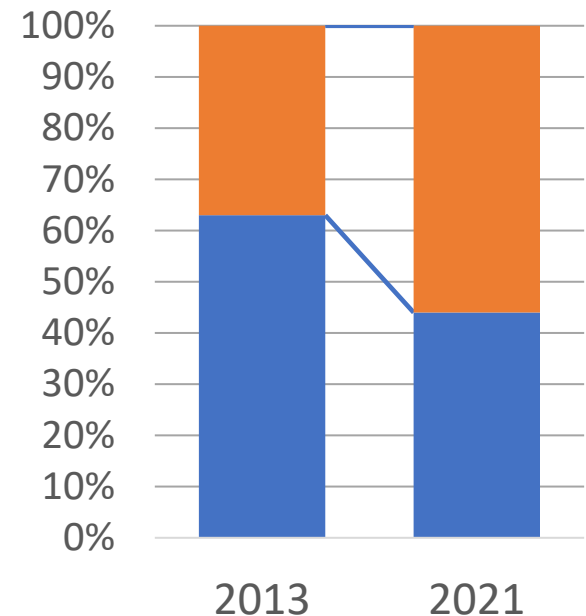
US Nutritional Supplement Sales

\$ Billions



Sales by form*

% of total sales



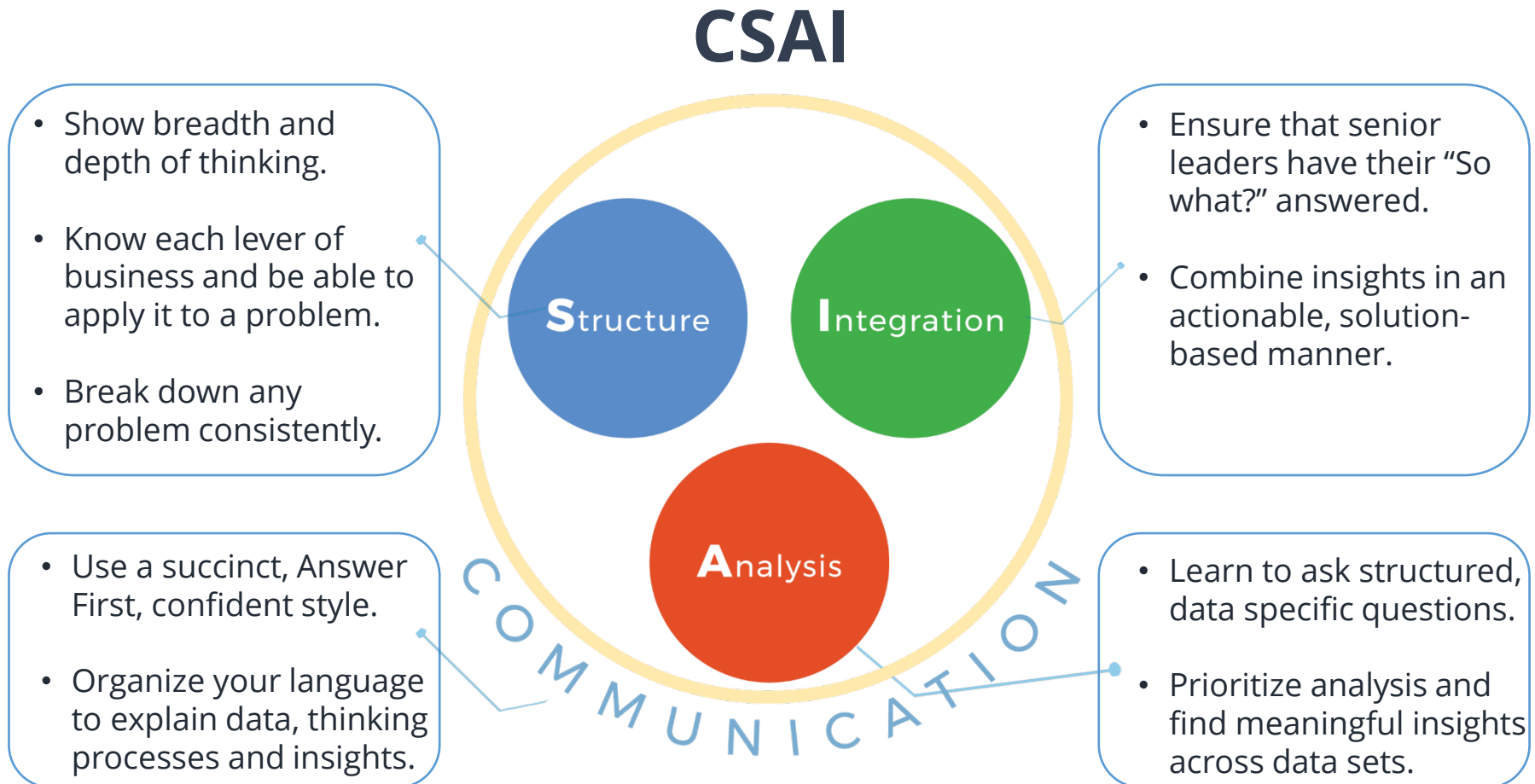
* Pills includes: tablets, capsules, softgels and VegiCaps

Non-pills includes: chewables, gummies, powders, liquids, injections, lollipops/lozenges, etc.

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Getting offers = showing solid skills



Case format can vary

One-on-One

- Most typical format
- Interviewer style and case content vary widely
- Be ready to drive the discussion

Small Group

- Usually final round only
- Rare but growing in popularity
- Listen and collaborate!

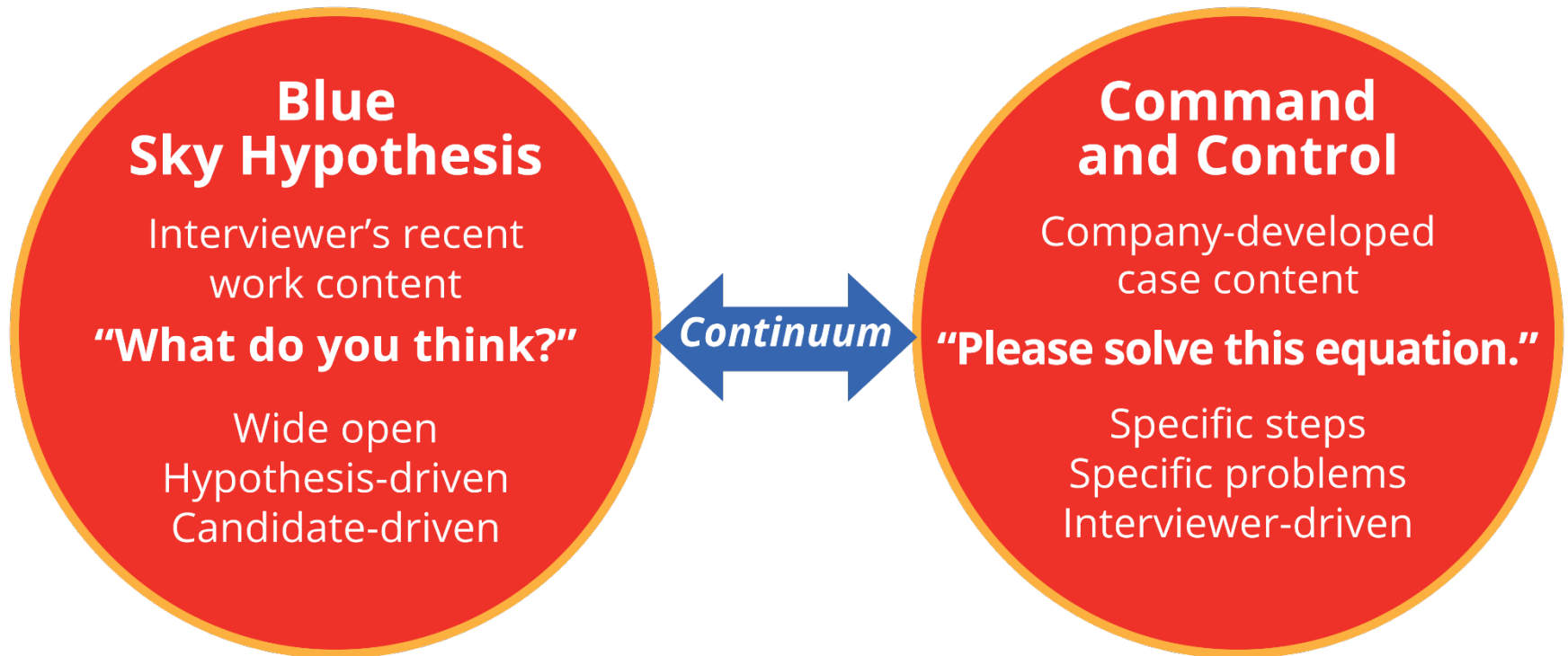
Analysis Only

- You and a computer or paper exam
- Usually a threshold test
- Emphasis on quant skills

Analyze & Present

- You, blank slides, and a case
- Present to 2–3 people
- Have a tight storyline and solid recommendation

Interviewer approach can vary



Interviewer personalities vary



Silent Partner

- Doesn't say much
- Hard to read



Chatty Charlie

- Jumps off topic
- Feels frenetic



Data Director

- Wants facts only
- Pushes for insights

Firm approach varies



Generalist Consulting

Firms that advise a broad set of companies and industries may give you a case on any topic. A firm's recent client work may show up in your case!



Company-Specific

Expect cases that are centered on their specific industry and day-to-day problems. Be sure to read up on their most recent challenges and products.



Industry-Specific

Firms that advise in specific industries will give cases on those topics. Educate yourself on current challenges and trends.

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Think in phases

Typical Case Interview Journey



"I like this! This is my future."

Cases are fun and I'm learning so much!

"Let's dig in. Bring it on."

This analysis is cool. I have so much to learn!

"This is like running into the wind."

This is getting too hard. I'm not getting better.

"I've built long lasting skills!"

I'm glad I pressed on. It was worth it.

What can I do to prepare now?



TIPS

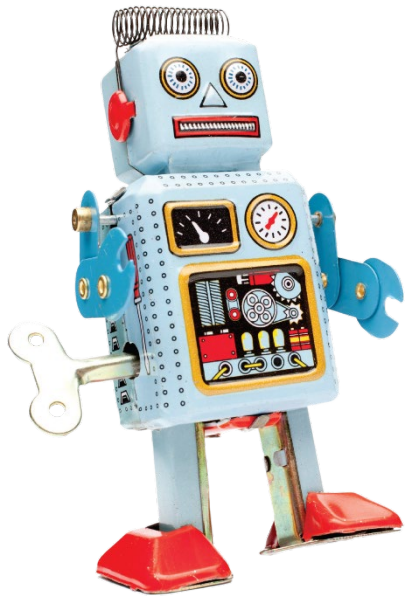
Case Communication

- Keep your answers under 90 seconds
- Get to the point quickly
- Explain your logic
- Anticipate questions
- Give a firm recommendation at the end

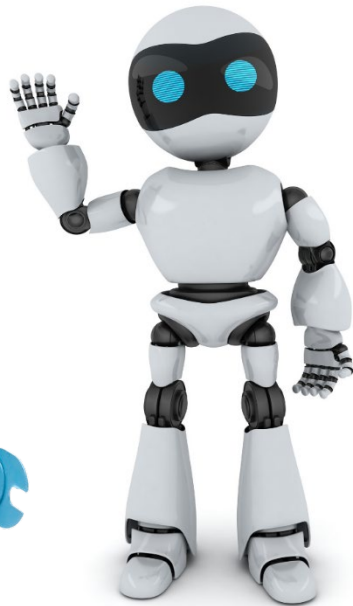
**Get familiar with frameworks, but
don't over-memorize.**

PEST Analysis
4 Ps
Porter's 5 Forces
Ansoff Matrix
GE-McKinsey Nine-Box Matrix
Product Life Cycle
Value Chain Analysis
SWOT Analysis
VMOST
BCG Matrix
3 Cs
Six Sigma
Gap Analysis
VRIO Analysis
Diamond Model
Profit Curve
Experience

Avoid ROBOT MODE! Be Case Specific



Quest Bot



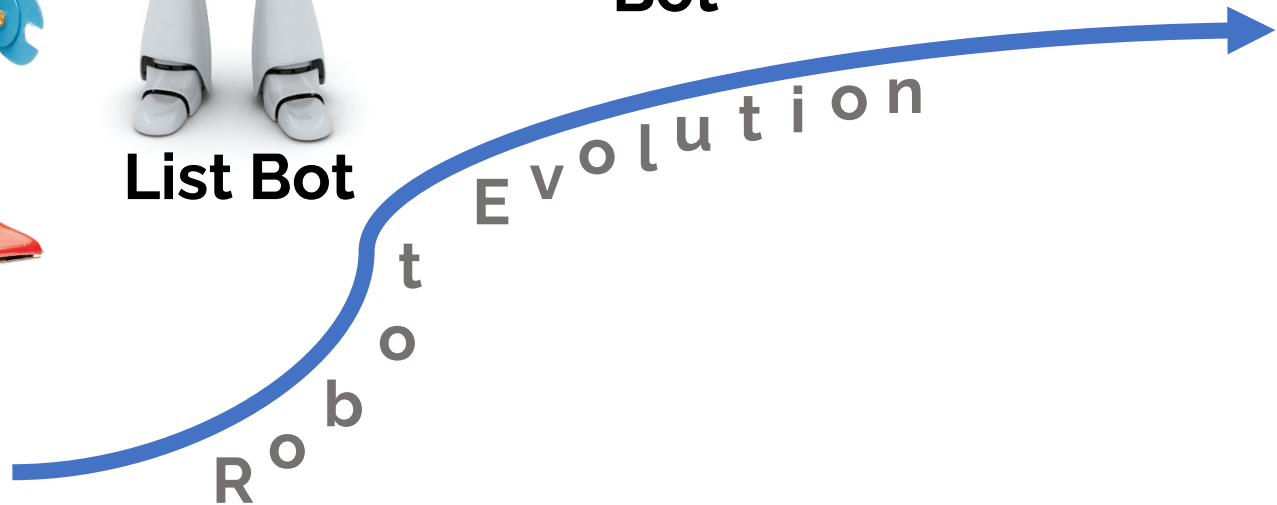
List Bot



Hypothe Bot



**True “AI”
Authentic
Intelligence**



Stay disciplined and balance solo practice with partner practice

Invest the time

Drill, drill, drill

Get the
feedback

- **Muscle** – You build this over time. Cramming is not effective.
- **Weak Spots** – They won't go away on their own.
- **Calibrate** – Find seasoned interviewers to get good insights
- **Reps** – Get volume and variety at first, then focus on quality
- **Consistency** – Stick to a schedule is key - even if the sessions are short
- **Fine tune** – Conflicting advice is normal. Focus on the major and expect different prefs and styles

Join Crack the Case Summer Camp!



Crack the Case Summer Camp 2025



Join expert trainers David Ohrvall & Deborah Resnick for our intensive case interview program this summer!

Dates: June 15 – August 3

Visit zintervu.com/camps or scan the QR.





Camp begins Sunday, June 15

- Be “offer ready” by August.
 - **7 weeks / 7 topics.** Live classes each week. Recordings available.
 - **Bonus:** Interview LOGIC workshop and 1-year subscription included.
-
- Summer Camps typically have 50+ campers from all over the world!
 - World class trainers: David (ex-Bain) and 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.
 - We focus on building consistent skills that lead to offers.

**Join the Waitlist and save \$100
during our pre-sale from May 13-16!**



Download our Quick Start Guide and get today's slides

Zintervū

CASE INTERVIEW *Quick Start Guide*

Here's how to **launch** your prep and **succeed**
in the toughest interviews of your career.





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