

HOW TO SUCCEED IN YOUR **VIRTUAL** CASE INTERVIEWS

Webinar Series with David Ohrvall



MBACASE



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Agenda



My Tech

Video "Me"

Starts

Questions

Analysis

Creativity

How can I optimize my tech for the virtual interview?



My Tech

Know your equipment

- Find your audio **settings** and set your mic input
- Test with a friend your desktop sounds – so annoying!
- Know how to **select** your mic and camera

Know **your connection**

- Is ethernet an option? It's always best.
- Where is WIFI the **fastest** in your building?
- Turn off drains: syncs, virusware, devices

Know your interviewer's system (tool/platform)

- Find out in advance and test it
- Always have a **backup ready** (your phone)

How do I make a great impression via video?



Video "Me"

Lighting and background are **everything!**

- Move your computer around until it's just right
- Start with **daylight** and add in your own
- Clean up your clutter and background lighting
- If necessary, add a virtual background

Eye contact makes the connection

- Practice staring at the camera dot!
- Move the interviewer's video near the camera
- Beware of the **nose cam**

Smile and move a little bit more than normal

- Toothy smiles have been proven to show warmth
- Film yourself on Zoom and watch it
- **Watch your chin** – it can get you in trouble

What can I do to make sure my interview starts well?

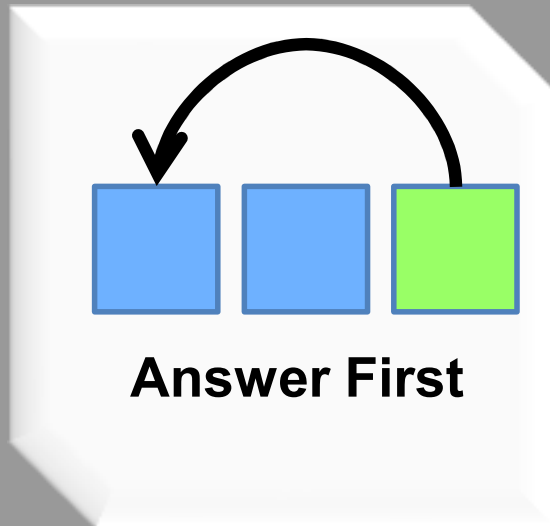


Starts

Behavioral stories make a huge impression. Are you ready?



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

Create an **IMPACT**

Individual Contribution

Manage or Lead

Persuasion

Analytics

Challenge or Failure

Teamwork

What can I do to make sure my CASE starts well?



Starts

Behavioral stories make a huge impression. Are you ready?

Your **case first impression** lasts 5-7 minutes!

- there are **13 case types**; practice one for each
- always do them out loud
- at this late stage, a little memorization won't hurt
- BUT stay flexible. Remember, "Should I buy a cow?"

Show **breadth & depth** and stay case specific

- 3-4 blocks, 1-2 layers deep; Block, Break, Ask
- Be careful about holding up your notes

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?

Why do companies use them?

They want to see a full set of skills called
CSAI: Communication, Structure, Analysis & Integration

- 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.

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



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

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

Case Interview Journey

Typical thoughts and behaviors



“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.

How can cases vary by format?

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!

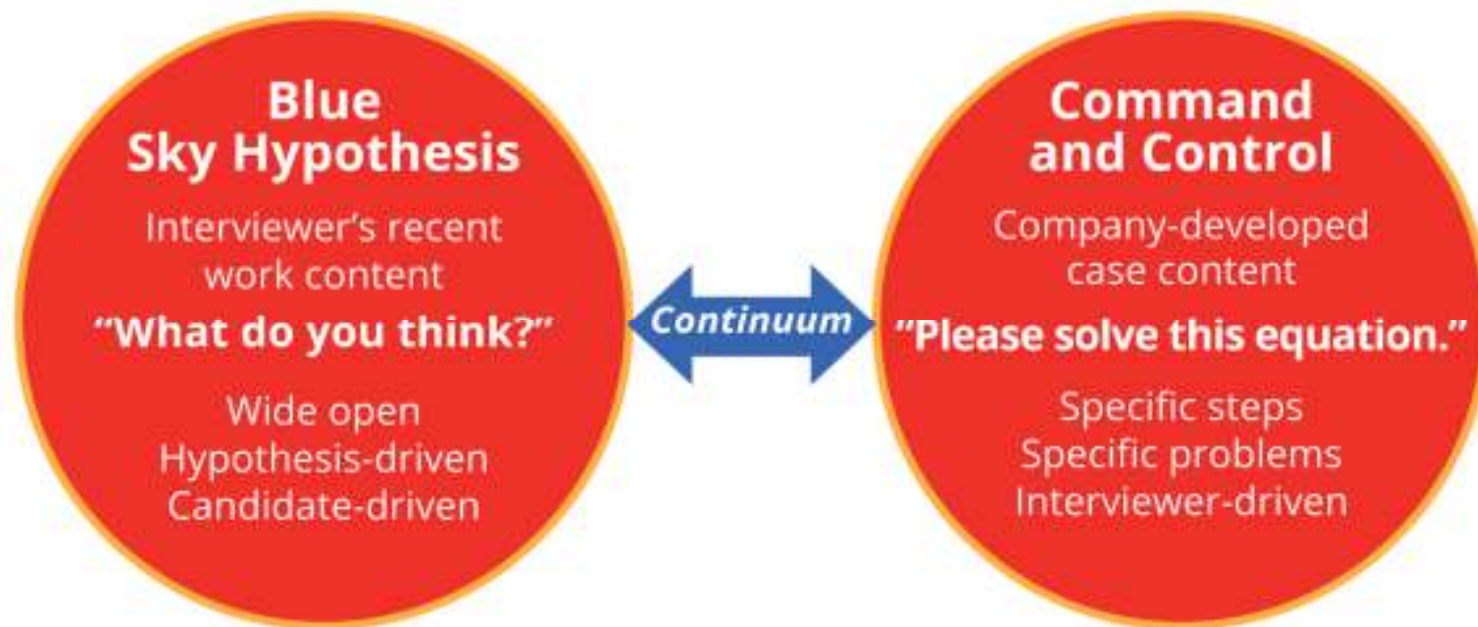
Analysis Only

- 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

How do interviewer approaches vary?



- Profit maximization
- Acquisition
- Growth strategy
- Competitor threat
- Exit the market
- Cost reduction

How about interviewer personalities?



Silent Partner

- Doesn't say much
- Hard to read
- Unsettling



Chatty Charlie

- Jumps off topic
- Feels frenetic
- Almost too fun



Data Director

- Wants facts only
- Pushes for insights
- Demanding but fair

How can cases vary by industry?



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.

What can I do to prepare best?



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



What about frameworks?

I'll memorize my way to an offer!

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

Avoid ROBOT MODE!



Pause-Bot



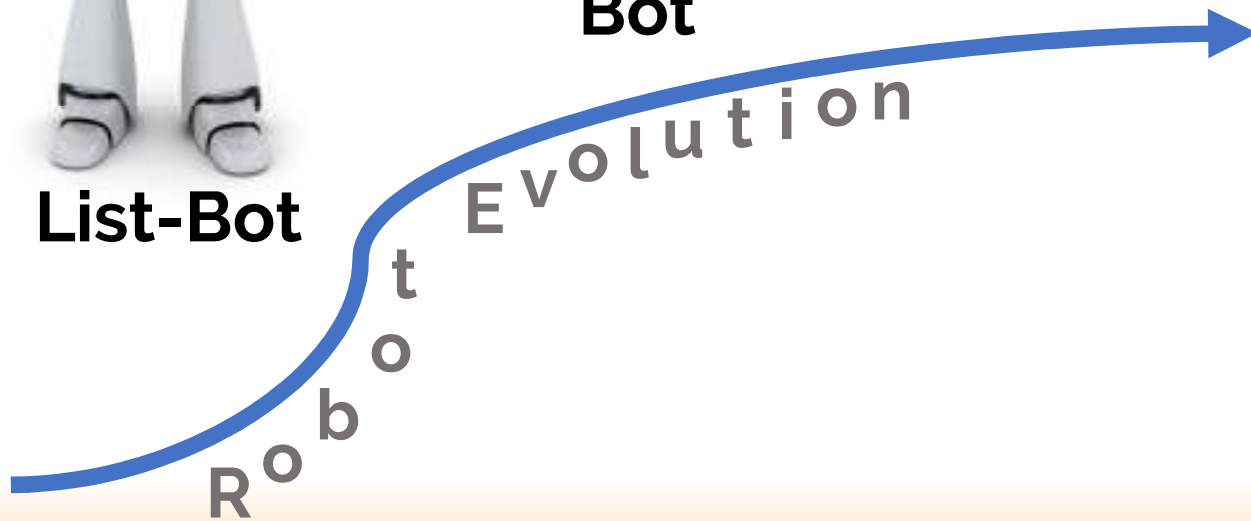
List-Bot



Hypothese-Bot



**True "AI"
Authentic
Intelligence**



What can I do to make sure my case gets off to a good start?



Starts

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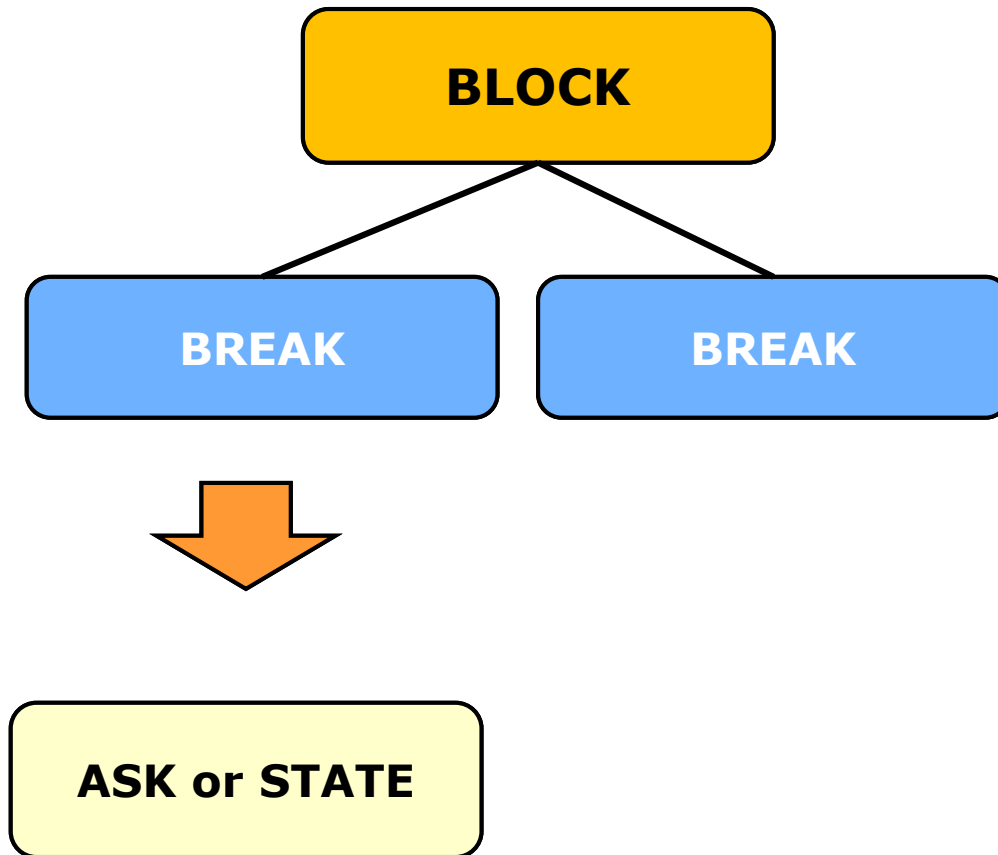
- 3-4 blocks, 1-2 layers deep; Block, Break, Ask
- Be careful about holding up your notes

Form **your hypothesis** appropriately

- a hypothesis helps you prioritize
- it should be part of a broader structure

Have a 3 layer structure

Our client wants to open a bike shop on campus.



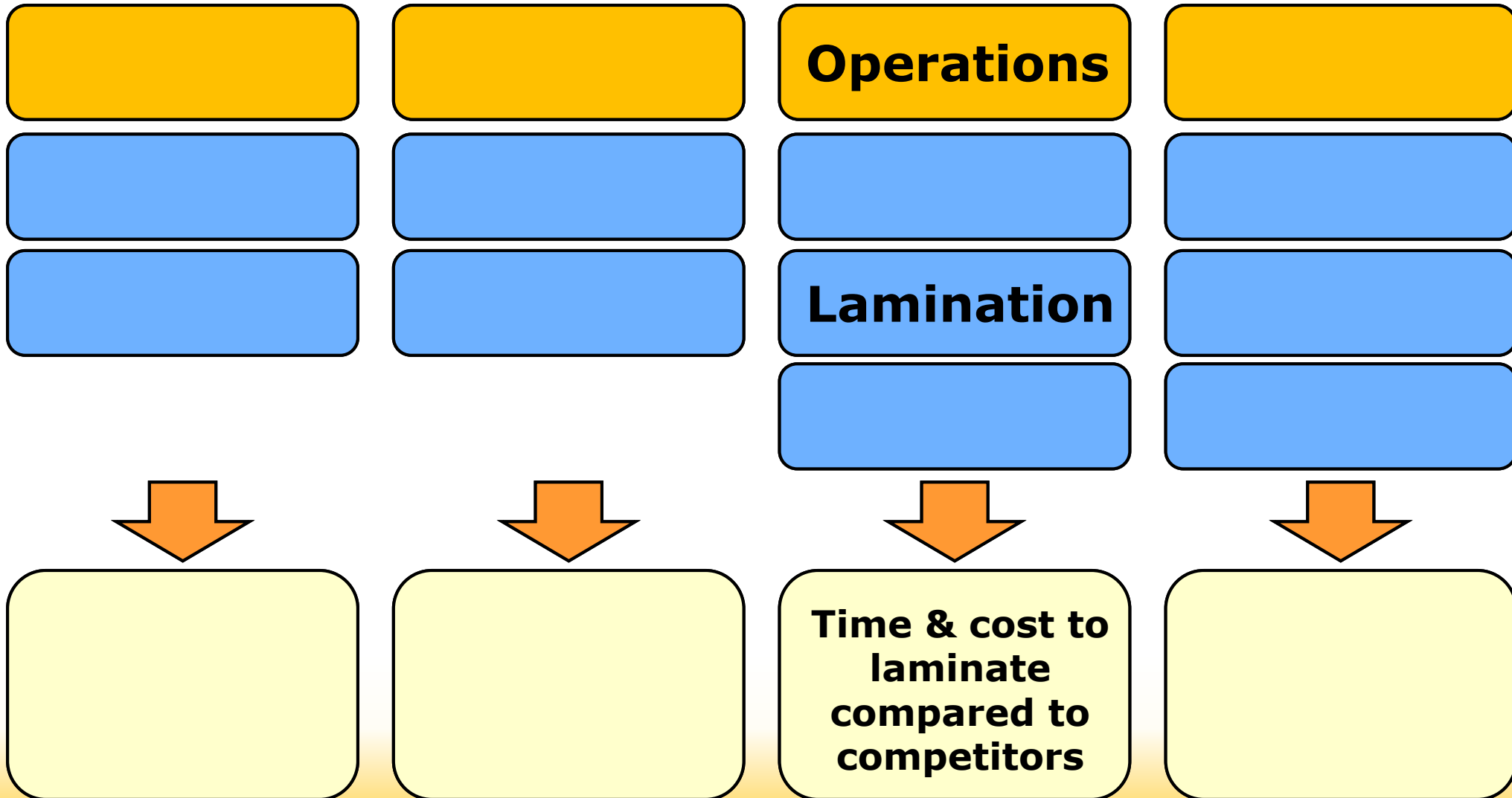
Show you are structured with several distinct categories.

Be case specific to address what matters for THIS case.

Mention the specific \$, # and % that you need.

Form a Hypothesis

Prioritize when possible but prepare to be wrong!



What do I do when they ask questions I can't answer?



Questions

Know **why** they are asking you

- they want to see if you can support your thoughts
- they want to see you respond to pressure
- this is true for both behavioral and case interviews

Be **prepared** with proper practice

- have your partners ask you intense questions
- use question flash cards for solo practice

Sample tough questions - behavioral



- **Going Deeper** – “Let’s go back to that previous situation”
 - “What were you thinking?”
 - “What was on your paper?”
 - “How did you prioritize?”
- **Definitions** – “How would you define X, and give me an example of how you showed that definition?”
 - “Leadership”
 - “Teamwork”
 - “Persuasion”
- **Broad** – “Tell me about yourself”
- **Poking** – “Why do you believe that?” or “Do you think you were effective?” or “What would you do differently?”

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Turn on your brain with your left hand for tough cases

- the answer is not on the ceiling!
- be active and look at your **structure**
- and look at your **original** notes

Sample tough questions - case



- **Stake in the Ground** – “Do you think you’ve covered everything with your answer?”
- **Depth & Breadth** – “What’s missing in your plan?”
- **So What?** – “I’m lost! Why does any of this matter?”
- **Prioritization** – “You’ve just told me 14 things! What really matters here? Are you going to focus?”
- **Thoroughness** – “Nope, don’t have that. Nope. Nope. No, we don’t have that data . . .”
- **And worst of all** – Silence! What will you say?

How do I get to the right insights faster?



Analysis

Estimation is your friend

- make sure your mental math is on point
- Scale is the most common issue:

Billions, Millions, Thousands

- estimates reduce the risk, "Do you mind . . ."
- know your formulas

Keep track of your "**puzzle pieces**"

- Fix you messy notes! You can do it.
- 75% of my clients can't find their insights

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See and **connect** the dots with **mid-case structures**

- make small connections as you go
- practice "driving" old cases with friends
- **bar charts** are your friend!

How do I show off my creativity throughout the case?



Creativity

Make sure you **avoid** creativity early in the case!

- Interviewers mainly want problem solvers
- Show breadth, depth and **analytics** first

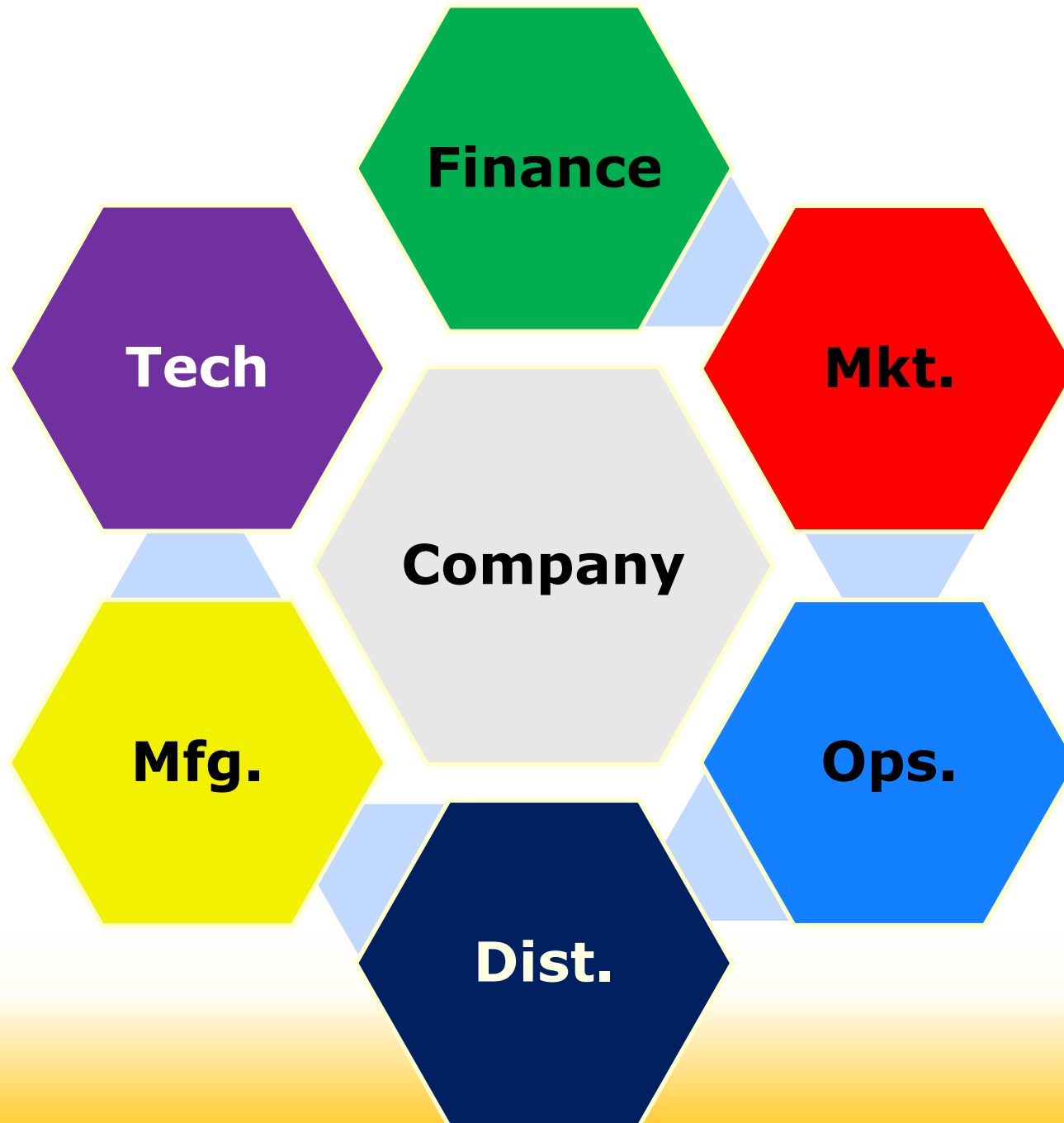
Stay within the **case topics** as much as possible

- What could change? e.g. retail, distribution
- Think deeply about the product and service
- Consider the **customer** perspective

If only you know it, then it's not likely a good answer

- examples from a friend or relative are bad
- use examples from readings, class and observations
- make sure the connection is clear

Hit creativity from several angles



Plan to put in the time and be systematic



Step 5 Practice with alums & pros
· Fine-tune for target companies

Step 4 Review your feedback · Drill on weak spots · Work on mental math and slides

Step 3 Practice with partners · Find your weak spots
· Score your cases with the MBACASE Scorecard

Step 2 Learn how to structure profit trees · Practice Block, Break & Ask technique · Do 10 case starts on MBACASE.com

Step 1 Form your practice team · Gather your case materials · Make your partner schedule · Watch a full case video on MBACASE.com

Recap

- **There is a lot to consider when preparing for behaviorals and cases**
 - How you present
 - How you think
 - How you find insights
 - How you present your conclusions
- **Focus on CSAI and you will be able to handle any case, interviewer and style variations**





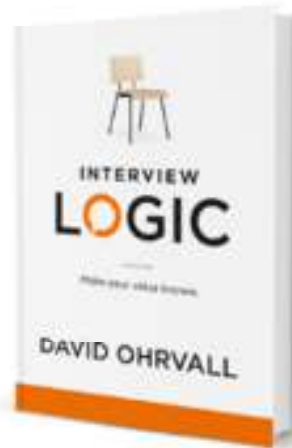
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