

CRACK THE CASE



Crack the Case
TRAIN THE TRAINER

Zintervū



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CRACK
THE CASE

INTERVIEW
LOGIC

World-Class Case Interview Training

Canada

Ivey School (UWO)
Queen's University
McGill University
U of Toronto
U of Calgary

United States

Amherst College
Berkeley Haas
Boston College
Boston University
Bowdoin College
Carnegie Mellon Tepper
Chapman
Chicago Booth
Columbia
Colorado
Cornell
Darden
Dartmouth Tuck
Duke Fuqua
Emory
George Washington
Georgetown
Georgia Tech
U of Georgia
HBS
Iowa
IU Kelley
Johns Hopkins
Kellogg
Maryland
Michigan Ross
Michigan State

MIT
Minnesota
Notre Dame
NYU Stern
Ohio State
Olin WUSTL
Owen Vanderbilt
Pepperdine
Rice
Smith
Stanford
SMU
Temple
UT McCombs
Texas A&M
USC Marshall
UCLA Anderson
UC Davis
UC Irvine
UNC Kenan-Flagler

U of Florida
U of Washington
Wharton
William & Mary
Wisconsin
Yale

Europe

IE Madrid
INSEAD
Oxford Said
Cambridge Judge
Bayes, Imperial,
Trinity Dublin,
ESADE, SDA Bocconi
HEC

Middle East

INSEAD Abu Dhabi
American University Cairo

Asia - Pacific Rim

INSEAD Singapore
National University
Singapore
Hong Kong UST
CEIBS Shanghai



Training Agenda

Review Core Skills

- ▶ **45 minutes**
- ▶ CSAI
- ▶ What to test & how
- ▶ HIQ video review

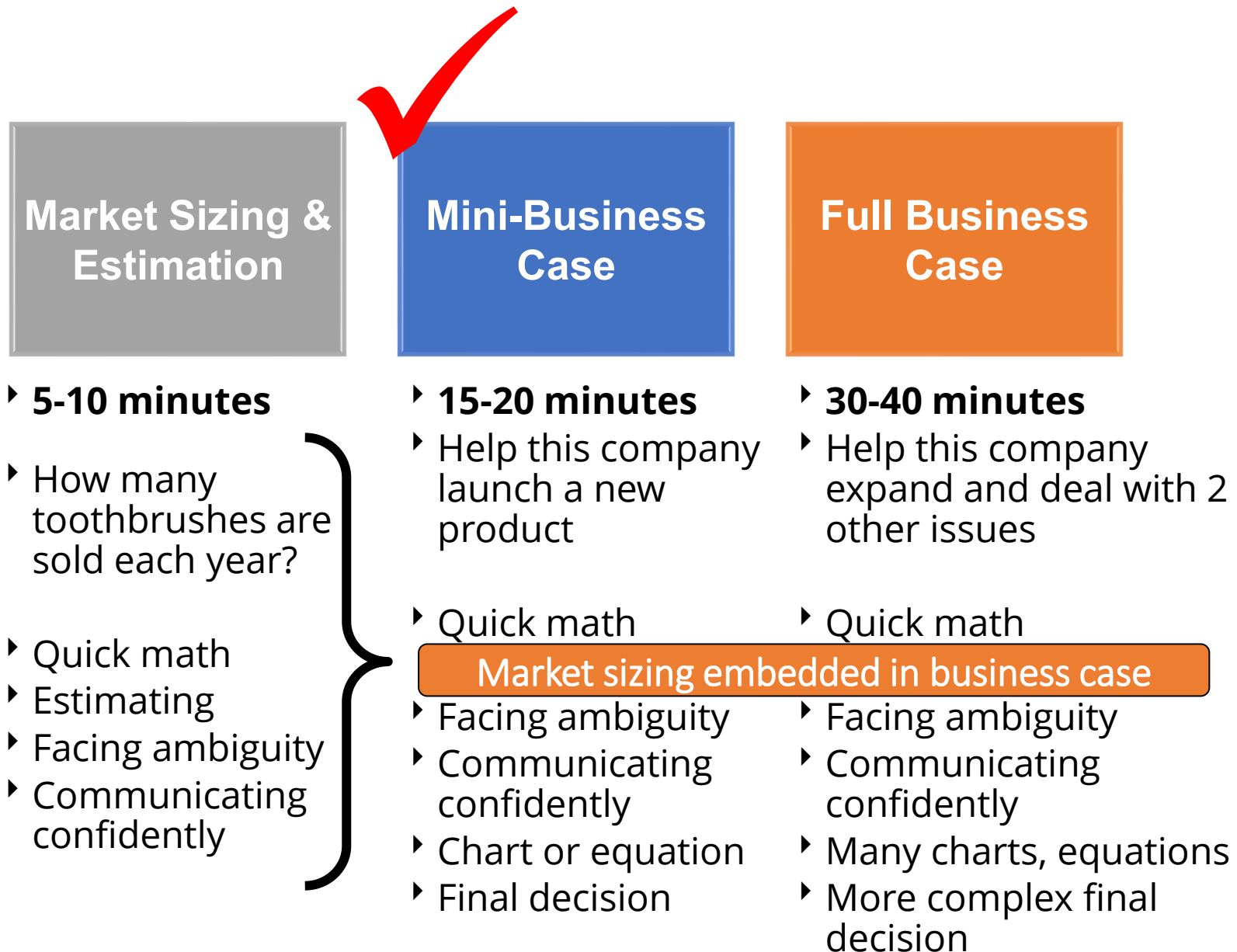
Practice Giving Cases

- ▶ **5 minutes**
- ▶ Use SMART cases
- ▶ Plan to practice

Answer Your Questions

- ▶ **10 minutes**
- ▶ Let's build momentum and skills

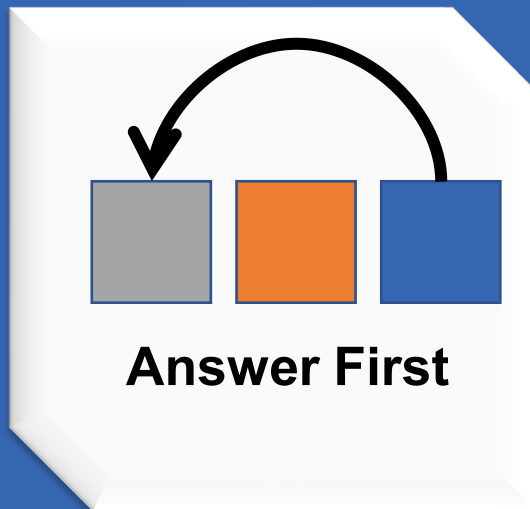
You'll be giving mini cases



Cases test four key skills

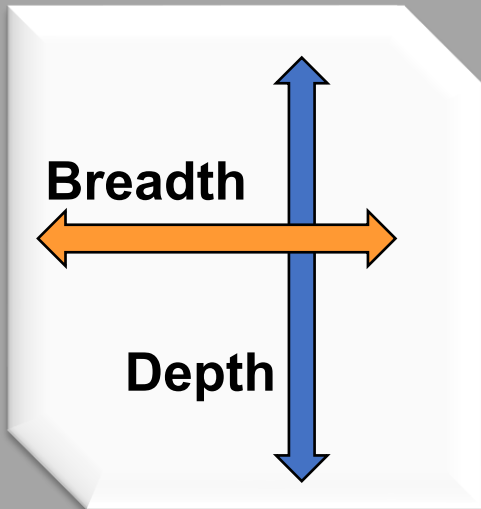


Be Answer First!



- **Bring the main point to the front**
- **Use data to engage your interviewer**
- **Apply Answer First to speed up your case communication**

Structure your thoughts with breadth and depth



- **Expect your interviewer to test your breadth, "What else, what else?"**
- **Practice showing your depth of thinking with Block, Break & Ask**

Bicycle Shop

Our client wants to open a bike shop on campus.

Competitors

Direct
(e.g., bike shops)

Alternatives
(Walmart, used)

Financial Goals

ROI
(\$, time to profit)

Profit by product
(equip vs. bikes)

Distribution

Major Brands
(Trek)

Independents
(custom bikes)

Equipment

Store Operations

Store location

Store hours
(normal, special)

Employees



What makes our product unique and will that advantage last?

What's our ROI goal and how does it compare to competitors?

Which suppliers must we work with to be competitive?

Should we consider a traditional store format or a pop-up?

Follow the Flow for Your Coaching



Qualitative

Tip 1 A good case will test both qualitative and quantitative skills. Ask questions that push the candidate in both areas. If you are more comfortable with qualitative questions, try adding an equation or calculation after you get to know the case. Remember, you don't have to do the math. You already have the answer key!



Quantitative

1
Warm-up
Warmth & Client Ready

Tip 2 Look for strong communication skills. Could this candidate present to a wide variety of audiences? Ask a tough question or two about their experience. Does the candidate get to the point or ramble? Answering questions directly is highly correlated to moving through cases quickly.

2
Start
Logic & Breadth

Tip 3 Now it's time to test for strong structuring skills. Present the case succinctly and listen for a concise recap of the situation and key question. Typically, the candidate will take a minute and put together a plan to solve the case. As the candidate presents their plan, listen for a logical approach (e.g.: 1st block, 2nd block, 3rd block). Ask specific questions about omissions or anything unclear. Don't rush through this step. It is critical to a successful case.

3
Data Dump
Chart/Table Equations Estimate Solve for X
Depth & Numbers

Tip 4 Did the candidate "jump in" the data pool or did you have to push? As you transition from the qualitative to the quantitative, were they ready to look at data, discuss numbers and do computations? Each case should have a quantitative element, e.g.: a calculation or a simple handout. Gauge their comfort with numbers and degree of accuracy. Prepare a handout that shows the suggested answers and calculations. Give it to the candidate at the end of your practice session.

4
Insight

Tip 5 Before leaving the data pool, the candidate needs to share some insights related to the numbers. For example, they may identify the main point of a slide, calculate a break-even or find the gross profit percentage. The candidate should explain how the data proves or disproves something about the case. More complex cases may have multiple insights, but you should plan to have at least one. If they have trouble finding a relevant insight, prompt with an open-ended question like, "What does the data say to you?"

5
So what?
Integration & Creativity

Tip 6 To solve the case the candidate needs to integrate his insights from the data pool in Steps 3 & 4 with their structure from Step 2. Good candidates will comment on what the analysis has revealed thus far. Has their original structure covered all the relevant elements of the case? If not, are there new areas to explore? At this point, if the candidate cannot connect their analysis back to the original case question, prompt them with "What are the implications of these findings?" or "What other areas would you like to explore?"

6
End
Recommendation with Data

Tip 7 A candidate ends a case well by bringing together their initial plan with an analysis of the facts and delivering a succinct recommendation. Listen for a good understanding of each element of the case, and an ability to prioritize a solution (e.g.: short and long term). Their final answer should be based on data revealed during the case and not on the candidate's personal everyday experience. At the very end, test for creativity by asking, "If you had more time, what else would you do?"

Look for Qualitative & Quantitative skills



Qualitative



Quantitative

- You must have both elements to fully test the candidate
- Don't stress about the math. You have an answer key!

Tip 1

A good case will test both qualitative and quantitative skills. Ask questions that push the candidate in both areas. If you are more comfortable with qualitative questions, try adding an equation or calculation after you get to know the case. Remember, you don't have to do the math. You already have the answer key!

Step 1: Warm-up by testing client readiness



Tip 2

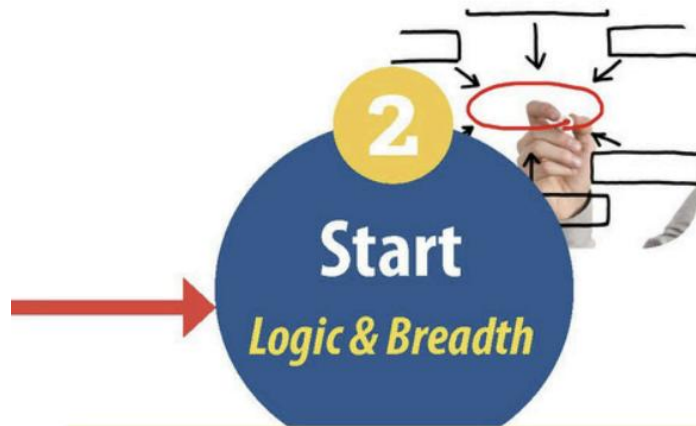
Look for strong communication skills. Could this candidate present to a wide variety of audiences? Ask a tough question or two about their experience. Does the candidate get to the point or ramble? Answering questions directly is highly correlated to moving through cases quickly.

- **First and foremost, are they engaged?**
- **Look for Answer First communication. Can they get to the point?**
- **Be sure to include a little behavioral test whenever possible.**
- **Client ready applies to internal and external clients**

1. Warm-up



Step 2-A: Present clearly and expect a structured start



Tip 3

Now it's time to test for strong structuring skills. Present the case succinctly and listen for a concise recap of the situation and key question. Typically, the candidate will take a minute and put together a plan to solve the case. As the candidate presents their plan, listen for a logical approach (e.g.: 1st block, 2nd block, 3rd block). Ask specific questions about omissions or anything unclear. Don't rush through this step. It is critical to a successful case.

- This is the most important step in the case
- Turn on your logic ears:
 - "two parts"
 - "my priority"
 - "first, second, third"
- Remember breadth, depth and case specific thinking

2. hIQ Concept



2. hIQ Question



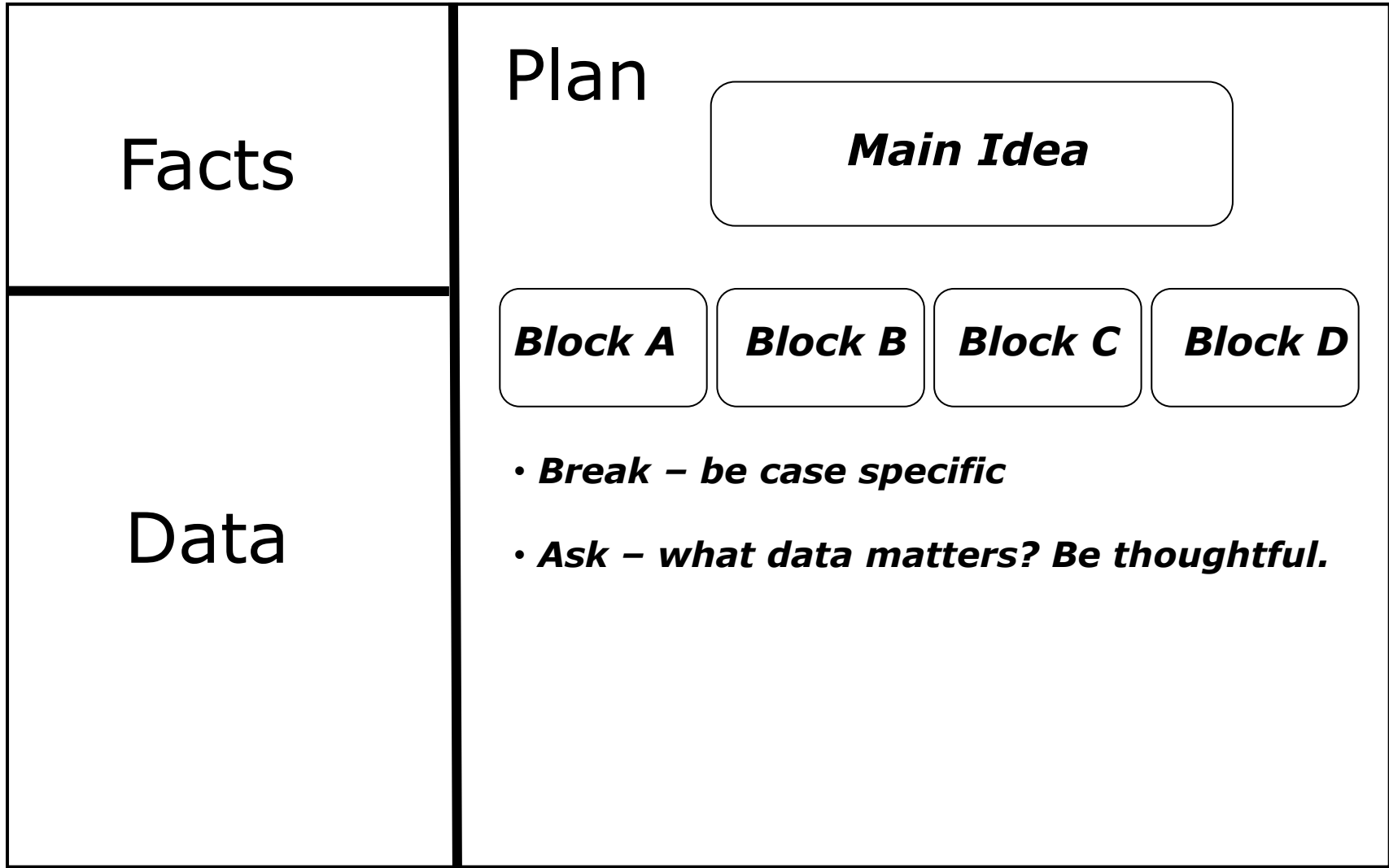
2. Recap: Situation, Complication & Task



2. Clarify, Ask for Minute, Plan



The candidate should have a plan that lays out their thinking



Presenting the Plan (Option A)

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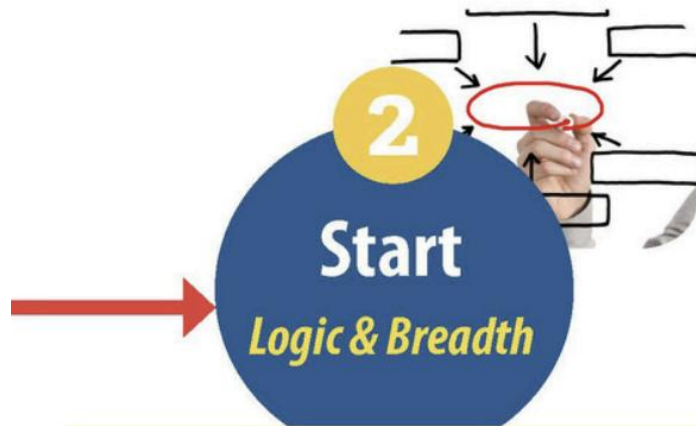


Presenting the Plan (Option B)

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Step 2-B: Actively test their plan



Tip 3

Now it's time to test for strong structuring skills. Present the case succinctly and listen for a concise recap of the situation and key question. Typically, the candidate will take a minute and put together a plan to solve the case. As the candidate presents their plan, listen for a logical approach (e.g.: 1st block, 2nd block, 3rd block). Ask specific questions about omissions or anything unclear. Don't rush through this step. It is critical to a successful case.

- **Plan** – push on breadth and depth to see the entirety of their thinking
- **Words** – are they saying anything that is unclear?
- **Data** – what data do they need to analyze to move forward?

2. What about your PLAN?



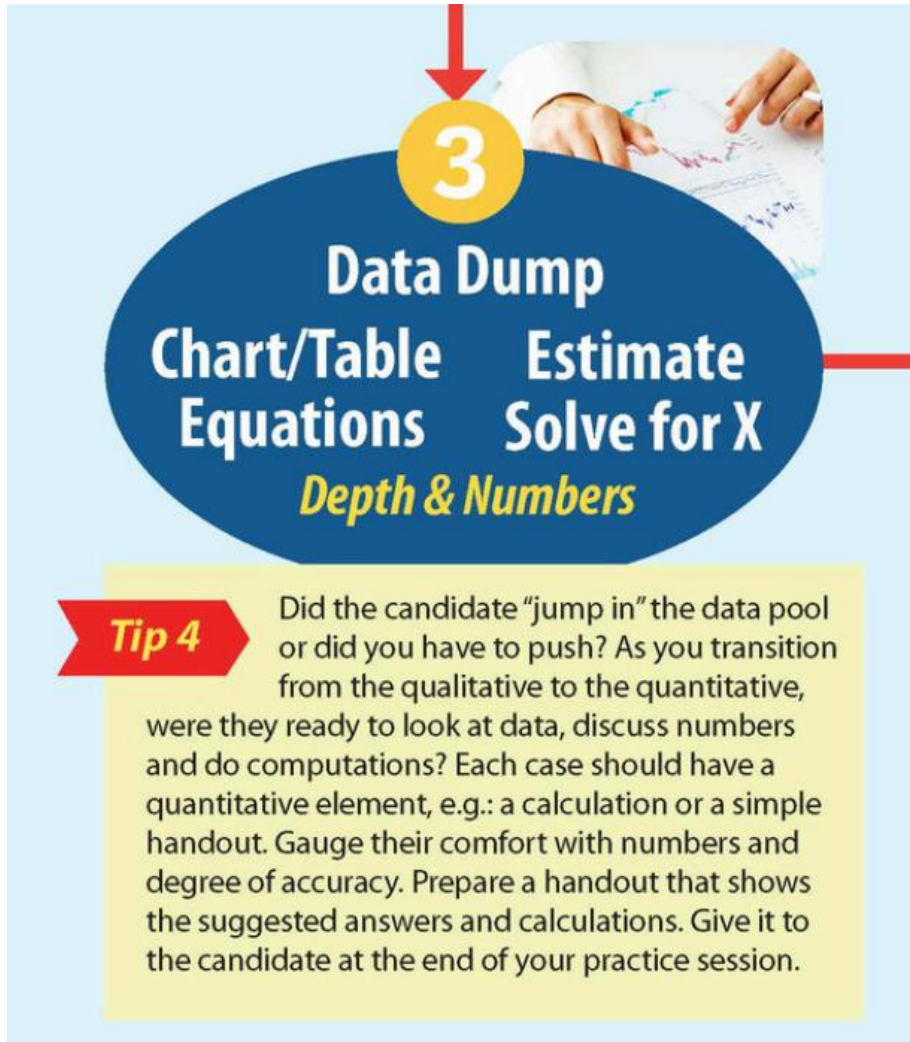
2. What did your **WORDS** mean? **Zintervū**



2. What about your DATA?



Step 3: Pressure test their data skills with specific analysis



3

Data Dump

Chart/Table Equations **Estimate Solve for X**

Depth & Numbers

Tip 4 Did the candidate “jump in” the data pool or did you have to push? As you transition from the qualitative to the quantitative, were they ready to look at data, discuss numbers and do computations? Each case should have a quantitative element, e.g.: a calculation or a simple handout. Gauge their comfort with numbers and degree of accuracy. Prepare a handout that shows the suggested answers and calculations. Give it to the candidate at the end of your practice session.

- What was the attitude towards the data?
- You need some kind of data test
- Have a planned beginning and end
- Don't go down the slippery slide of math instruction

3. Test for obvious insights



Handout A



hiQ
Handout A

Consumer Tea Trends by Country

Country	Tea Popularity	Green Tea Popularity	Enhanced Drinks	Healthy Eating Trend	Specialty Food Shops
Australia					
India					
Canada					
France					
Germany					
Italy					
Japan					
China					
Mexico					

3. Expect to also see deeper thinking

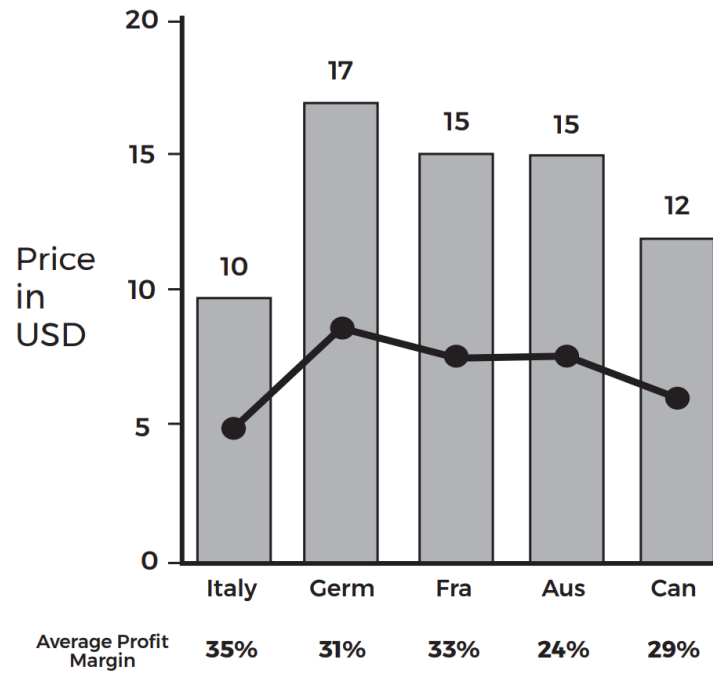


Handout B



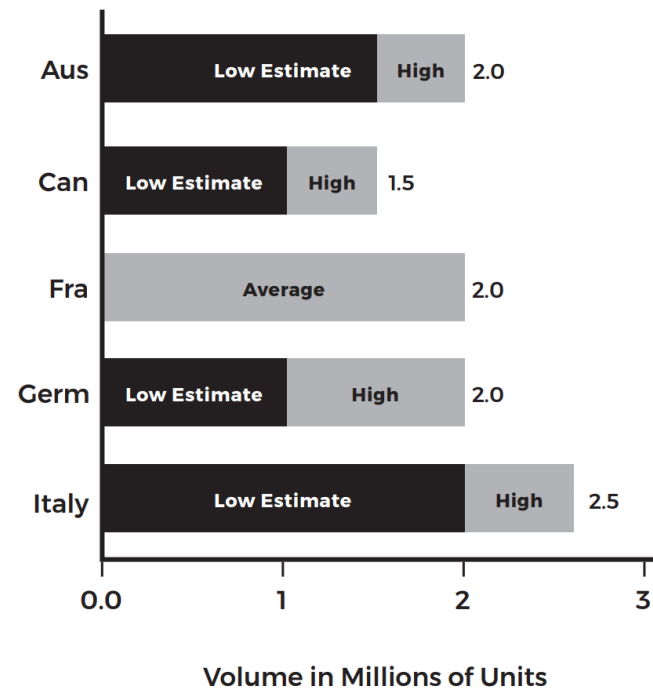
hIQ Handout B

Retail and Wholesale Pricing for hIQ

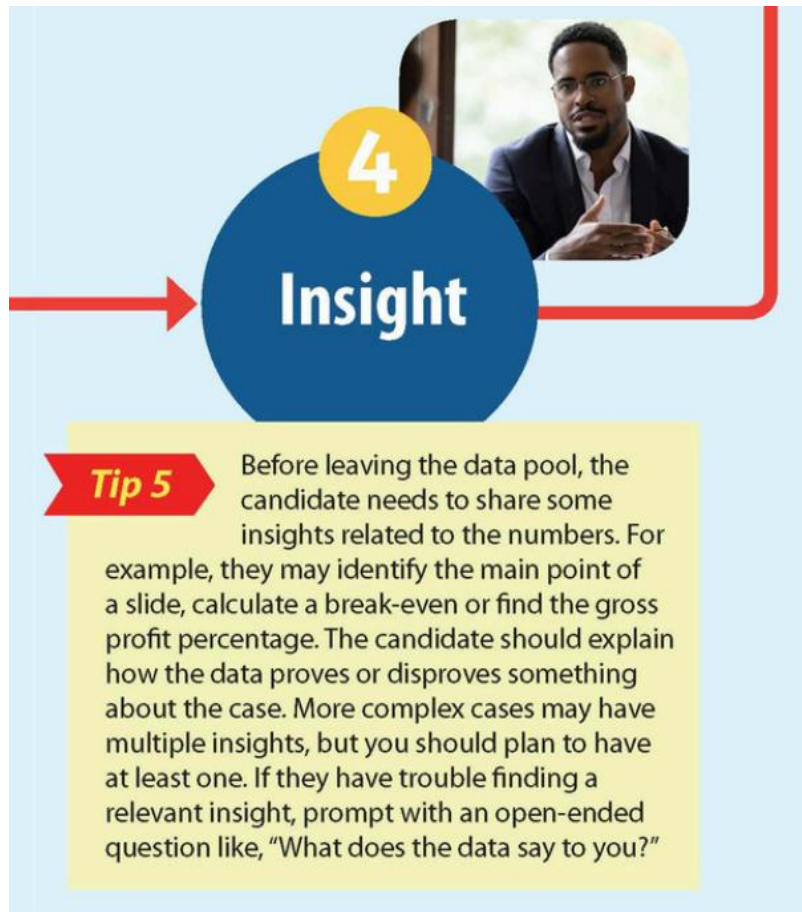


Retail Price
 Wholesale Price

Estimated Year One Volume Ranges



Step 4: Look for their ability to find insights



4
Insight

Tip 5 Before leaving the data pool, the candidate needs to share some insights related to the numbers. For example, they may identify the main point of a slide, calculate a break-even or find the gross profit percentage. The candidate should explain how the data proves or disproves something about the case. More complex cases may have multiple insights, but you should plan to have at least one. If they have trouble finding a relevant insight, prompt with an open-ended question like, "What does the data say to you?"

- Make sure there are several insights in the solution
- Having depth to your answer key will make it easy to evaluate candidates
- “What jumps out to you?” is a simple way to see who is on point
- Asking, “Do you see any connections to what we’ve discussed is another option.”

Step 5: So what? Integration & Creativity



Tip 6


To solve the case the candidate needs to integrate his insights from the data pool in Steps 3 & 4 with their structure from Step 2. Good candidates will comment on what the analysis has revealed thus far. Has their original structure covered all the relevant elements of the case? If not, are there new areas to explore? At this point, if the candidate cannot connect their analysis back to the original case question, prompt them with “What are the implications of these findings?” or “What other areas would you like to explore?”

- **Where does the candidate connect the dots?**
- **Implications should have some impact on business drivers (e.g. cost increases)**

4-5. Can they make the connections?



Step 6: End with Data



6
End
*Recommendation
with Data*

Tip 7 A candidate ends a case well by bringing together their initial plan with an analysis of the facts and delivering a succinct recommendation. Listen for a good understanding of each element of the case, and an ability to prioritize a solution (e.g.: short and long term). Their final answer should be based on data revealed during the case and not on the candidate's personal everyday experience. At the very end, test for creativity by asking, "If you had more time, what else would you do?"

- **Candidates who tie in all the data elements consistently do better**
- **Listen for Answer First prioritization**
- **They need to leverage the facts and not their experience**

6. Integrate and Wrap-up



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Answer Your Questions

- ▶ **10 minutes**
- ▶ Let's build momentum and skills

Cases test four key skills



Use clearly laid-out cases

Say specific things

Manage the discussion

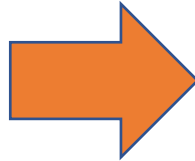
Ask specific questions

Role play to build skills

Track the issues

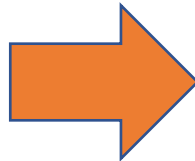
Use the case that works best

HonesTees



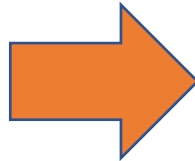
- Organic t-shirt company
- Believes in a "pure" value chain
- Great for testing logic buckets
- Focus on costs and break-even

Casual Cafe



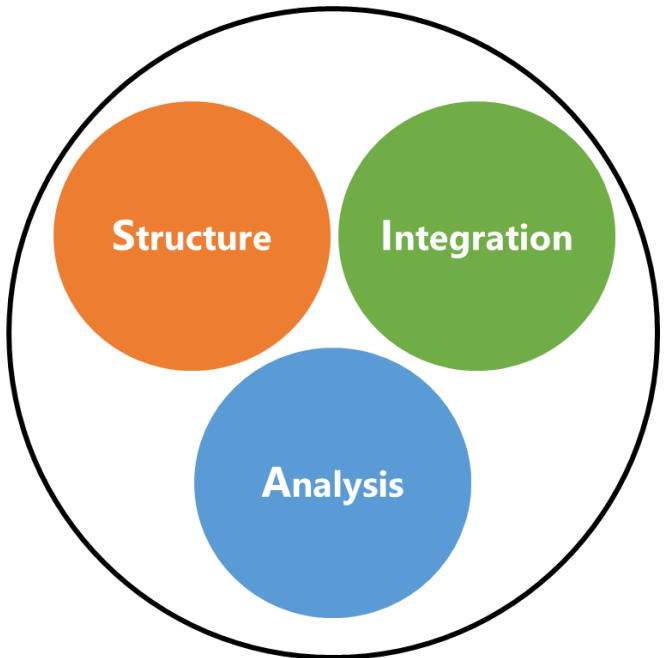
- Local college cafe
- Business is hitting profit issues
- Candidate needs to sort thru data
- Qualitative handout leads to insights

Junkyard Arcade & Bowling



- Popular place for fun and quick food
- Want to invest in 1 of 3 areas
- Forces candidate to compare options
- Return on Investment (ROI) test

Scoring will give you specific feedback



COMMUNICATION

	1 OFF-POINT	3 AVERAGE	5 GREAT
Communication			
1. You used an answer first style.	Answer last and hard to follow	Mix of answer first and answer last	On-point and engaging
2. You carried the discussion well and drove the case.	Needed frequent prompting to move forward	Occasionally awkward, but moved ahead	Fluid, lively and momentum toward solution
3. You used your notes effectively.	Notes were messy and scattered, did not refer to them	Fairly neat, disorganized, seldom used them	Neat and organized, referred to them frequently
Structure & Logic			
4. You had a logical and clear plan to solve this case.	Lacked a structure, direction unclear	Structure incomplete, skipped key areas	Clear plan, covered all key issues
5. Your plan was MECE. (Mutually exclusive, collectively exhaustive)	Several overlaps and full of gaps	Some overlap, 1-2 key gaps	Good breadth, no overlaps, no gaps
6. You referred back to your plan and updated when appropriate.	You basically forgot about it	Referred to early in case but not at close	Referred to often, updated as needed
Analytics			
7. You analyzed the data accurately and drilled down for additional data when needed.	Frequent math errors, vague questions, nervous	Some math mistakes, good questions, some confidence	Accurate math, excellent on-point questions, confident
8. You integrated the data and found key insights. Saw the big picture.	You missed all the linkages between the data	You found some insights and connections	"Connected the dots" and found key insights
Integration & Close			
9. Your final recommendation integrated the data with the case question and your initial structure.	Solution lacked data support, gave answers "from the gut"	Used some data, little connection between analysis and plan	Integrated all facts and data, offered relevant next steps
10. You were a persuasive, engaging business advisor.	Unconvincing, lacked confidence, robotic	Professional, somewhat engaging, lacked solid recommendations	Persuasive, professional, engaging, bottom-line oriented
Total Score: (10-50)		Notes:	

* Tip: Save your scorecards and track your progress over time.

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