

**CRACK**  
THE CASE

# FACING YOUR CASE

Introduction to  
Case Interviews

Led by David Ohrvall  
Zintervu CEO



**CRACK**  
THE CASE  
TRAINING



# David Ohrvall

CEO, Zintervu

Author of Crack the Case & Interview LOGIC



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# Zintervū

**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 University  
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



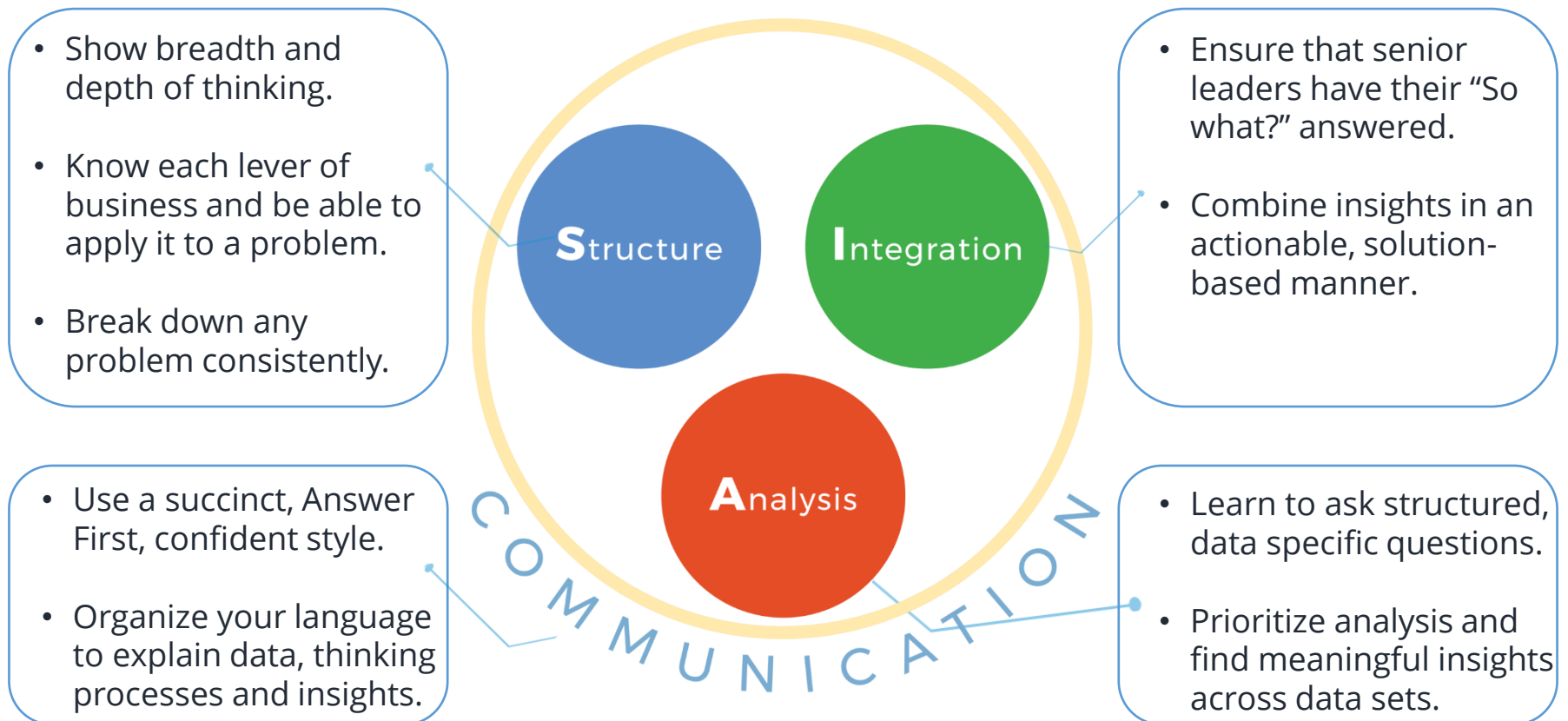
# Today's Agenda

- Why do companies use cases?
- What's a case interview?
- What type of cases will I face?
- How do I prepare?
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- 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**

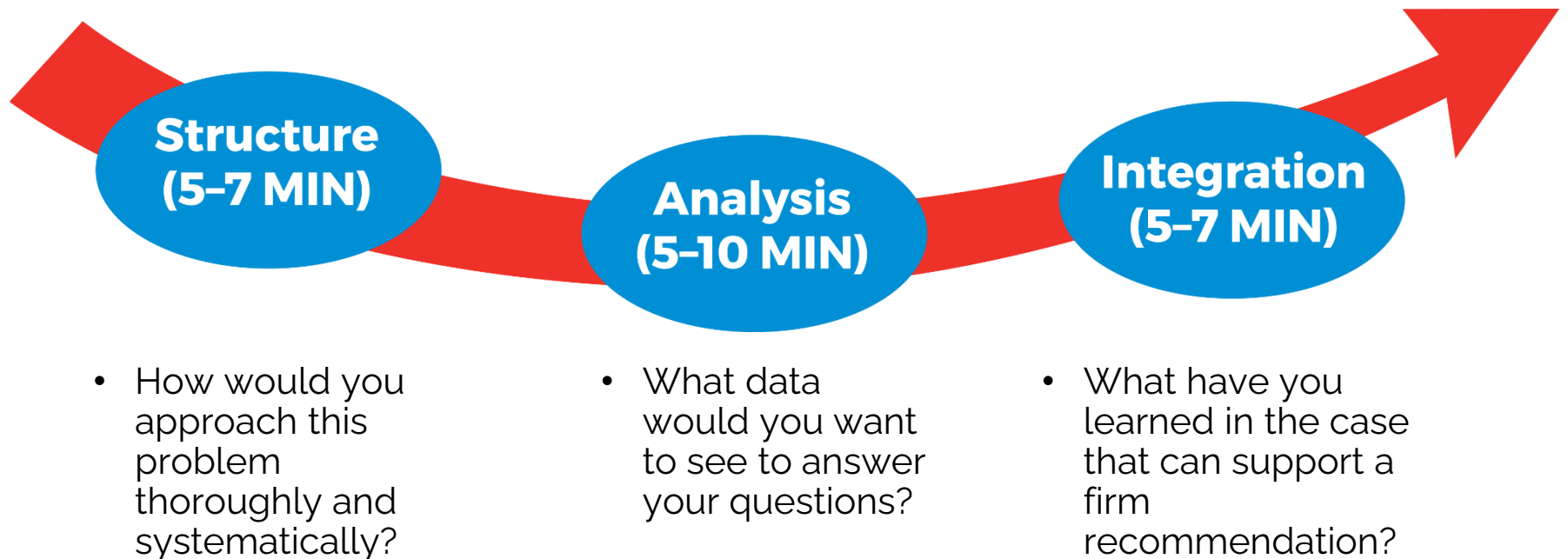


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# What's a case interview?

**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.”

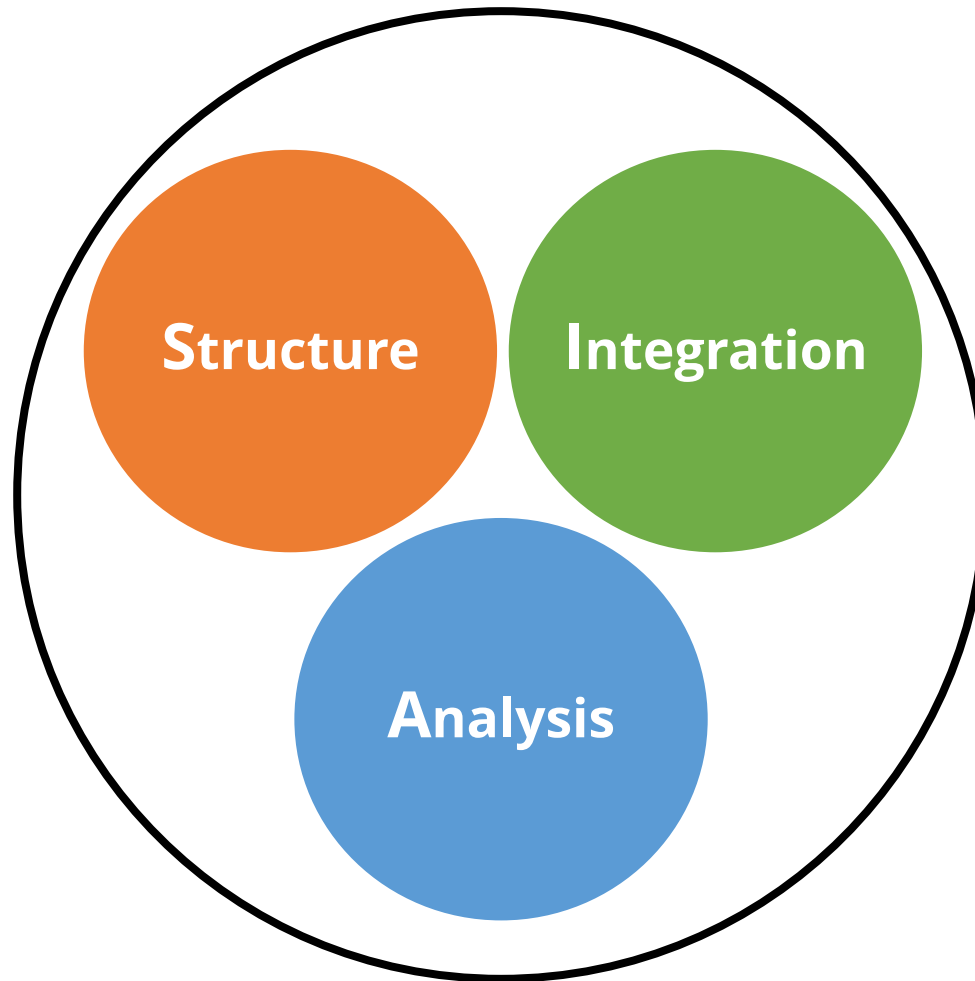
“A global beer company is looking at **acquiring** several smaller craft beer companies. **Should they do it?**”

“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

**I**ndividual Contribution

**M**anage or Lead

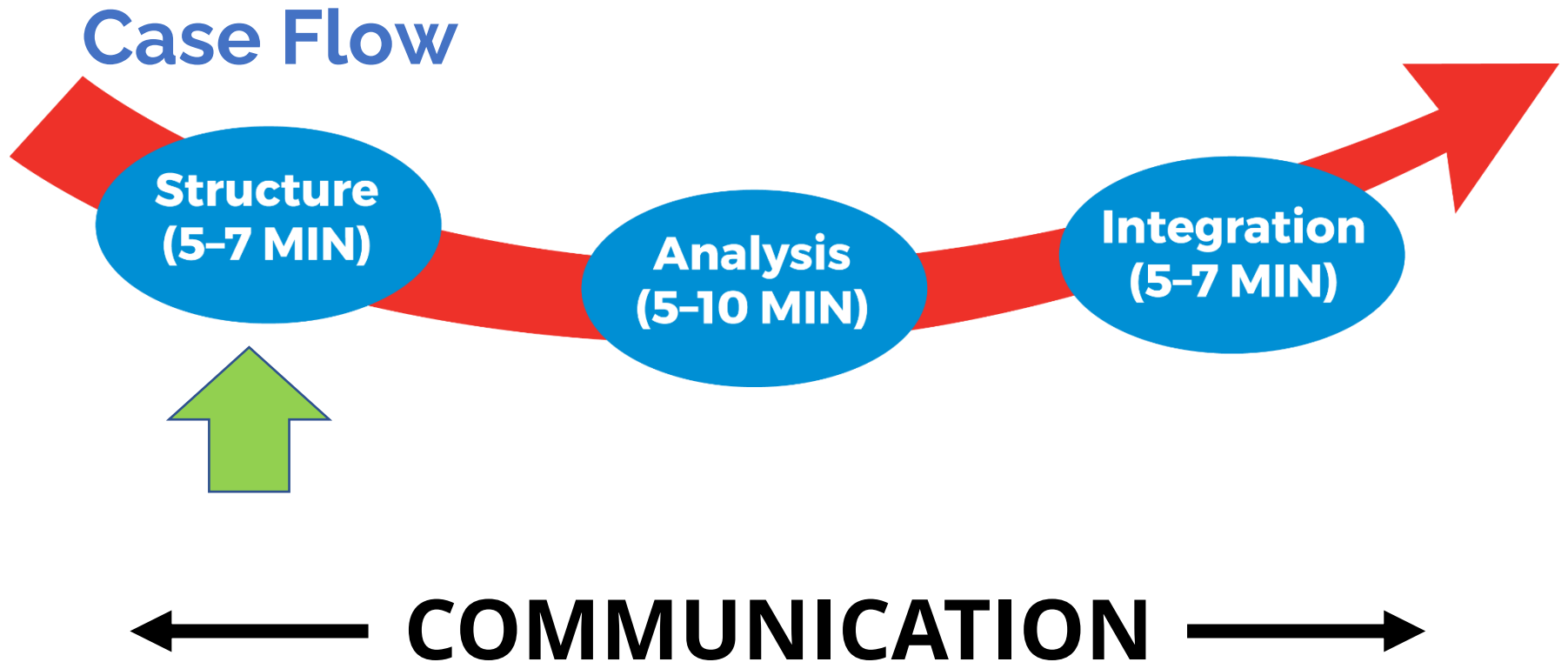
**P**ersuasion

**A**nalytics

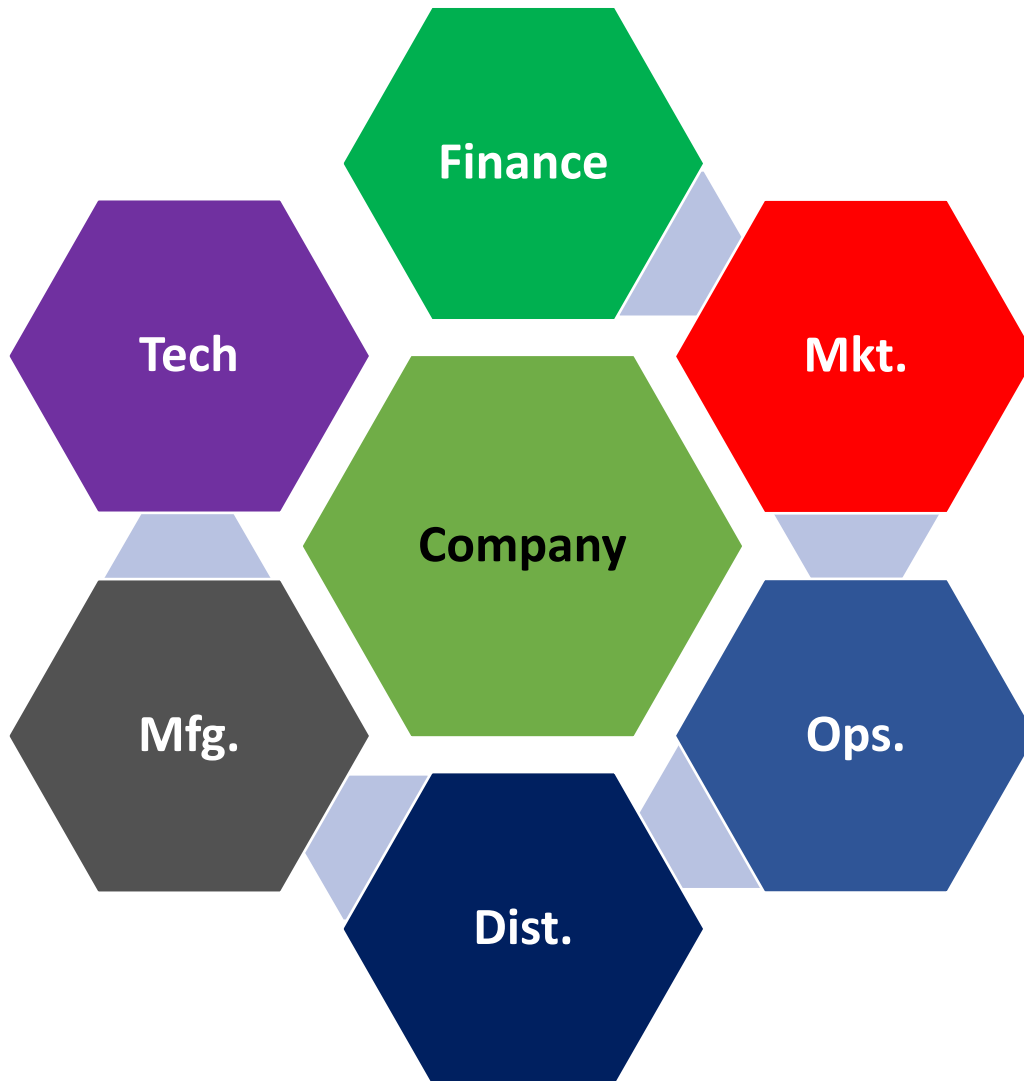
**C**hallenge or Failure

**T**eamwork

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



## 2. Structure – Consider all the angles



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

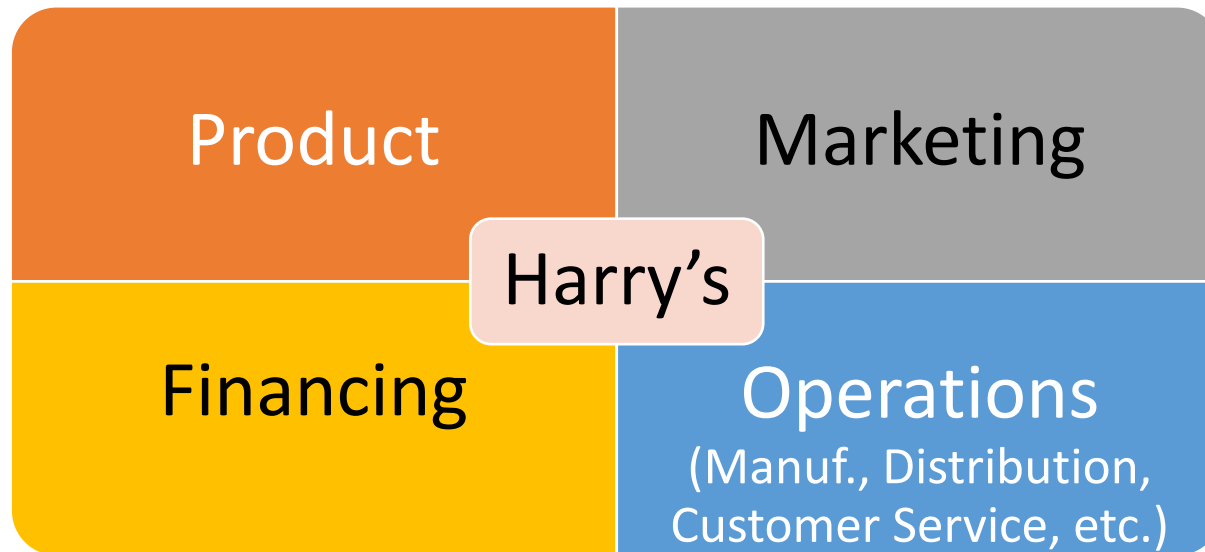
**Top candidates curate  
& prioritize in real time**

# 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?

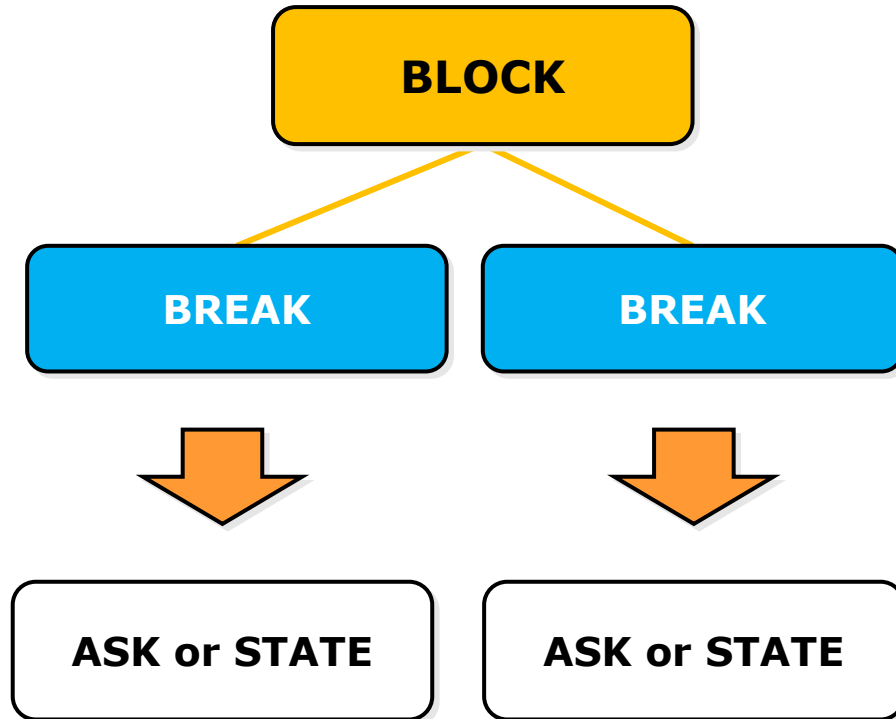
- **Mtg channel:** Social media for a Gen X/Z target
- **Messaging:** “You’re paying too much!”, socially conscious
- **Pricing:** Trial offer. Subscription discount



- **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

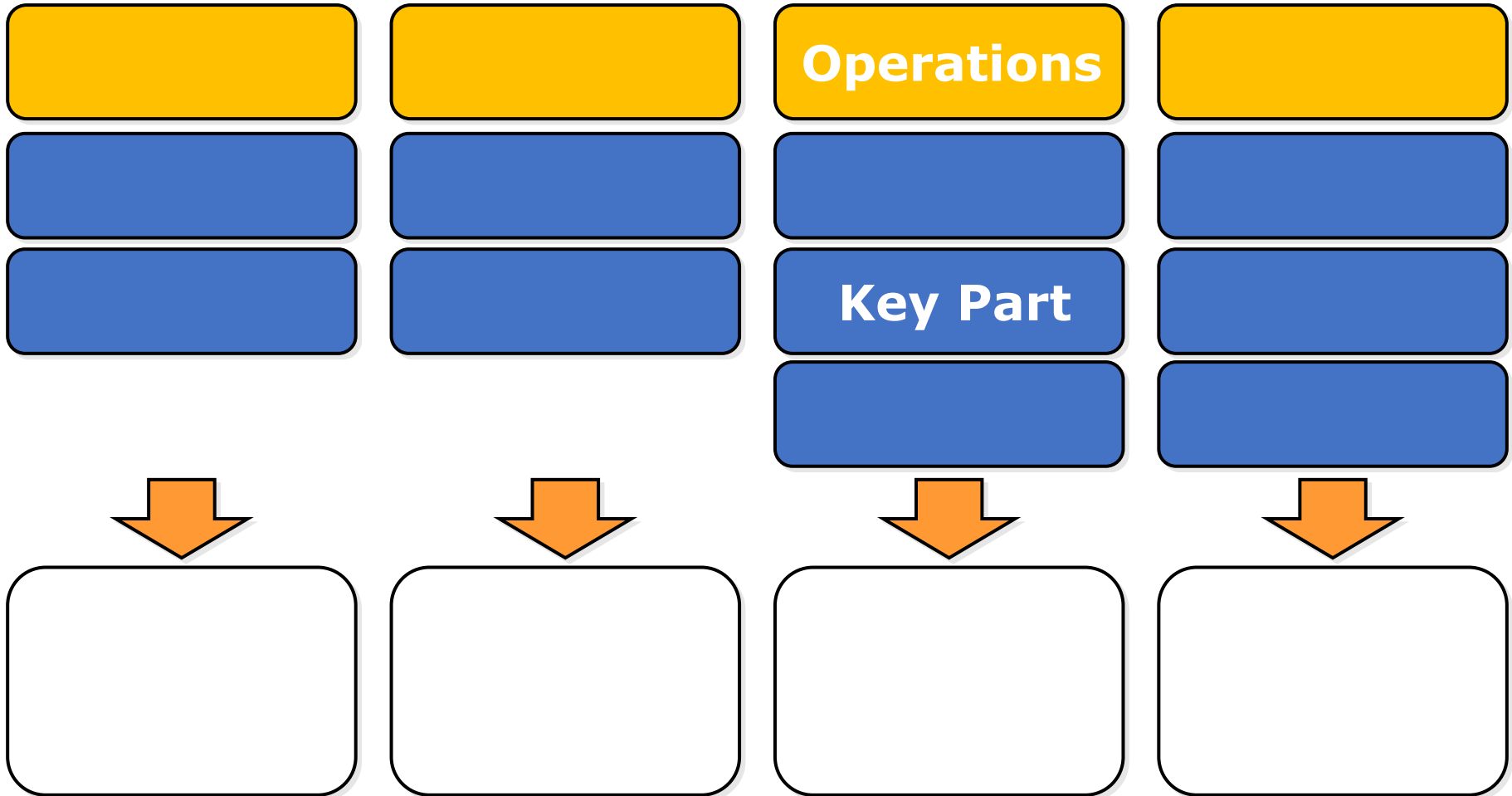


**Separate categories**

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

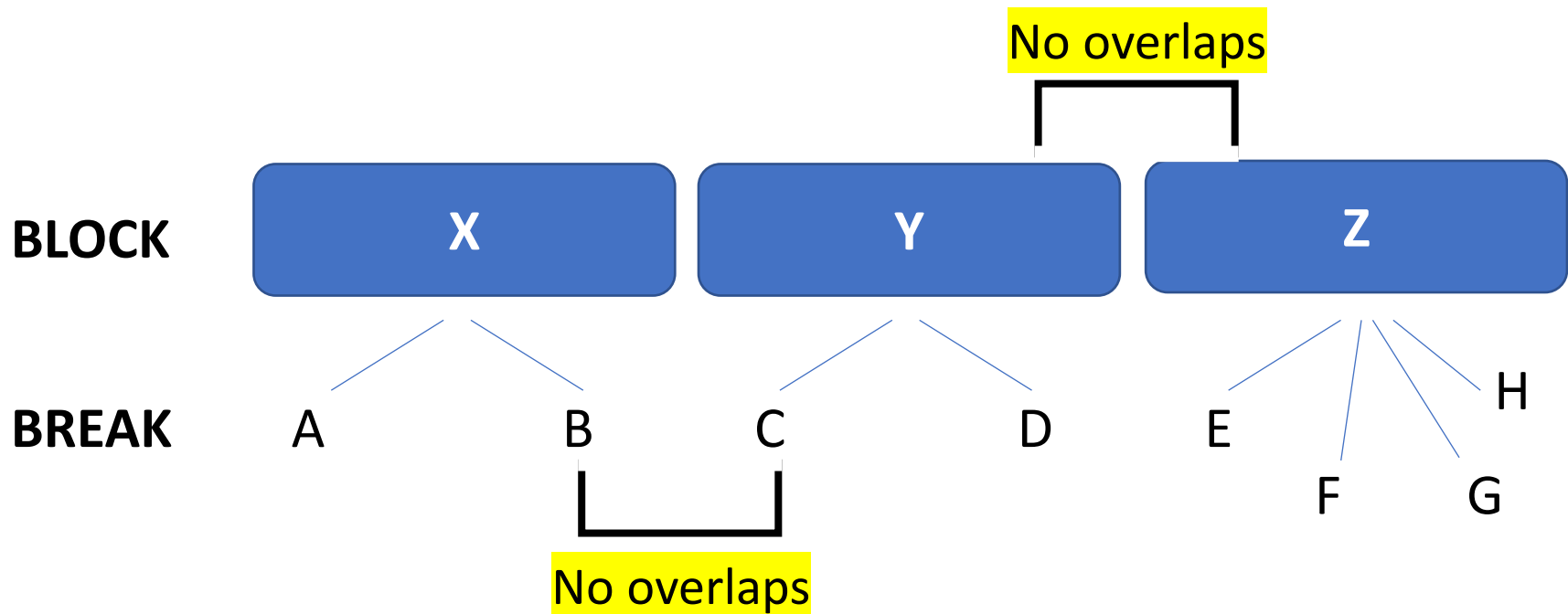
**Mention the specific \$, # and % that you need. Be ready to transition to the analysis portion of the case.**

## 2. Structure – Use a hypothesis



## 2. Structure – Be MECE when possible

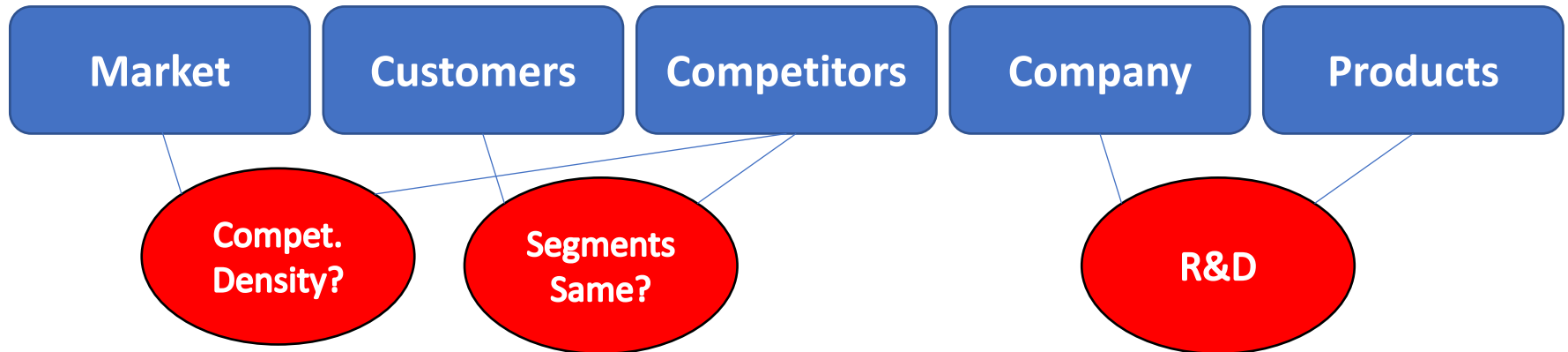
Mutually Exclusive, Collectively Exhaustive



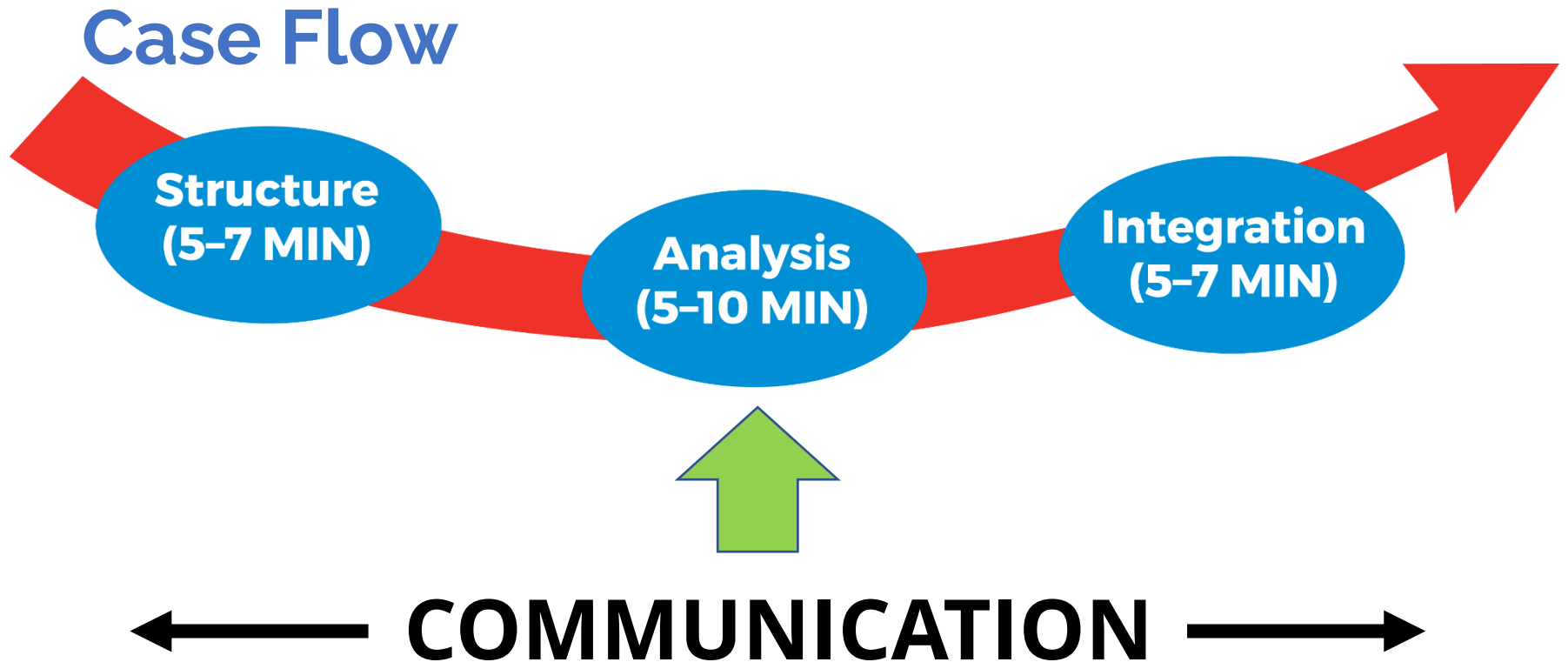
ASK      \$, # and %

## 2. Structure – It takes practice to avoid overlaps

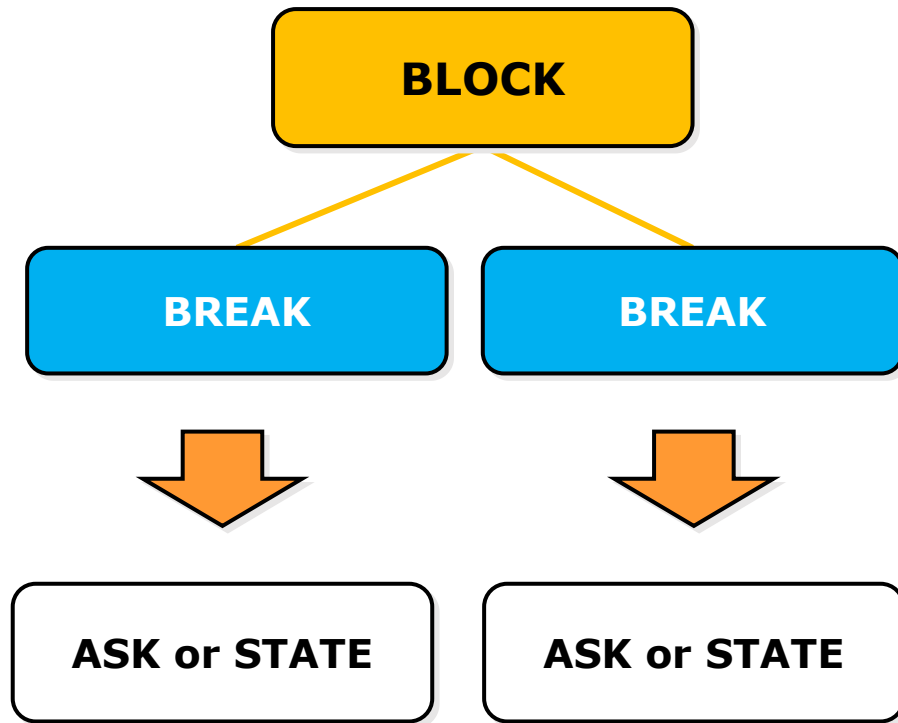
Let's enter a new market. I want to find the most attractive market.



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



### 3. Analysis – It begins with data anticipation

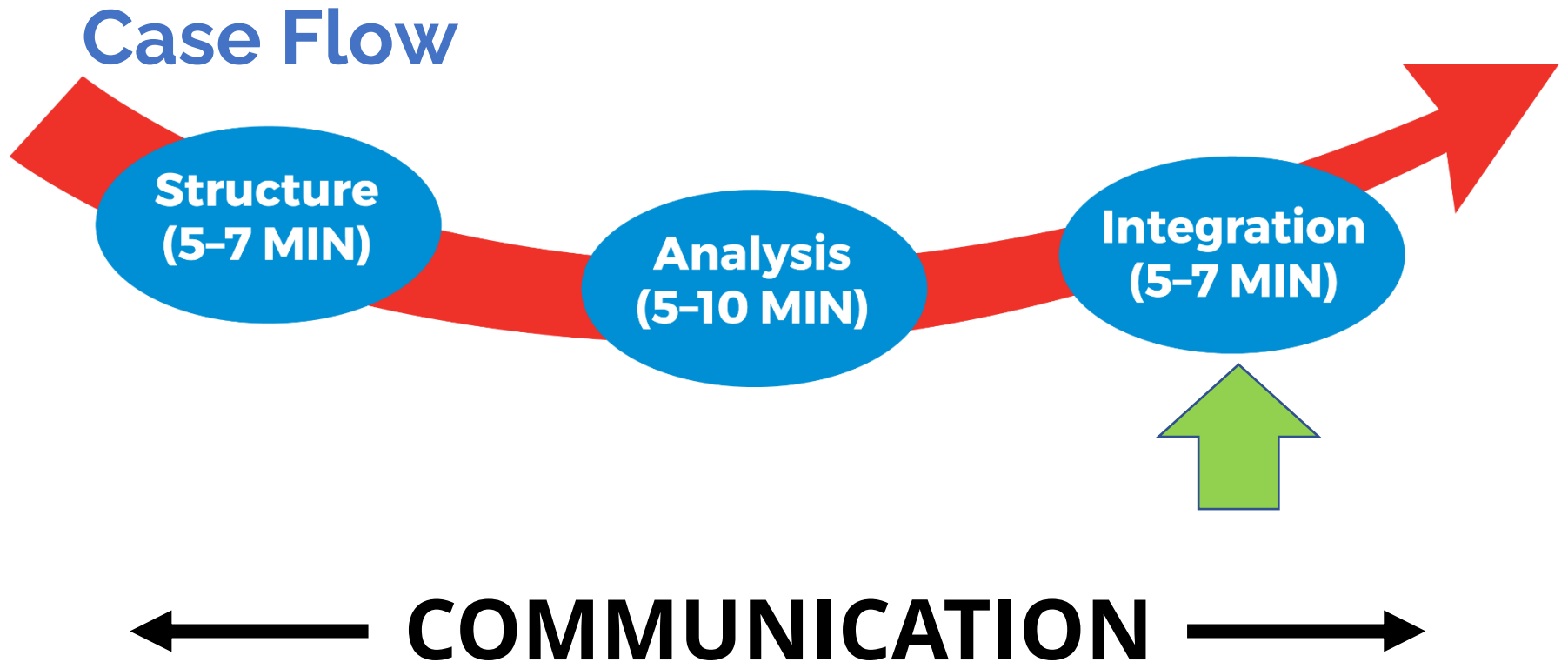


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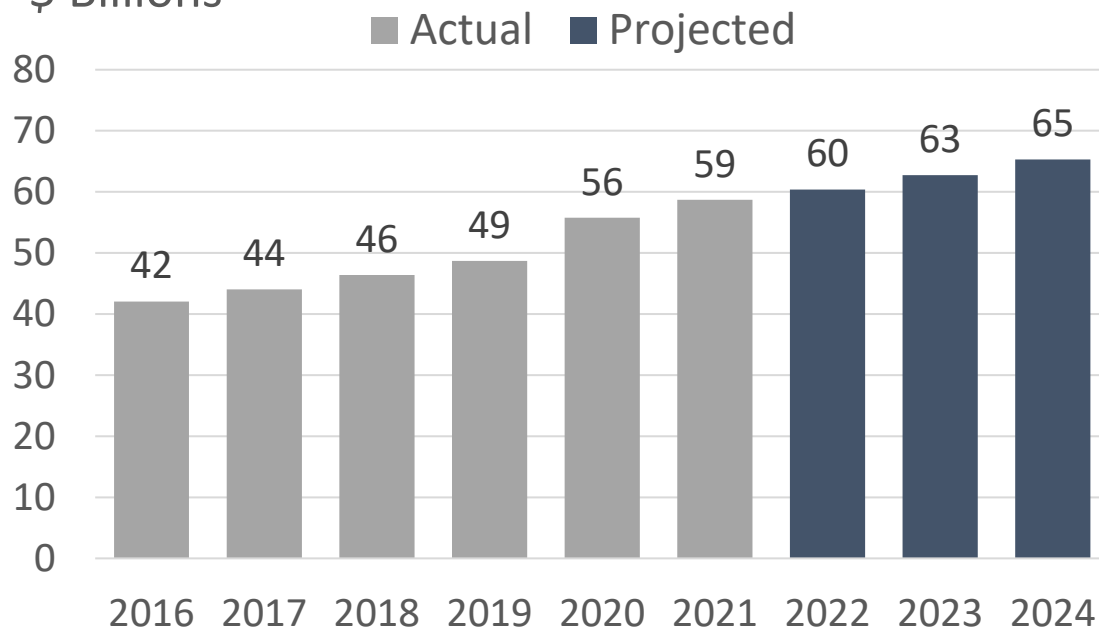
# 4. Integration – Focus on insights

## Nutritional Supplement Market Trends

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

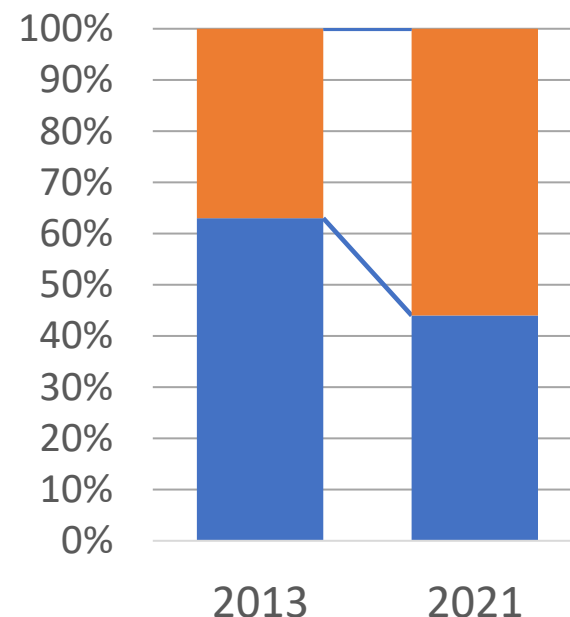
### US Nutritional Supplement Sales

\$ Billions



### Sales by form\*

% of total sales



\* Pills includes: tablets, capsules, softgels and VegiCaps

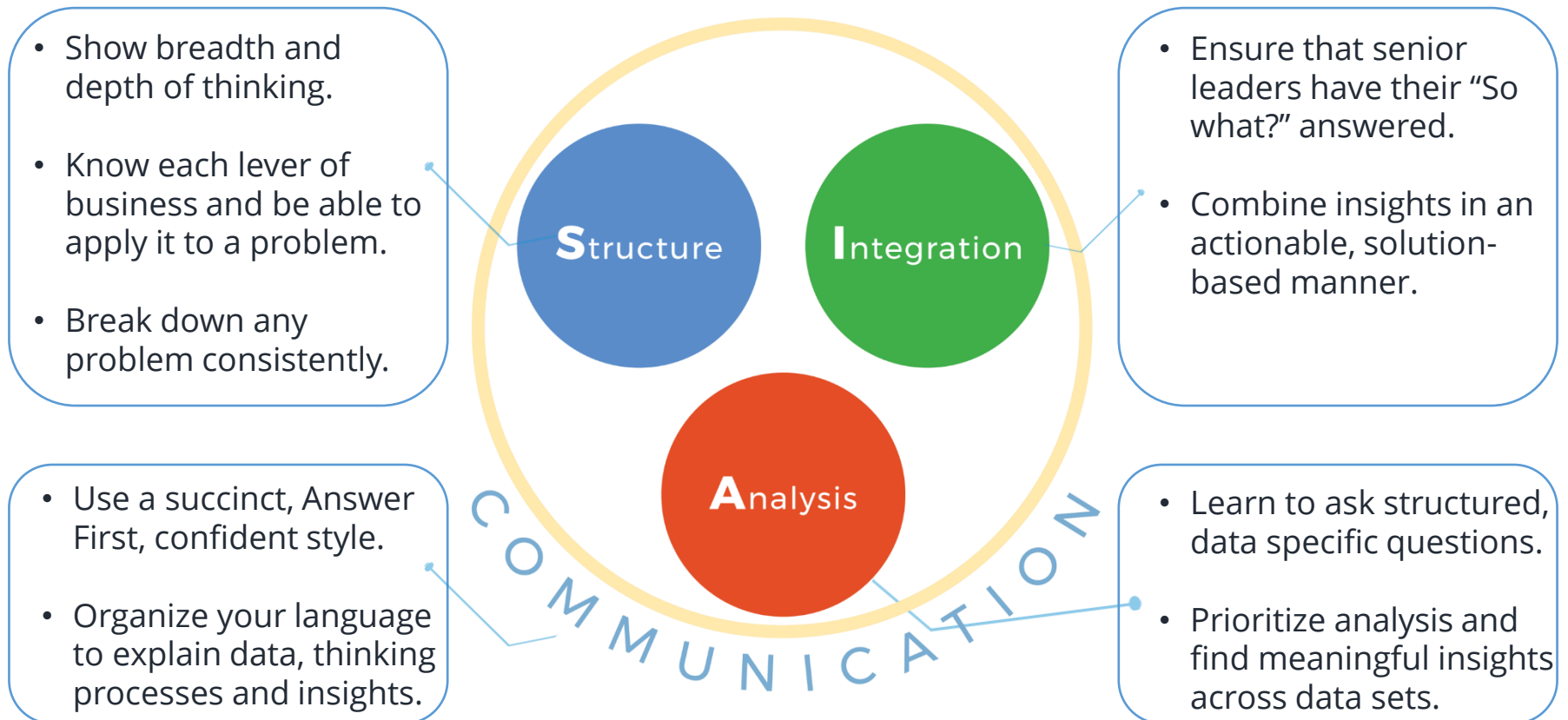
Non-pills includes: chewables, gummies, powders, liquids, injections, lollipops/lozenges, etc.

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# Getting offers = showing solid skills

## CSAI



# 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!

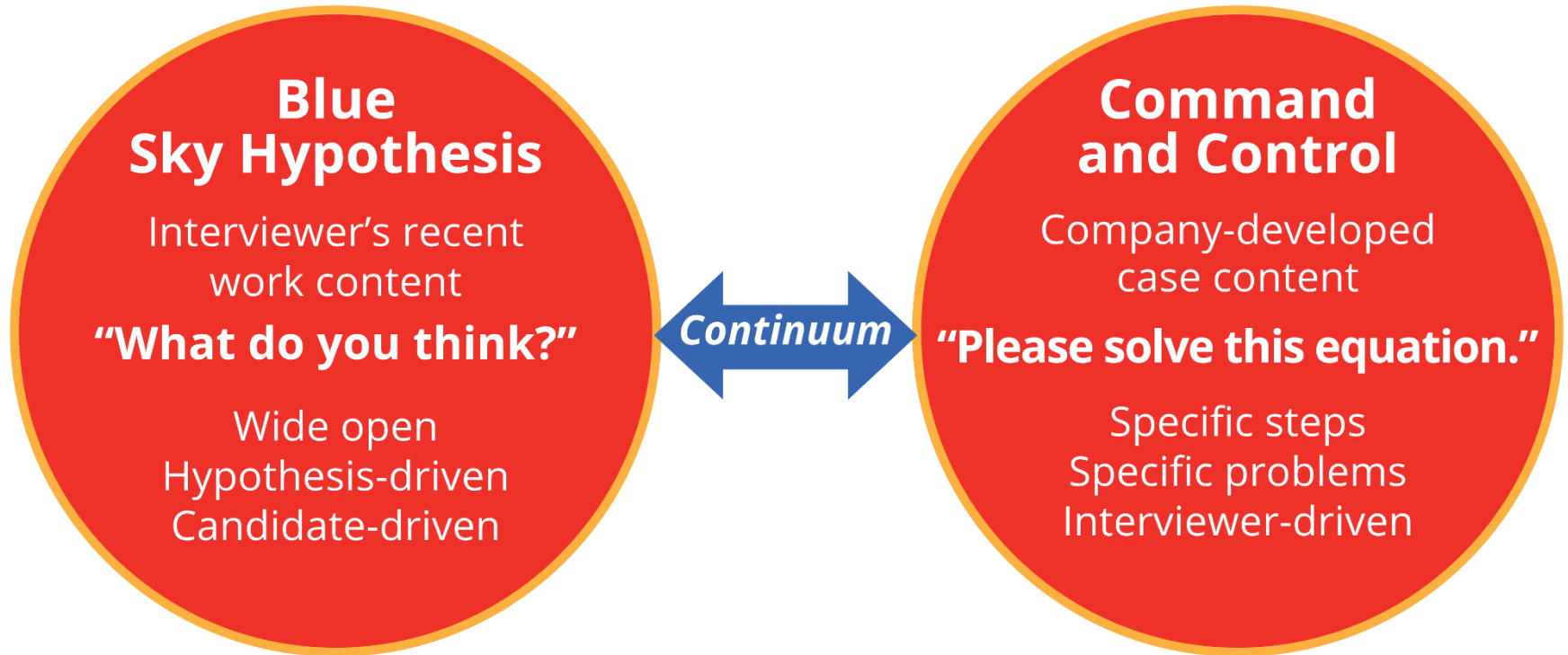
## Analysis Only

- 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

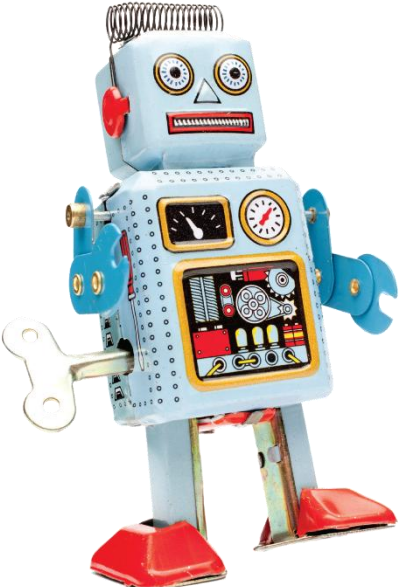
### Case Communication

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

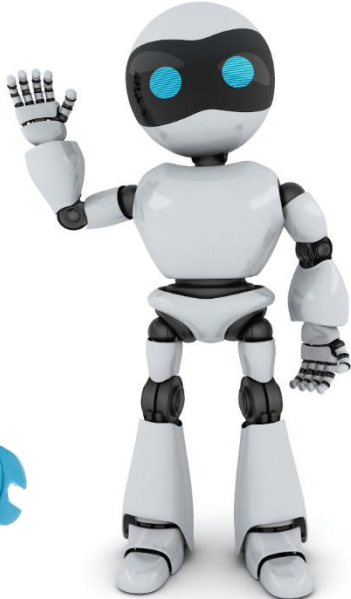
Get familiar with frameworks, but don't over-memorize.

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

# Be patient as your skills evolve



**Quest Bot**



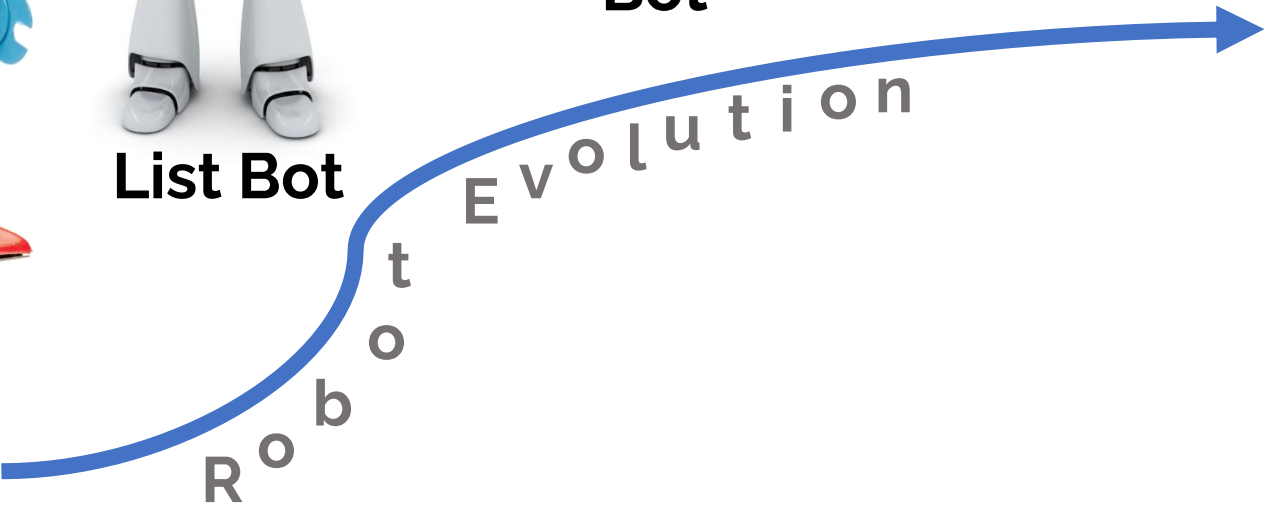
**List Bot**



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

Download our Quick Start Guide,  
get today's slides, sign up for CTC1.

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# CASE INTERVIEW

## *Quick Start Guide*

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



<https://zintervu.com/ftc-rp26/>



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