

# MBA Interviewing

## What to Expect



# David Ohrvall



# MBACASE Events

AU Cairo	Georgia	McMaster DeGroote	Texas
Berkeley	Georgia Tech	Michigan	Thunderbird
Bocconi SDA	George Washington	Michigan State	Toronto Rotman
Boston College	Haskayne Calgary	Minnesota	USC
Cambridge Judge	HBS	MIT	University of Wash
CM Tepper	HEC	National U Singapore	UCLA
Case Western	Hong Kong UST	Northwestern Kellogg	UC Davis
Cass London	IE Madrid	Notre Dame	Wake Forest
CEIBS Shanghai	INSEAD France	NYU Stern	Washington & Lee
Chicago	INSEAD Singapore	Ohio State	Wharton
Columbia	Iowa	Owen Vanderbilt	Wisconsin
Darden	Irvine California	Oxford SAID	William & Mary
Dartmouth Tuck	Ivey	Pepperdine	Yale
Duke Fuqua	IU Kelley	Queen's	
Emory	Maryland	Rice	
ESADE Barclona	McGill	SMU	
Georgetown		Stanford	

participate

**think big picture**

be serious,

have fun



# You'll face 2 major types of interviews



# You have a lot of choices

## Consulting

- Strategy/ IT/ Operations
- 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 / telecomm
- Internal strategy

# Companies emphasize different behavioral and technical elements

	Industry / Marketing	Finance	Consulting
Behavioral	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Show leadership and positive energy</li> <li>• Can achieve long term goals thru cooperation</li> <li>• Play well with others</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Show grit, confidence, and fight</li> <li>• Use insights and savvy to WIN!!!!!!</li> <li>• Get along with others</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Show ability to be all things to all people</li> <li>• Use data to prove points and persuade</li> <li>• Enjoy and can lead others</li> </ul>
Technical	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• “Think thru a situation . . .”</li> <li>• Company and business sense</li> <li>• Industry awareness</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Acct./Finance Basics</li> <li>• Logic, deal and business sense</li> <li>• Memorized and on the spot analytics</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Gen. business knowledge</li> <li>• Logic and business sense</li> <li>• On the spot analytical prowess</li> </ul>

# We'll discuss skills you can use in all interview situations

	Industry / Marketing	Finance	Consulting
Behavioral	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Show leadership and <b>positive energy</b></li> <li>• Can achieve long term goals thru cooperation</li> <li>• Play well with others</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Show grit, <b>confidence</b>, and fight</li> <li>• Use <b>insights</b> and savvy to WIN!!!!!!</li> <li>• Get along with others</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Show ability to be all things to all people</li> <li>• Use data to prove points and <b>persuade</b></li> <li>• <b>Enjoy</b> and can lead others</li> </ul>
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# Expect to do additional preparation

	Industry / Marketing	Finance	Consulting
Behavioral	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Connect to the products</li> <li>• Know the role and your fit</li> <li>• Embrace the long term career path</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Know firm differences</li> <li>• Highlight your victories</li> <li>• Show you are ready to sacrifice</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Know office differences</li> <li>• Find client-like examples</li> <li>• Show you can flex and deal with change</li> </ul>
Technical	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Know the products</li> <li>• Know recent strategies</li> <li>• Know the industry</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Mental math</li> <li>• Capex</li> <li>• Cash flow</li> <li>• Balance sheets</li> <li>• DCF</li> <li>• Debt/ equity</li> <li>• Working Cap</li> <li>• Depreciation</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Mental math</li> <li>• Growth rates</li> <li>• Present value</li> <li>• Slide reading</li> <li>• Break-even analysis</li> <li>• Market sizing math</li> <li>• ROI</li> </ul>

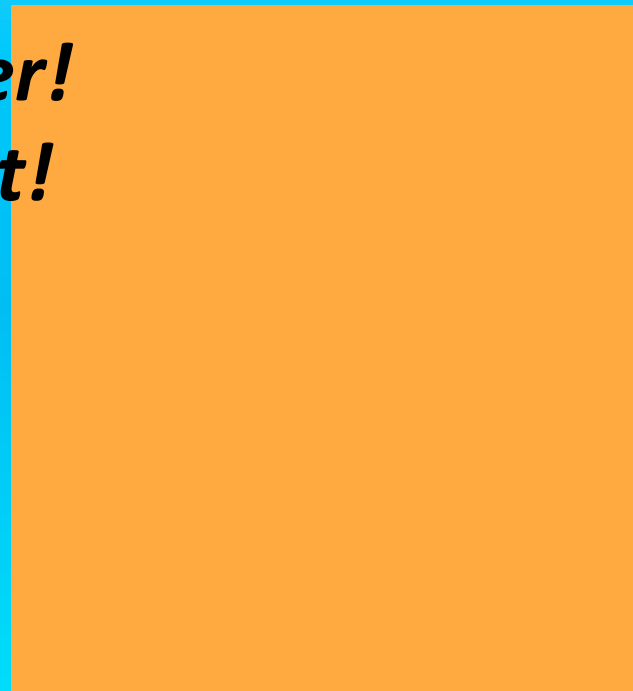
# Let's look at behavioral skills



**Candidates enter the room with a certain level  
of value . . . .**

***We need her!***  
***What a fit!***  
***Great story!***

***Huh?***



**and can  
destroy it  
quickly**

**Your Value**

# You know you need to be ...

## Warm

- You connect easily
- I'd introduce you proudly
- I could hang out with you

## Clear

- You communicate easily
- You are easy to understand
- Your goals are easy to follow and attainable

## Good Fit

- You seem like "one of us"
- Our goals for you seem to align with your trajectory
- Your life fits with us

## Ready

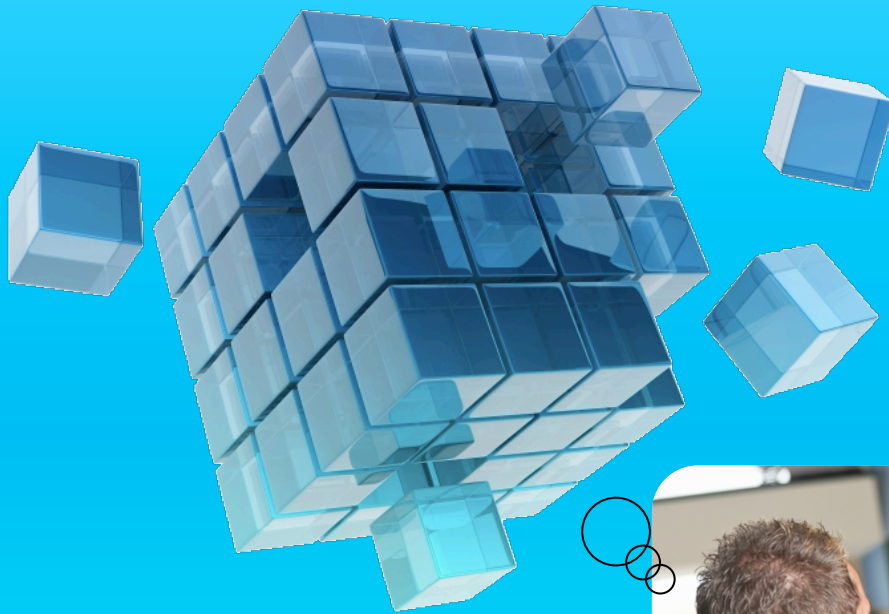
- You are ready to jump in and make a difference
- You have a history of "making it happen"
- You have time for us in your life



# But reality is often different



# Stories can seem random and disconnected



# Or the stories fail to show the real you



# Great candidates show “themes” or layers throughout the interview

**Leadership**

**Organization**

**Goal Setting**

**Integration**

**Communication**



# Principle 1:

## Interviewers want themes

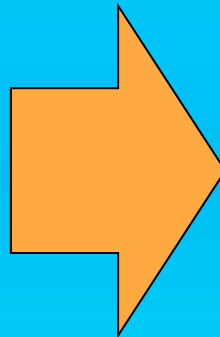
**Leadership**

**Organization**

**Goal Setting**

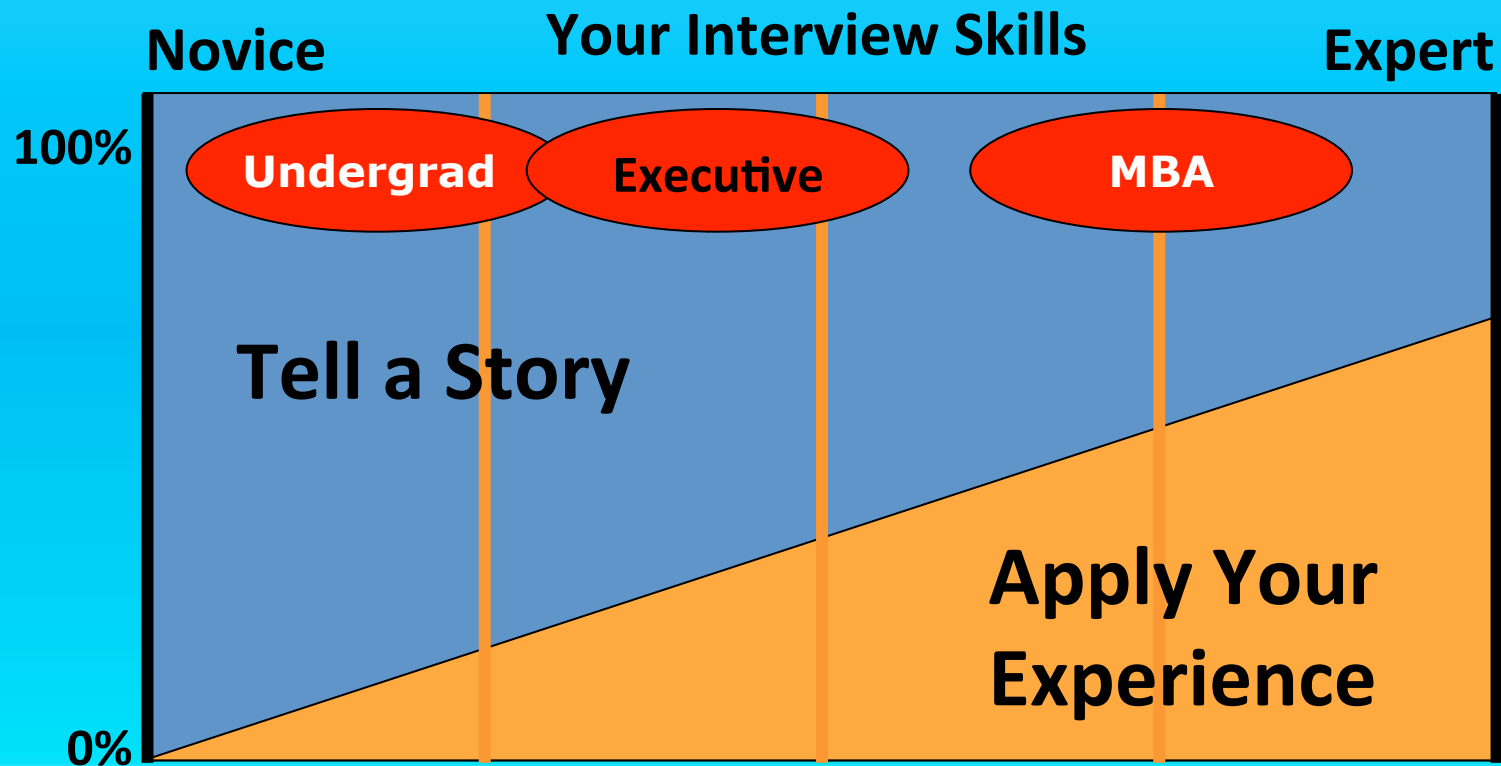
**Integration**

**Communication**



- Reinforce strong attributes
- Shows interviewer that these behaviors will repeat
- Builds value in their eyes quickly

# Principle 2: Interviewers want application to their own situation



**Communication is the foundation of every  
interview**

**Leadership**

**Organization**

**Goal Setting**

**Integration**

**Communication**

# Communicate Effectively

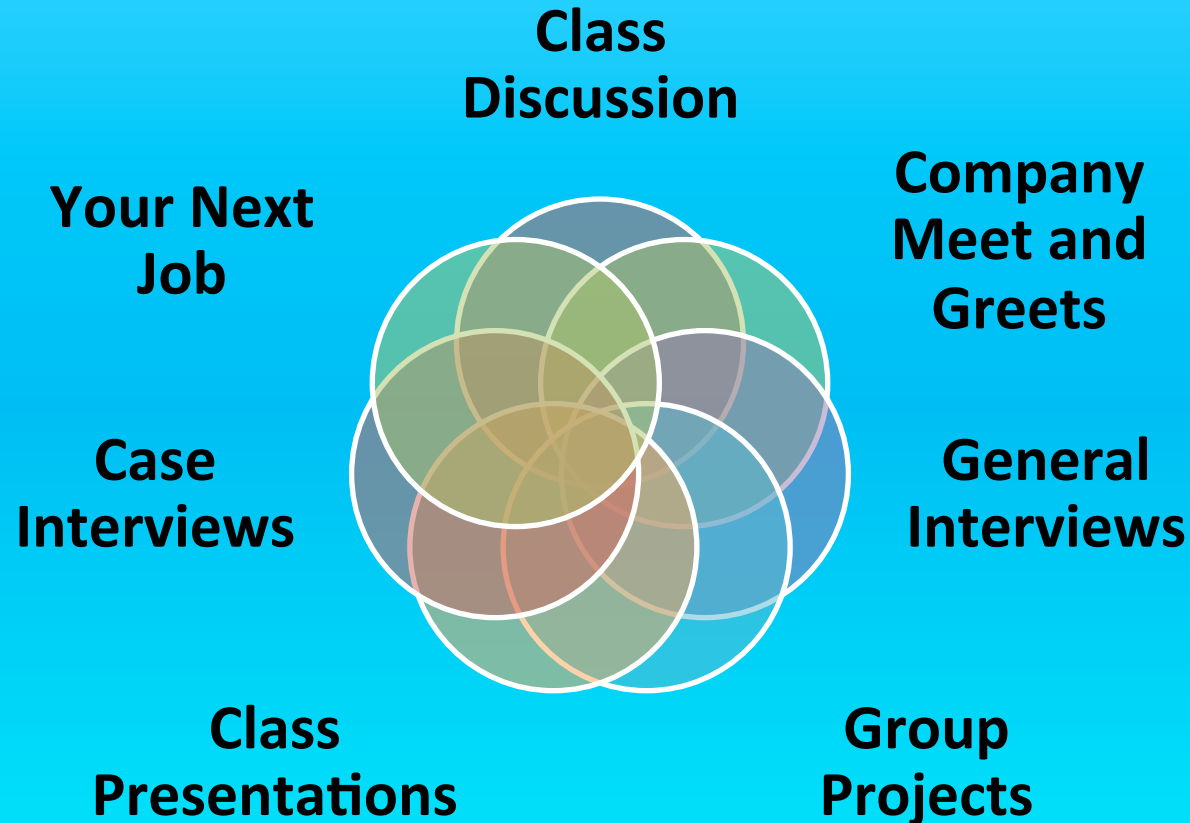
Both pieces are important as you attempt to prepare for your interviews and MBA level communication

**Great  
Communication**





# **You will need these skills in a variety of contexts**



# What do you want to do with your words? Finish the sentence, “I want . . .

Class  
Exercise

- to be fluent and quick
- to say the right thing
- to be seen as knowledgeable
- to be understood
- people to follow and admire me
- to drive change
- to make more money
- to care for others

# Now, what do you want when you listen to others' words?

- Get to the point
- Tell me what I need to know
- Please don't bore me
- Not too much detail
- Tell me something good about me
- Give me information that is vital
- Help me get ahead



# Great Communicators

## What do they do?

- **Warm-up Exercise:** think of someone you know who communicates well.
  - What does she do in particular?
  - Take 5 minutes and write down specifics.
  - We'll discuss your thoughts as a group.

# What do we notice about her?

Class  
Exercise

- Knows her audience
- Can predict what listeners will like to hear
- Picks up what the other person cares about
- Talks the right amount of time
- Achieves “ping pong” balance; both people “play”
- Uses strong gestures: head nods, eye contact and some hand movements
- Uses positive, encouraging language
- Uses content rather than empty words

# Where do people go wrong?

## Let's list some pitfalls.

Class  
Exercise



Timing



Content



Voice



Body



Level

# Where do people go wrong?

## Let's list some pitfalls.

Class  
Exercise



### Timing

- talks too long
- interrupts
- doesn't balance the conversation



### Content



### Voice



### Body



### Level

# Where do people go wrong?

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### Timing

- talks too long
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- doesn't balance the conversation



### Content

- too off base
- jumps around
- discusses inappropriate topics
- tries to cover too much



### Voice



### Body



### Level





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### Timing

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### Content

- too off base
- jumps around
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### Voice

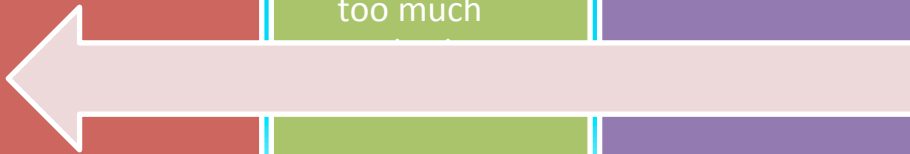
- too fast
- too loud
- too soft
- too close
- too accented



### Body



### Level



# Where do people go wrong?

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Class  
Exercise



### Timing

- talks too long
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### Content

- too off base
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### Voice

- too fast
- too loud
- too soft
- too close
- too accented



### Body

- jerky movements
- poor eye contact
- sad / tense facial expressions
- too strong hand gestures



### Level



# Where do people go wrong?

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### Timing

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### Body

- jerky movements
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### Level

- too deep
- extra details
- unnecessary specifics
- too high level
- too vague



# Great communication will help you in all types of interview situations.

Answer questions

Bring energy

Interrupt and be interrupted

Say less

Be persuasive

Talk faster than you prefer

Connect and engage

Talk at the right level



# Techniques for HOW



# Content for WHAT

## Experience

- Build IMPACT stories

## Personalities

- Role play to push each other

## Interest

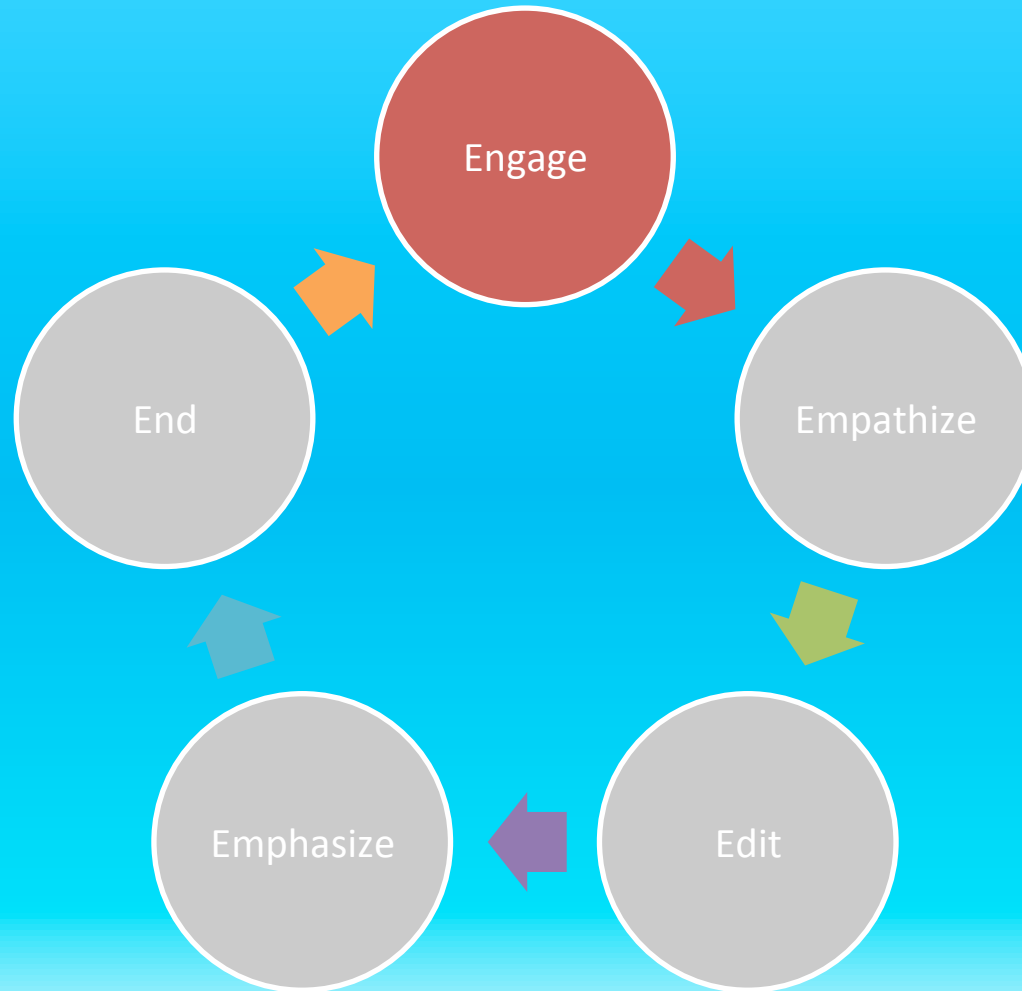
- Present a personal passion

## Business

- Discuss ideas logically

# ENGAGE

It's all about me . . .



# What “gift” are you bringing?

- Bring your listener a gift
  - An interesting discussion
  - Knowledge about something relevant
  - An intriguing or funny story
- Don’t come empty handed
- Prepare in advance





# Appeal – what's special about you?

- Life experience – language, country, lifestyle
- Perspective – different or similar
- Work – experience, connections
- Values – beliefs you hold strongly



# Delivery – are you ready to change the way you deliver the gift?



- Try out your thoughts and stories on many people
- Learn what is interesting and not so interesting
- Be ready to adjust your content

# Engagement – when someone completely engages us what do we think?

- He'll do this with clients, team members or other "customers".
- She'll be persuasive. People will listen to her.
- He'll be easy to work with, bring energy every day and be effective.

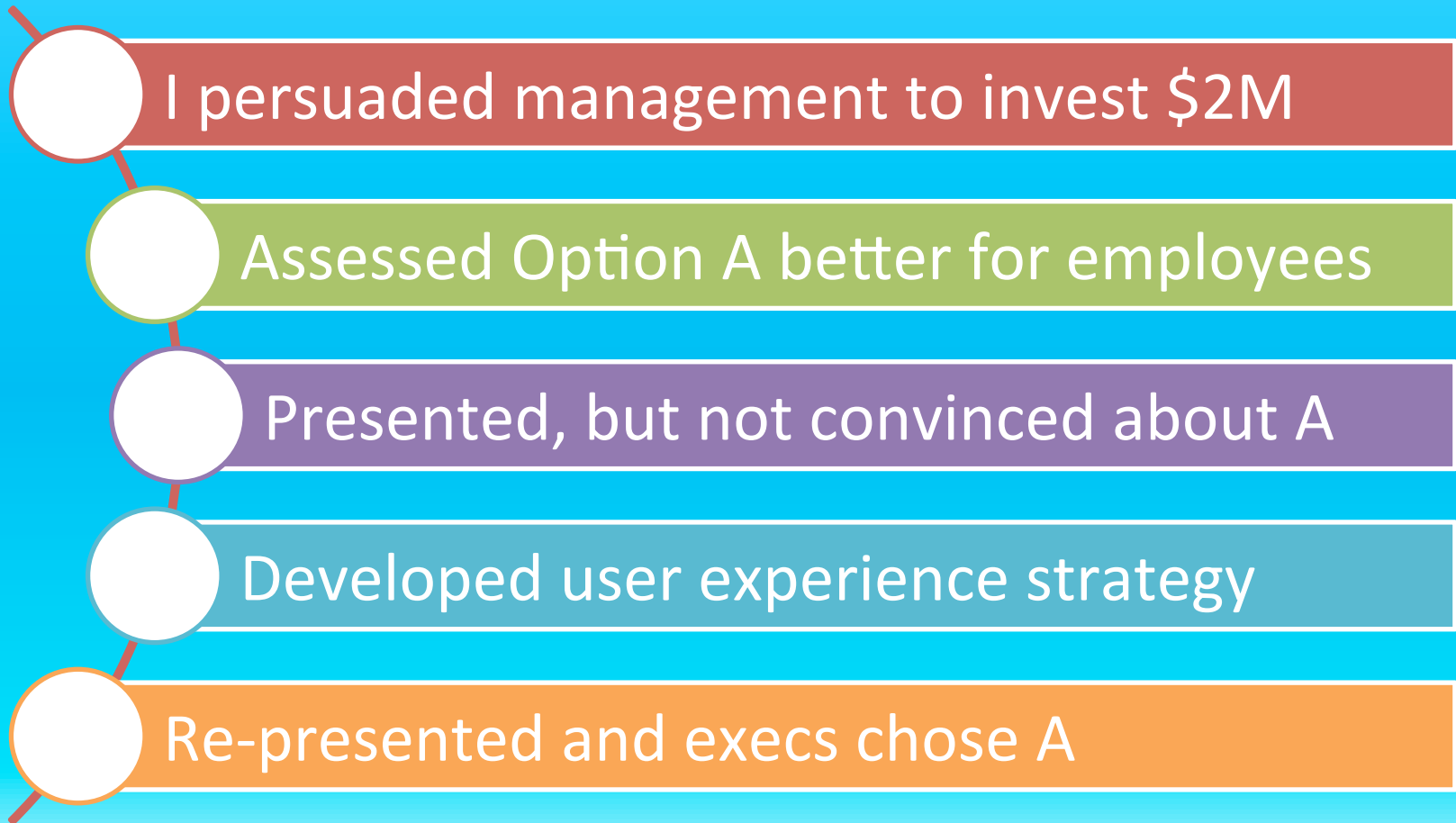


# IMPACT

## Story Development

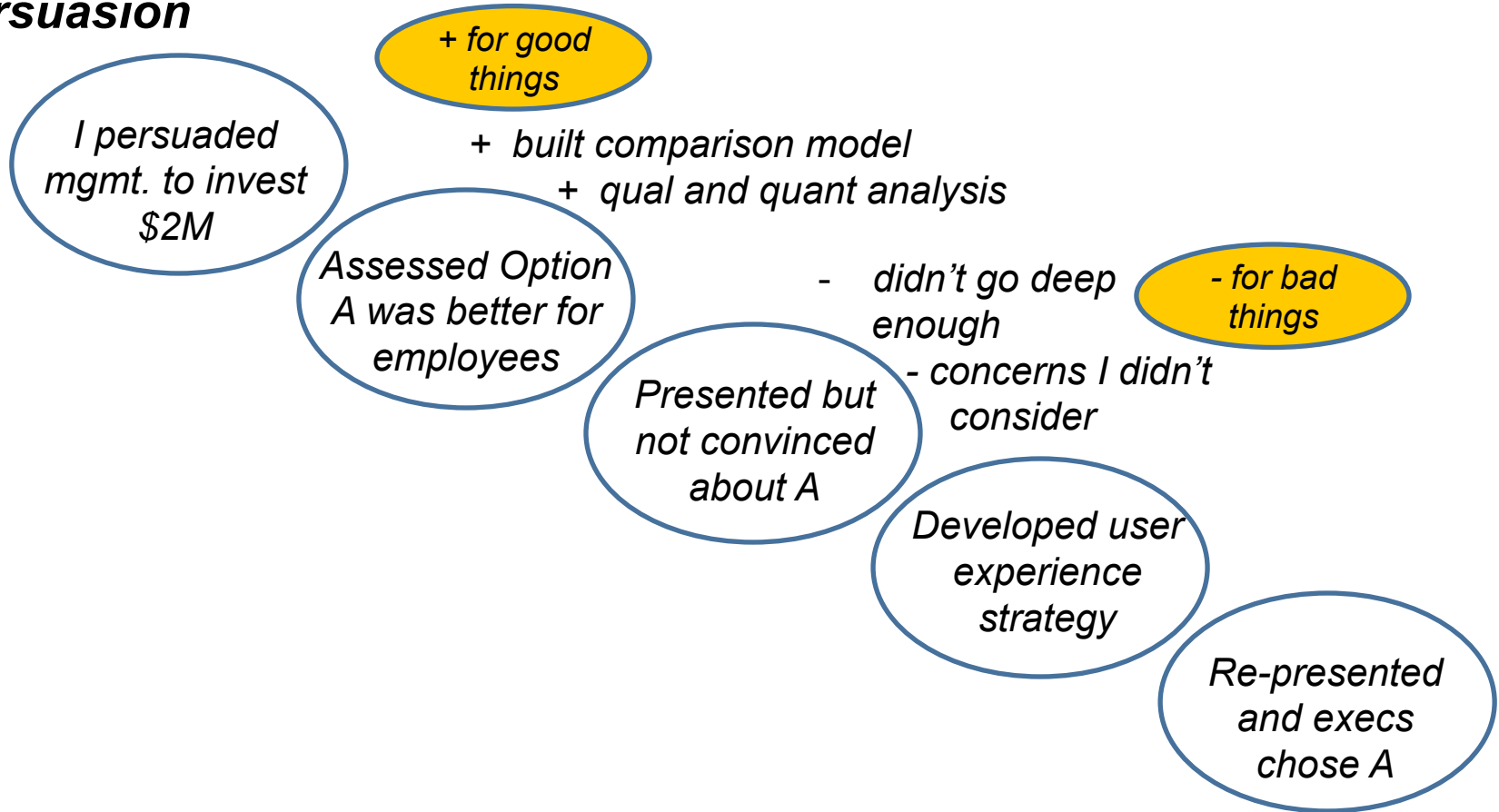
I	Individual Contribution
M	Manage or Lead
P	Persuasion
A	Analytical
C	Challenge or Failure
T	Team

# Story development – stepping stones



# Stepping stones on your paper

## Persuasion



# Explain the YOU machine

## What did I Hear?

See?

Think?

What did I  
Say?

and Do?



# Personal Exercise 1

## Use IMPACT

- Select 1 category that appeals to you
- Use the stepping stone approach to form the key pieces of each story
- 5 minutes
- Add in detail to each key step:
  - People
  - Places
  - Funny events
  - What you did well or not so well

I	Individual Contribution
M	Manage or Lead
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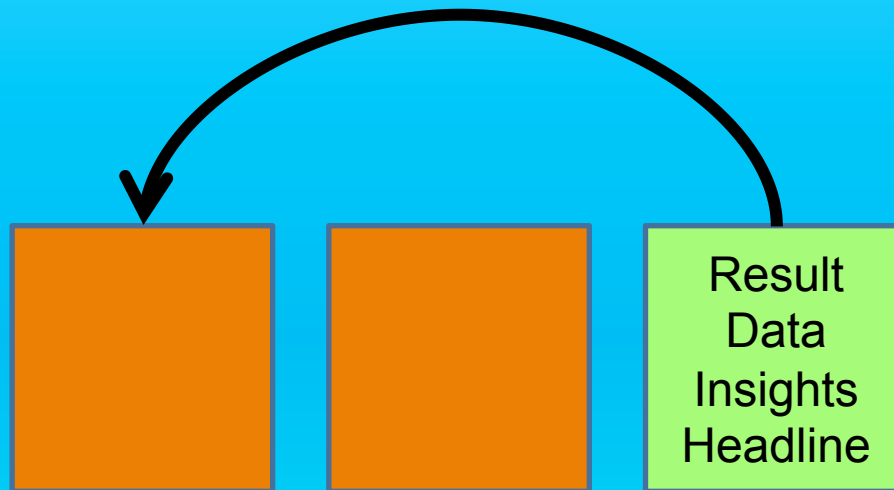
# Partner Exercise 1

## Tell an IMPACT story

- Give and receive one IMPACT story with your partner. Take 5 minutes for each story.
- Feedback
  - What you liked
  - What caught your attention
  - What you did not understand

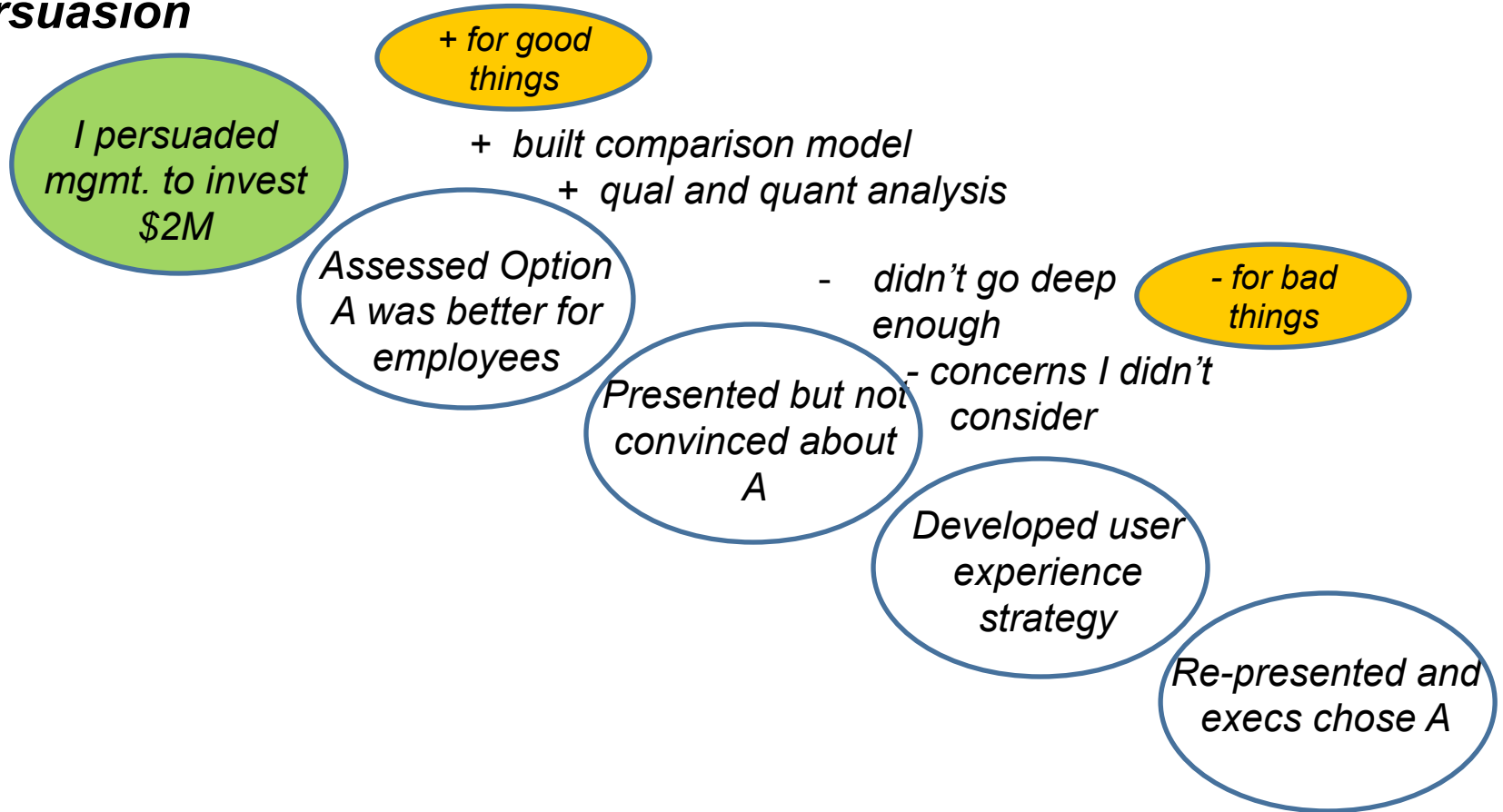
I	Individual Contribution
M	Manage or Lead
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A	Analytical
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# Be Answer First



# Your stories need an Answer First

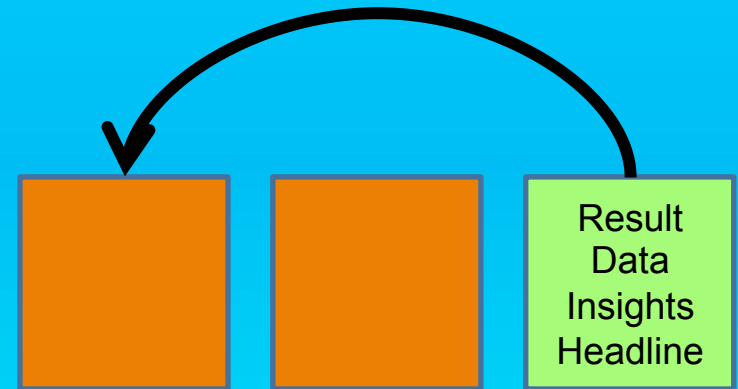
## Persuasion



# Personal Exercise 2

## Weave in Answer First

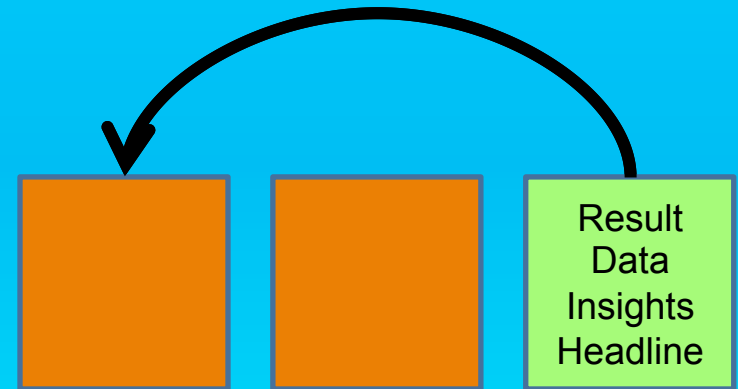
- Go back to your story
- Find the Answer First
- Think about results that you want to highlight:
  - Achievement
  - Financial target
  - Time
  - People's response



# Partner Exercise 2

## Use Answer First, Story #2

- Give and receive the second story now using Answer First
- Get feedback from your partner on whether the Answer First was clear
- Edit where necessary



# Content for WHAT



## Experience

- Build IMPACT stories

## Personalities

- Role play to push each other

## Interest

- Present a personal passion

## Business

- Discuss ideas logically

# ENGAGE

## Recap

- **Concepts learned**
  - **My conversation should be a gift**
  - **My profile has appealing features**
  - **I may need to change my delivery**
  - **My ability to engage signals future skills and work**
- **Actions to take**
  - **Build IMPACT stories and use them often**
  - **Fill out “stepping stone” approach for each one**
  - **Practice being Answer First in stories and day to day conversation**

# EMPATHIZE

It's all about me . . . or is it?

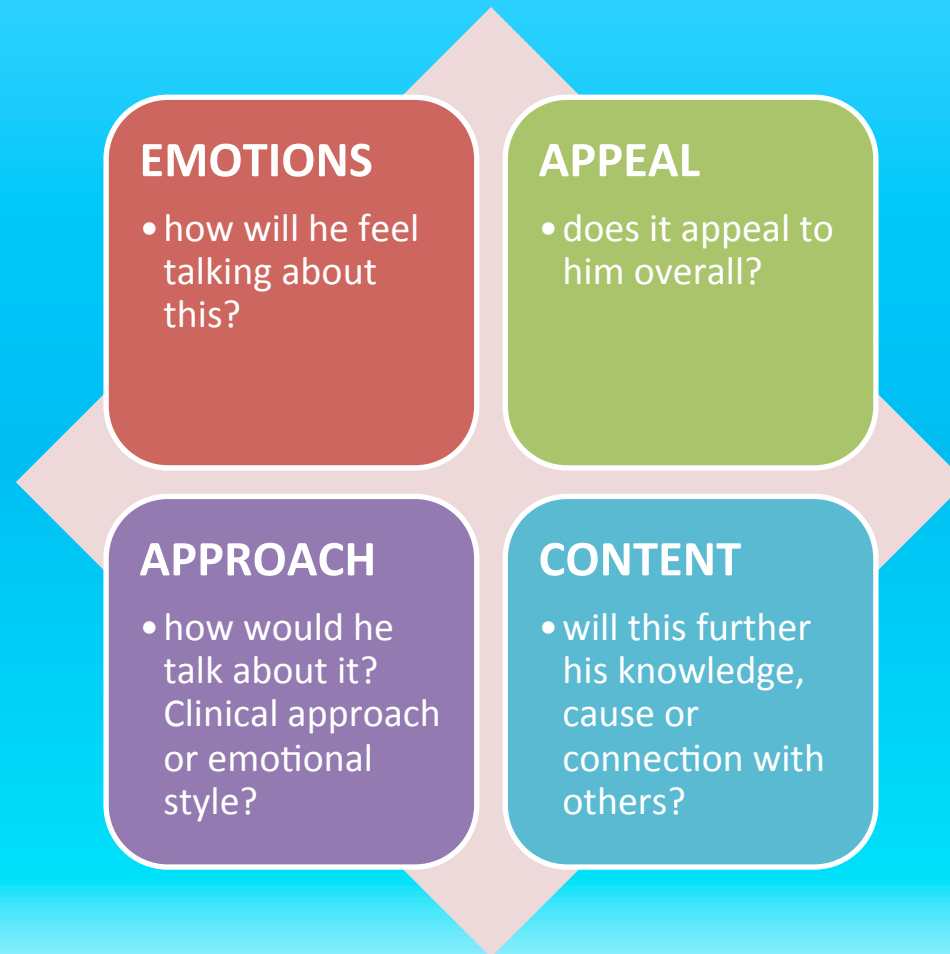




# Anticipate and gauge your audience

- How much time do they have?
- Where is their mind right now?
- What is their body language saying? Are they leaning in and listening intently or moving around or ready to bolt?
- What about their head and eyes? Are they showing full listening or disinterested eye glances?
- How can you be more in tune with the listener?

# Empathize with your audience



# Partner Profiles

## GRUMPY

- Seems irritated
- Interrupts often

## CHATTY

- Very talkative
- Difficult for you to talk

## ANALYTICAL

- Wants precision
- Asks a lot of how much, why and when questions

## CONFUSED

- Seems to get lost
- Asks you to repeat often

## TANGENT

- Participates almost too much
- Takes the conversation off track

## FOCUSED

- Very interested in you
- Speaks at appropriate times

# Partner Exercise 3

- **Listener**
  - Review your assigned character profile.
  - Think through the attributes that you need to display.
  - Consider how you can play up those parts.
- **Presenter**
  - Look over your IMPACT story.
  - Consider what your Answer First is.
- Take 5-7 minutes for each person's story.

# Content for WHAT



## Experience

- Build IMPACT stories



## Personalities

- Role play to push each other

## Interest

- Present a personal passion

## Business

- Discuss ideas logically

# EMPATHIZE

## Recap

- **Concepts learned**
  - I need to anticipate my listener's interest
  - I can empathize on several levels: emotion, appeal, approach and content
  - Adjusting to personality types will take practice
- **Actions to take**
  - List personality types where empathy is difficult
  - Outline actions you can take to relate better
  - Talk with a variety of people

# EDIT

## Block, Break & Discuss any topic



# What do you think about Uber?

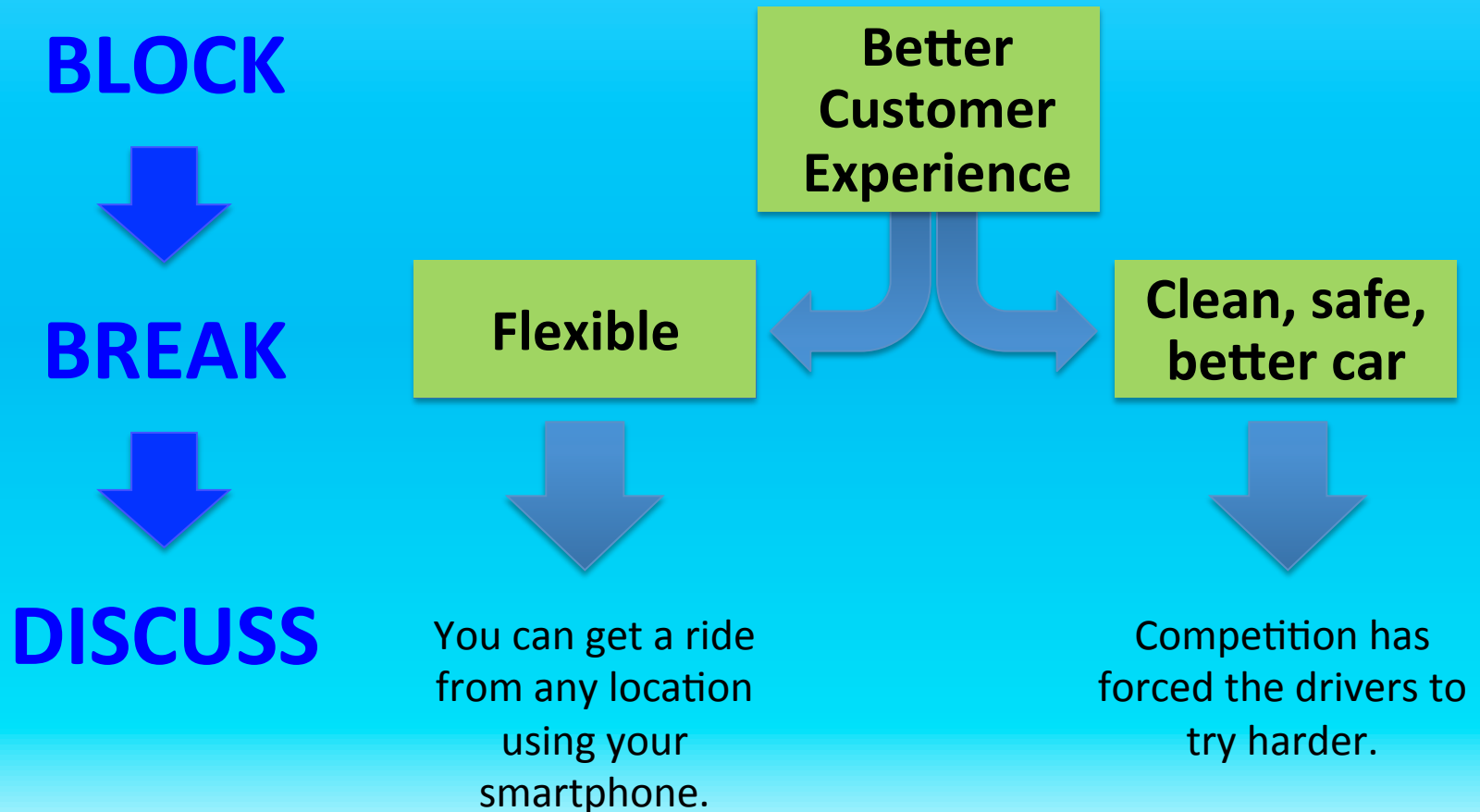
**Class  
Brainstorm**





# Uber

## Block, Break, Discuss

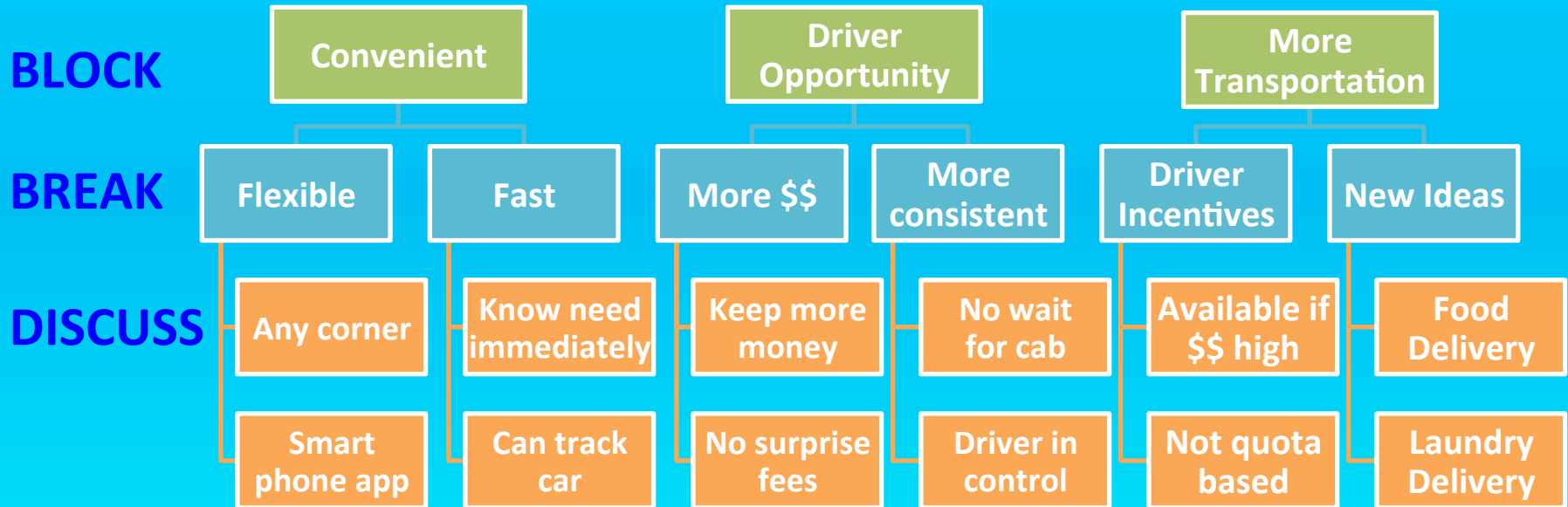


# Uber

## Block, Break, Discuss

What do you think of Uber?

*"I think it's a good idea . . . "*



# Personal Exercise 4

## Should we get a pet? Dog, cat, fish



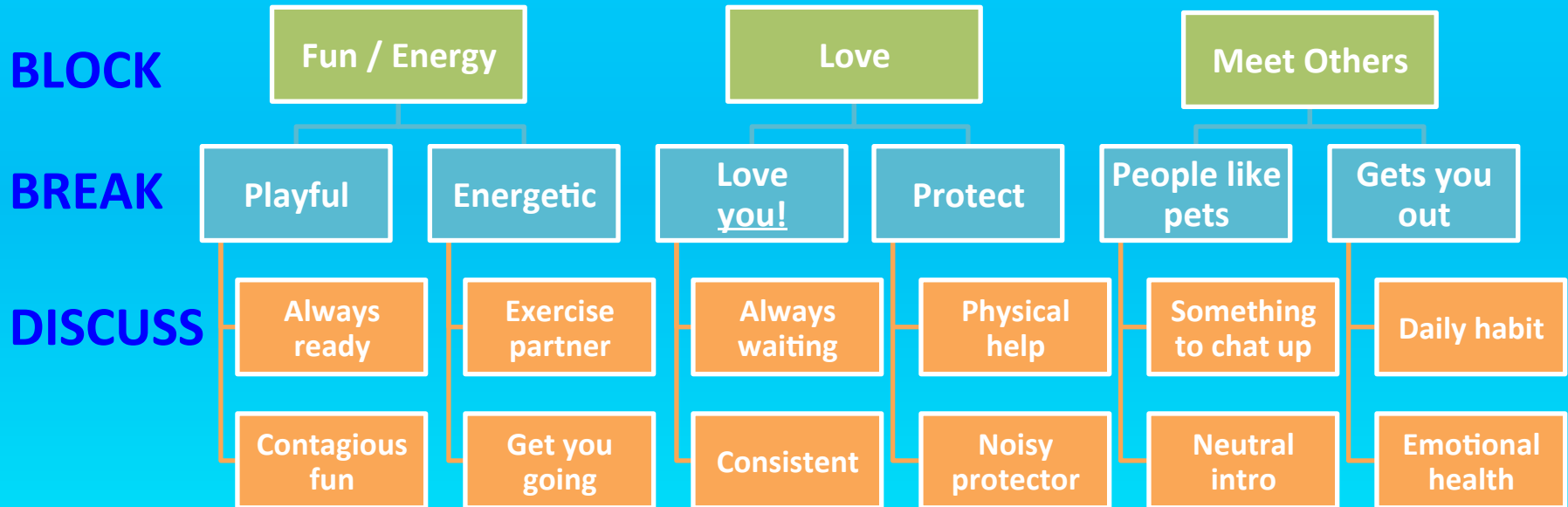
- Block out several key areas of the discussion.
  - Don't worry if you got it "right" or not.
  - Just think about the main things to consider.
- Break your blocks into an "A" and a "B".
  - You may or may not use them in the discussion.
  - But it's a good habit to be ready to show depth of thinking.
- Discuss pieces below each A and B.
  - These pieces may trigger a thought or question.
  - What are you curious about? How can you connect?

# Dogs are great!

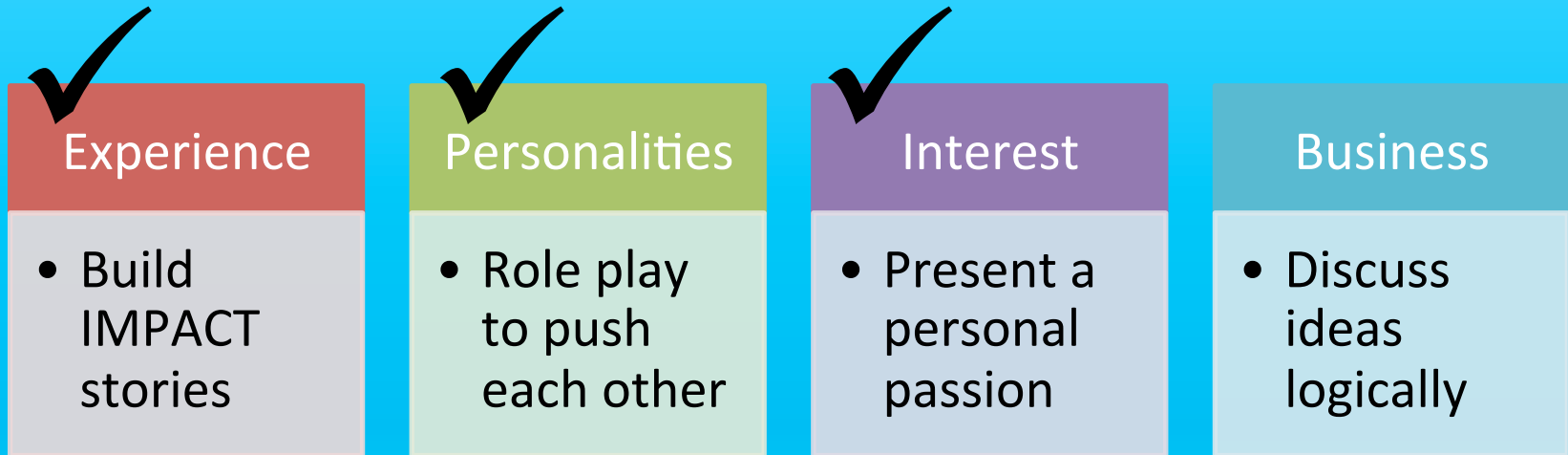
## Block, Break, Discuss

Do you think I should get a dog?

*“Oh definitely! Dogs are great . . . ”*



# Content for WHAT



- Hobby
- Sport
- Entertainment
- Food & Drink
- Travel
- Pet Peeve

# Personal Exercise 5

## I think everyone should . . .

- Watch more movies
- Learn how to play the piano
- Be a (favorite team) fan
- Skydive!
- Visit China
- Stop using plastic bottles

# Your Editing Toolkit

## Block Break Discuss

- Structure with 2 to 3 good points

## Be Answer First

- It's always appropriate, unless you are telling a joke with a punch line

## Timing

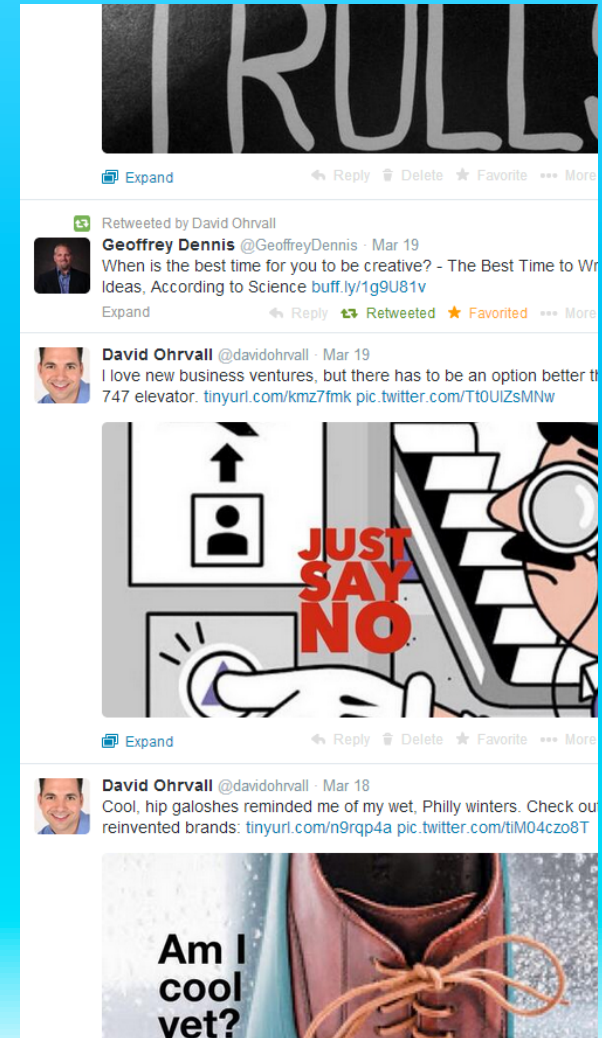
- Stay under 2 minutes
- Brief is better

## Flexibility

- Adjust as you go along

# EDIT Recap

- Concepts learned
  - Block, Break, Discuss
  - To connect, structure and edit
  - BBD works with business or casual conversation
- Actions to take
  - Practice BBD on business articles
  - Twitter: davidohrvall, #BlockBreakAsk
  - Try time limits: 30, 60 and 90 seconds

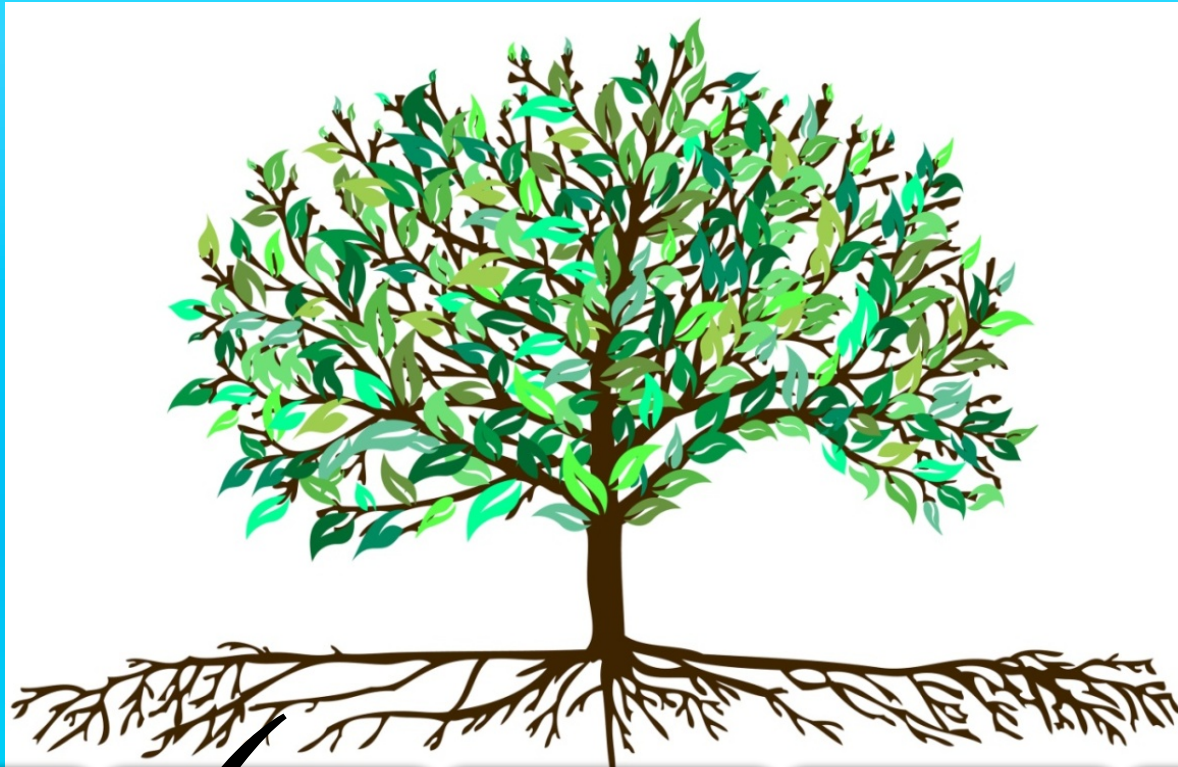




# Let's talk about case interviews



# What do cases really test?



**C**

Communication

**L**

Logic

**A**

Analytical

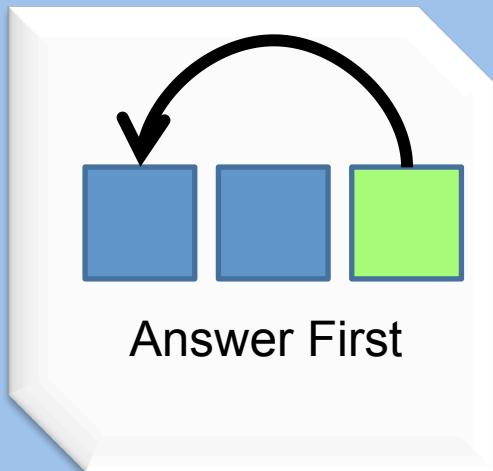
**SS**

Social Skills

**IC**

Integration &  
Creativity

# Be Answer First!



**C**  
Communication

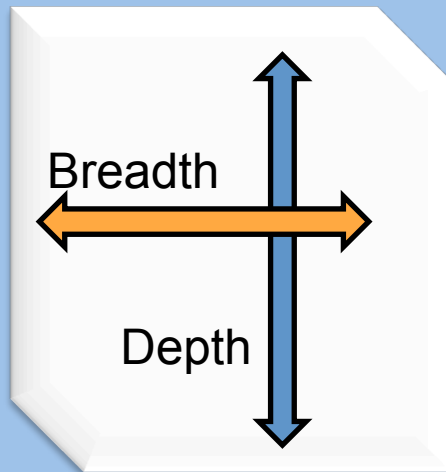
**L**  
Logic

**A**  
Analytical

**SS**  
Social Skills

**IC**  
Integration &  
Creativity

# Show breadth and depth



**C**  
Communication

**L**  
Logic

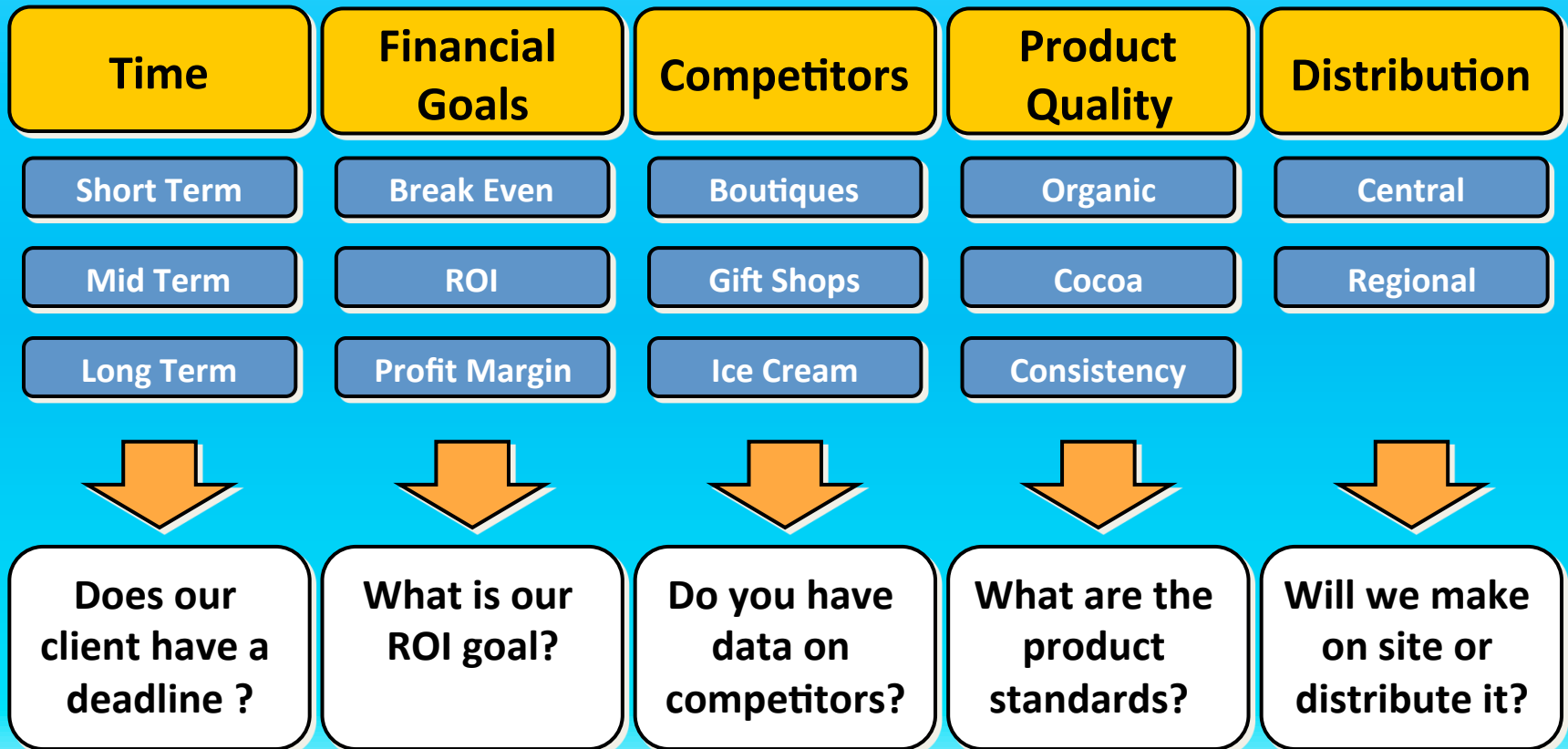
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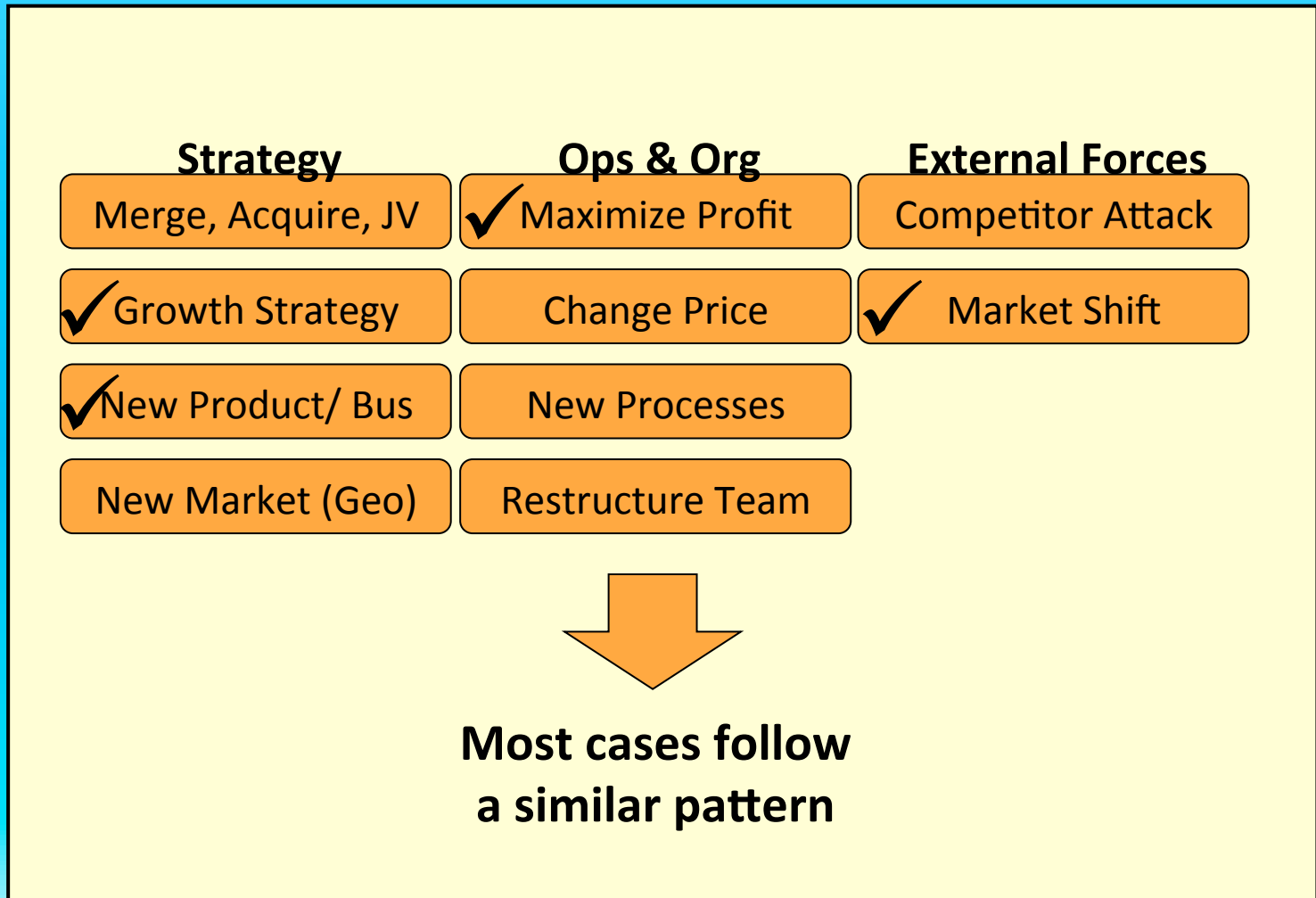
**IC**  
Integration &  
Creativity

# NYC Chocolate Store

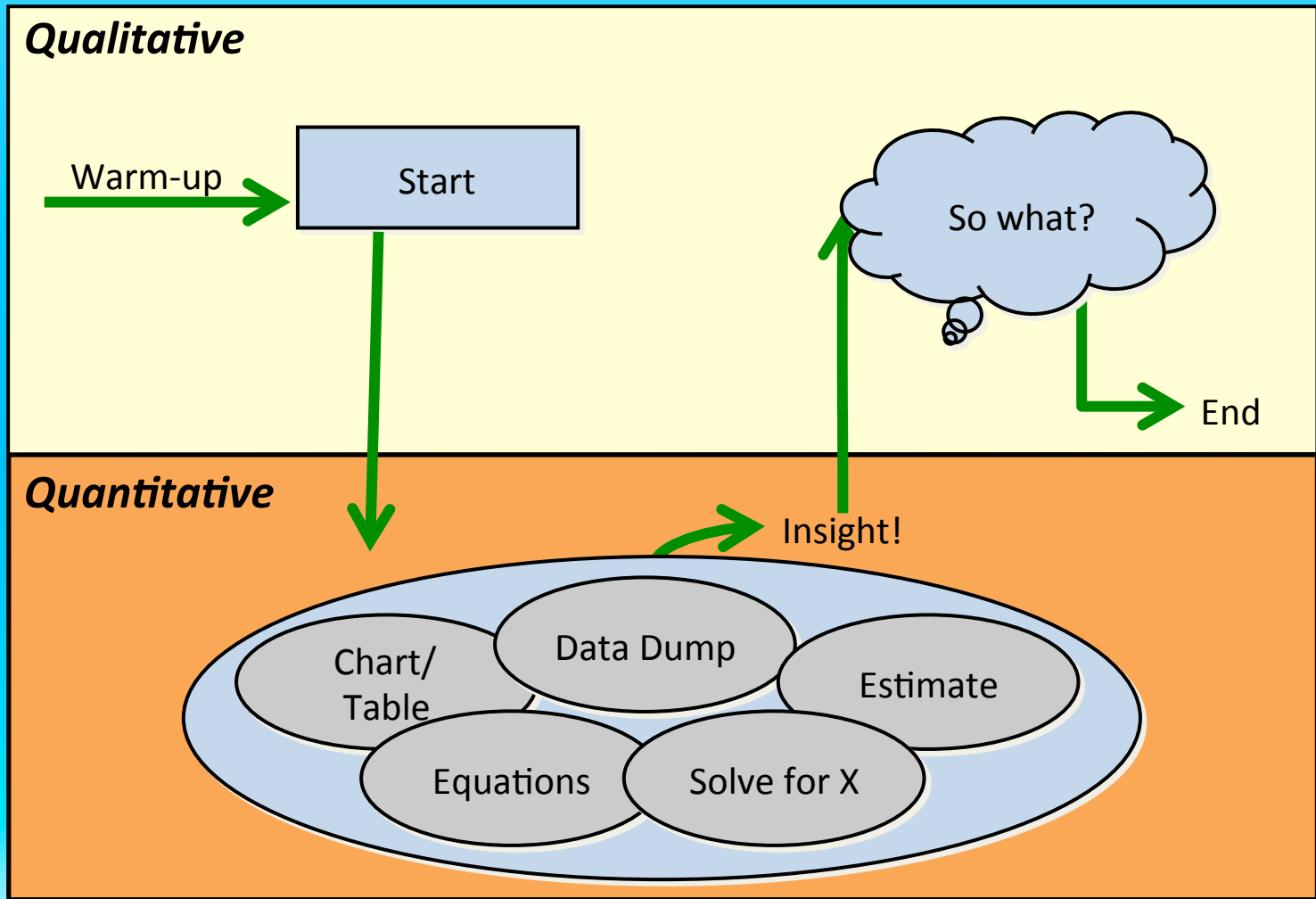
Our client wants to open a chocolate store.



# Most Common Business Cases



# MBACASE Path



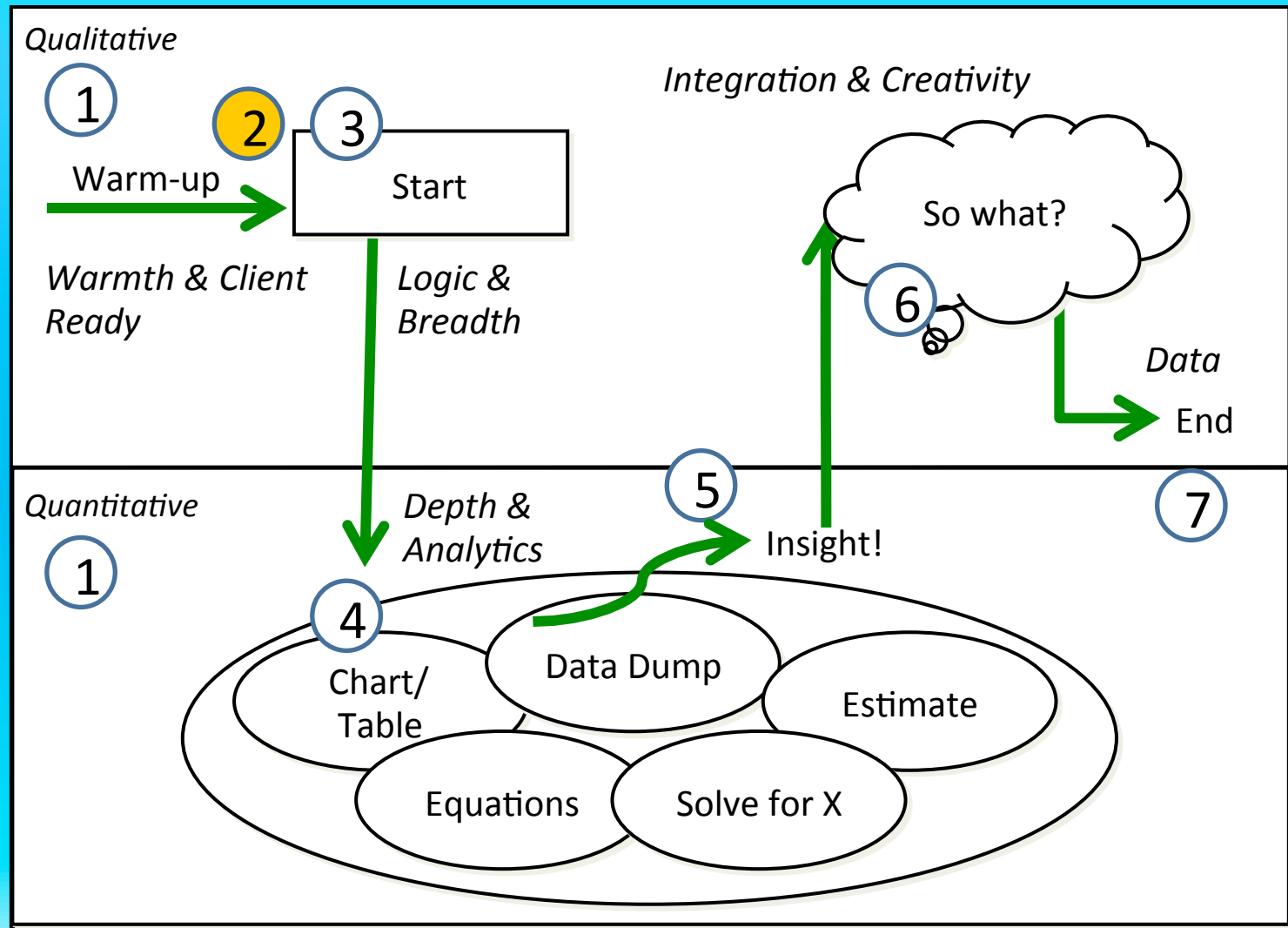
# 1. Warm-up



Watch the Pet Power videos at [www.mbacase.com](http://www.mbacase.com).  
<http://www.mbacase.com/videos/full-length-cases/>



## 2. Move Into the Case



## 2. Pet Power Concept



Watch the Pet Power videos at [www.mbacase.com](http://www.mbacase.com).  
<http://www.mbacase.com/videos/full-length-cases/>

## 2. Pet Power Question



Watch the Pet Power videos at [www.mbacase.com](http://www.mbacase.com).  
<http://www.mbacase.com/videos/full-length-cases/>

### 3. Recap: Situation, Complication, Task



Watch the Pet Power videos at [www.mbacase.com](http://www.mbacase.com).  
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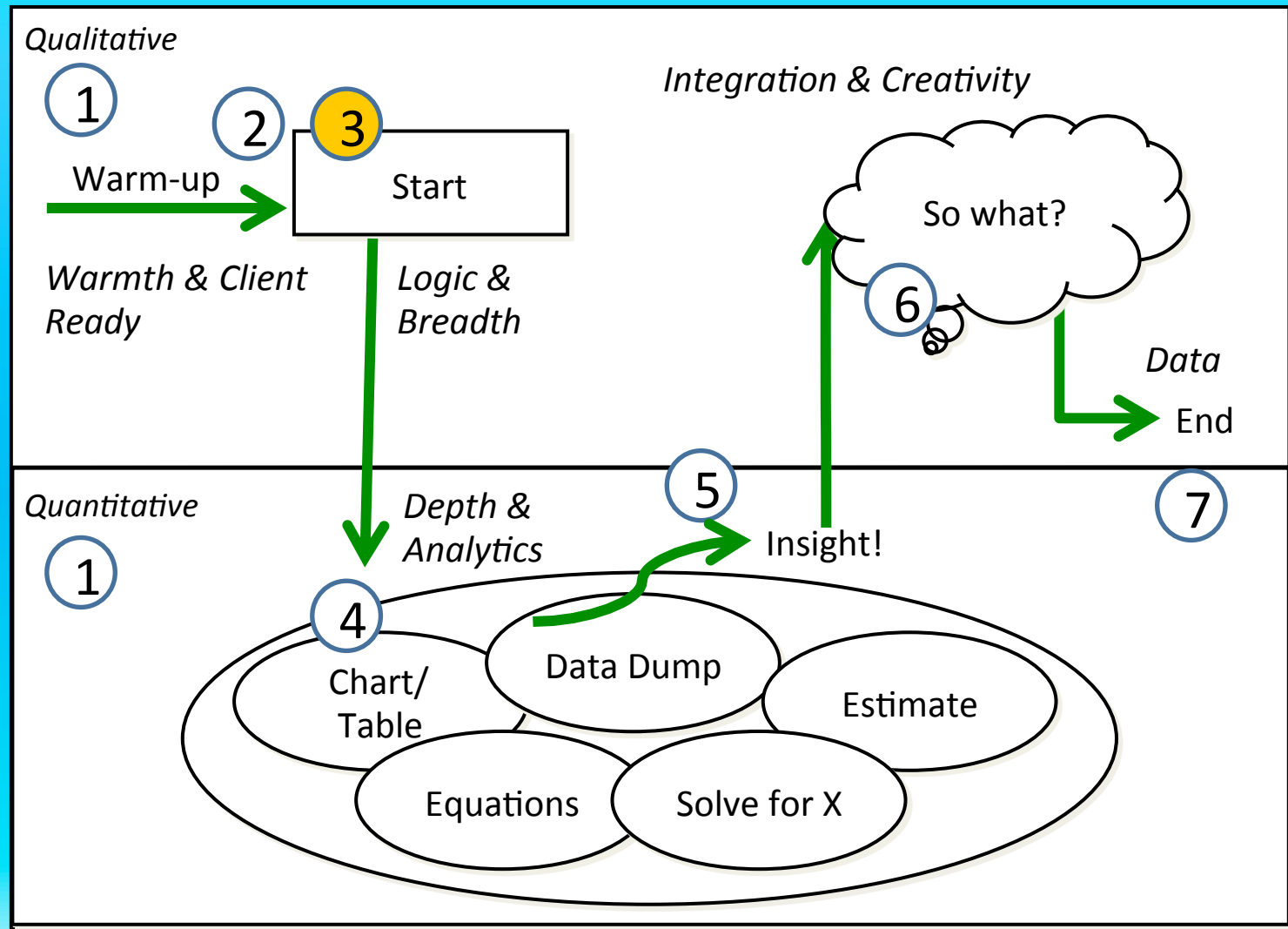
### 3. Clarify, Ask for Minute, Plan



Watch the Pet Power videos at [www.mbacase.com](http://www.mbacase.com).  
<http://www.mbacase.com/videos/full-length-cases/>



### 3. Create Your Plan

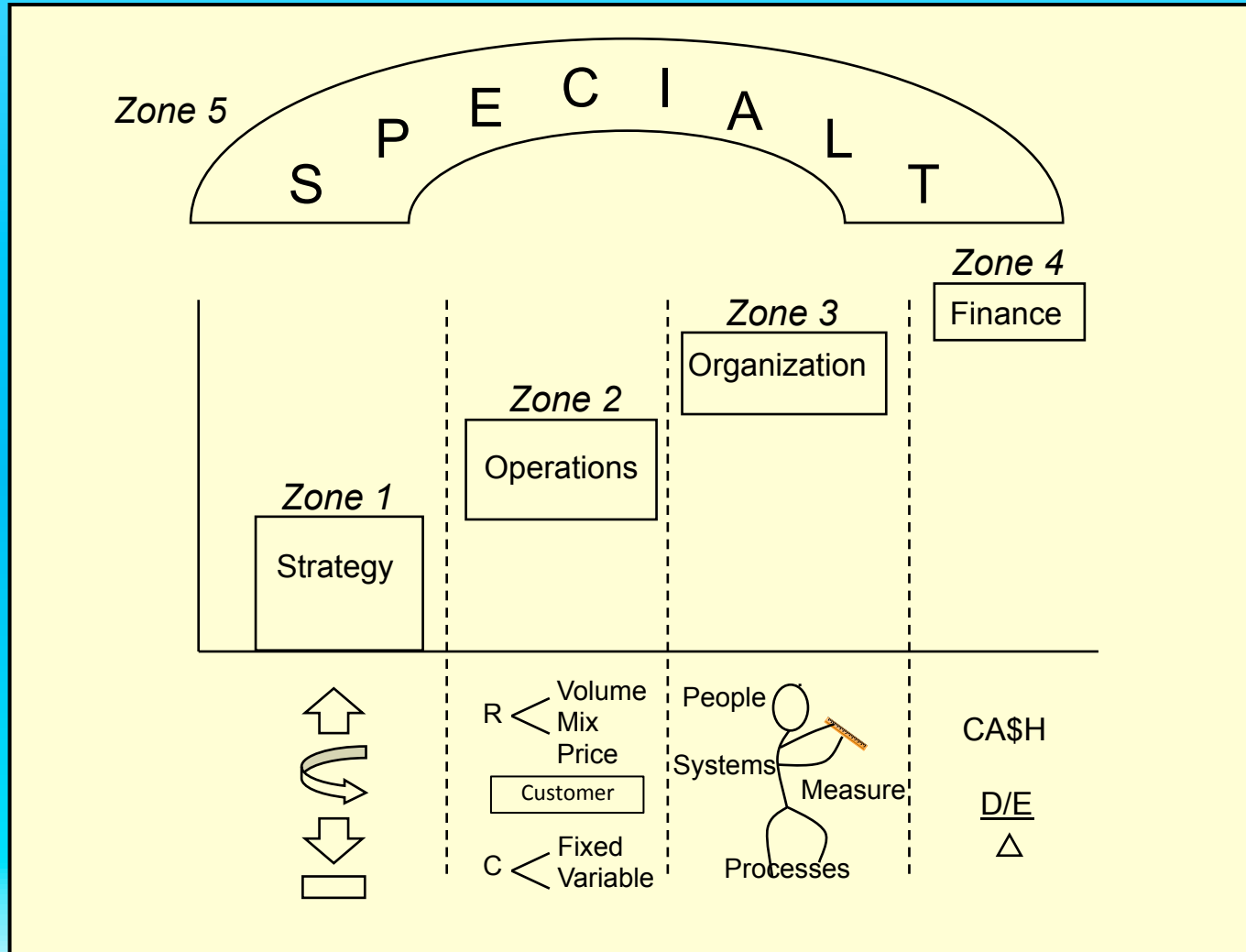


**What's your objective  
with every case?**



**Maximize the Value of the  
Company**

# You will develop methods for thinking through the business drivers





# Use your plan to connect and explain

Facts	<p>Plan</p> <div><i>Main Idea</i></div> <div><div><i>Group A</i></div><div><i>Group B</i></div><div><i>Group C</i></div><div><i>Group D</i></div></div> <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• <i>Why?</i></li><li>• <i>Data?</i></li><li>• <i>Questions?</i></li></ul>
Data	

### 3. Present Your Plan



Watch the Pet Power videos at [www.mbacase.com](http://www.mbacase.com).  
<http://www.mbacase.com/videos/full-length-cases/>

### 3. What about your PLAN?



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<http://www.mbacase.com/videos/full-length-cases/>

### 3. What do you MEAN?



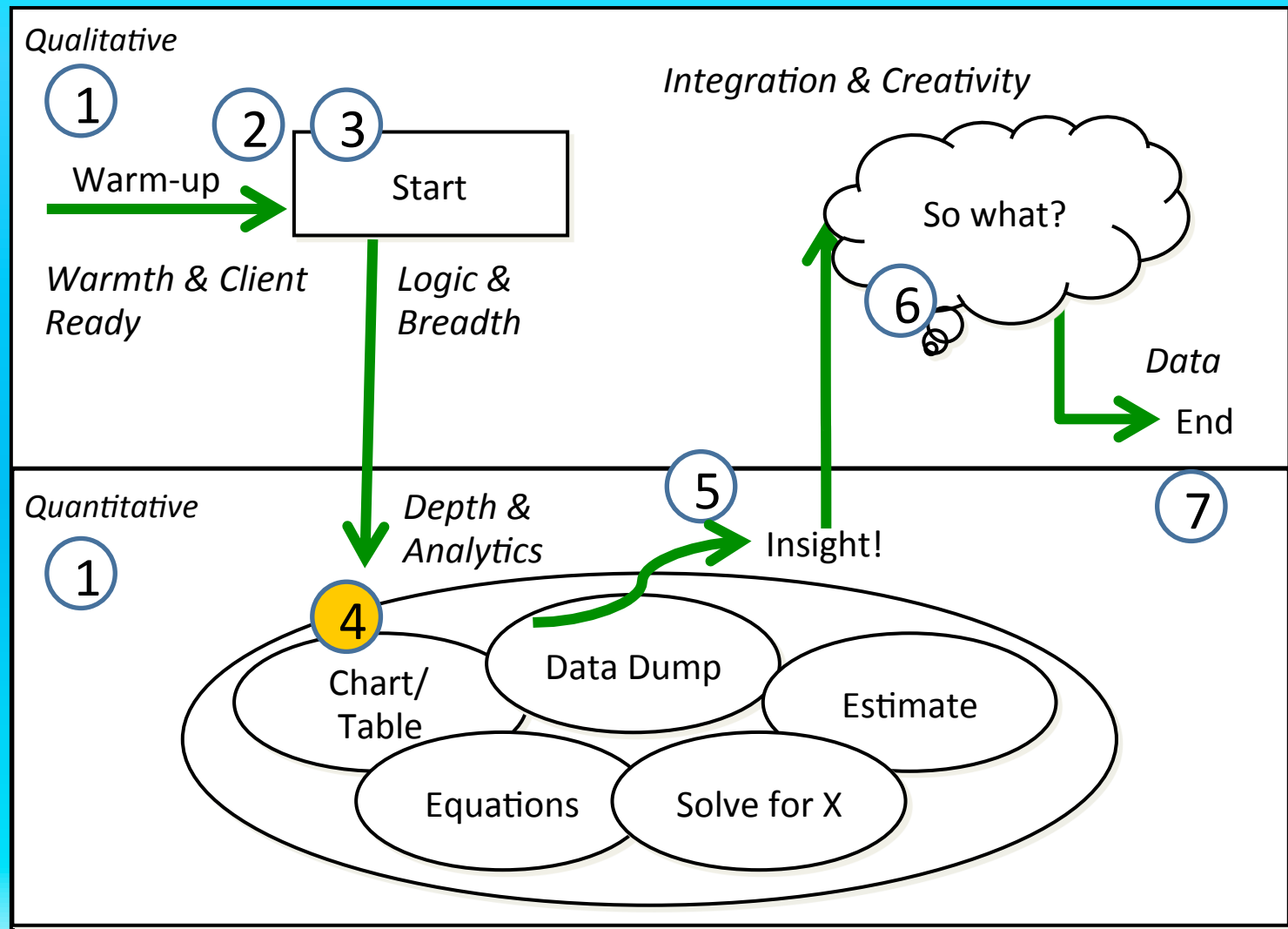
Watch the Pet Power videos at [www.mbacase.com](http://www.mbacase.com).  
<http://www.mbacase.com/videos/full-length-cases/>

### 3. What about your DATA?



Watch the Pet Power videos at [www.mbacase.com](http://www.mbacase.com).  
<http://www.mbacase.com/videos/full-length-cases/>

## 4. Dive Into Data



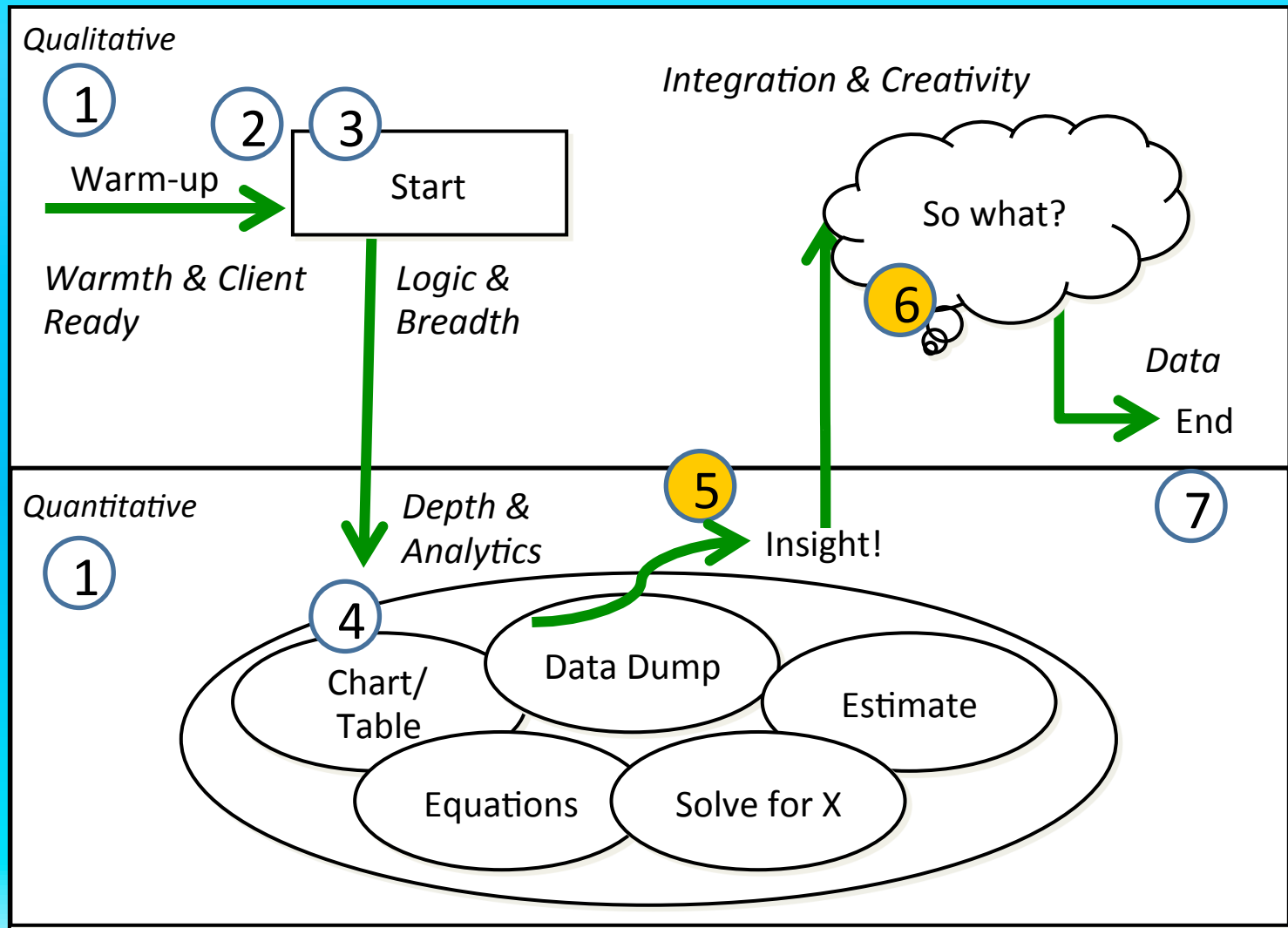


## 4. Talk Thru the Data



Watch the Pet Power videos at [www.mbacase.com](http://www.mbacase.com).  
<http://www.mbacase.com/videos/full-length-cases/>

# 5. Find Insights



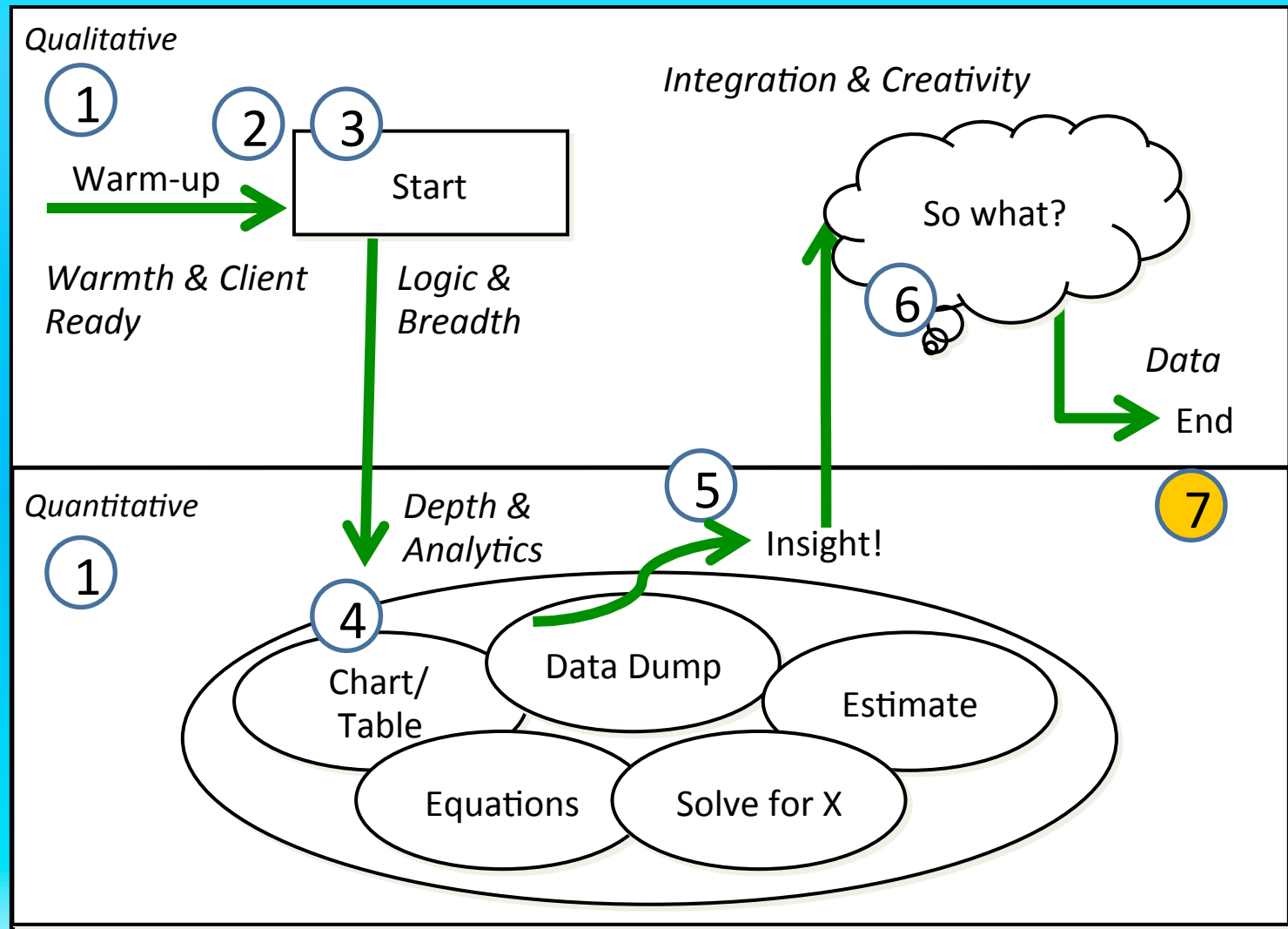


## 5-6. Use Data



Watch the Pet Power videos at [www.mbacase.com](http://www.mbacase.com).  
<http://www.mbacase.com/videos/full-length-cases/>

# 7. Integrate and Wrap-up



## 7. What would you do?



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<http://www.mbacase.com/videos/full-length-cases/>

## 7. End the Case with Data



Watch the Pet Power videos at [www.mbacase.com](http://www.mbacase.com).  
<http://www.mbacase.com/videos/full-length-cases/>

# MBA Interviewing

## What to Expect

