



MASTERING THE CASE INTERVIEW



What is case interview

Case interview is the job interview method used by management consulting companies. Candidates are given a business problem and asked to resolve the situation. Case interview also simulates a real work situation of consultants.

THE INTERVIEW HAS 2 PARTS

Case interview
normally lasts
for

**45
mins**

The first 15
mins is
FIT INTERVIEW

Personal
experience
interview
&
An airplane test

FOCUS

The latter 30
mins is
**CASE
INTERVIEW**

CASE INTERVIEW HAS

1

OPEN



2

Analyze



3

CLOSE



1

HOW TO OPEN A CASE (1)

STEP 1

Summarize the case and verify objectives

1. Short note important information from the interviewer
2. Ask interviewers to clarify terminology
3. Summarize the case
4. Make sure that you understand the question precisely



1

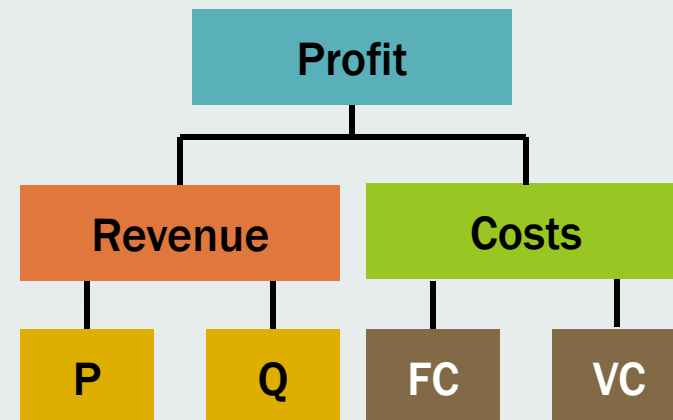
HOW TO OPEN A CASE (2)

STEP 2

Structure a framework and draw it

How to structure a framework

1. Identify **PROBLEM TYPE**
2. Match to appropriate **FRAMEWORK**
3. **DRAW** the framework on a piece of paper
4. Show the framework and **EXPLAIN** to the interviewer



2

HOW TO ANALYZE A CASE (1)

STEP 3

Ask questions and dig down each branch of the framework

Analyzing a case step-by-step

1. State a **HYPOTHESIS**
2. PICK a branch of framework to start
3. Ask questions to gather more and more data
4. Go **DEEPER** down the branch if data suggests to do so, or go **UP** a level and work a different branch

KEY IDEA:

To Analyze = To Break Things Down into Its Component Parts

When in doubt, break problem into PIECES

2

HOW TO ANALYZE A CASE (2)

Think of case interview as a **GAME** in which you start with nothing and you need to **EXTRACT** more and more **DATA** from the interviewer until you have enough understanding of the case to make strategic recommendation.

3

HOW TO CLOSE A CASE (1)

STEP 4

Provide a synthesis of what you've discovered

Checklist of a Good Close:

1. Pick up the most **IMPORTANT INSIGHT** that you've discovered
2. Provide a '**BIG PICTURE**' point of view and also actionable recommendation
3. Support your recommendation with data

SYNTHESIS:

Synthesis is not a conclusion.

- **Conclusion** summarizes all the fact.
- **Synthesis** provides recommendation with supporting insights.

3

HOW TO CLOSE A CASE (2)



When
to close a case?

When you reach a **critical point**

As you dig deeper into the case, you gather more and more data. Until at a point, you find an **AHA!** Or the critical information. Then you know that it is time to wrap up the case.

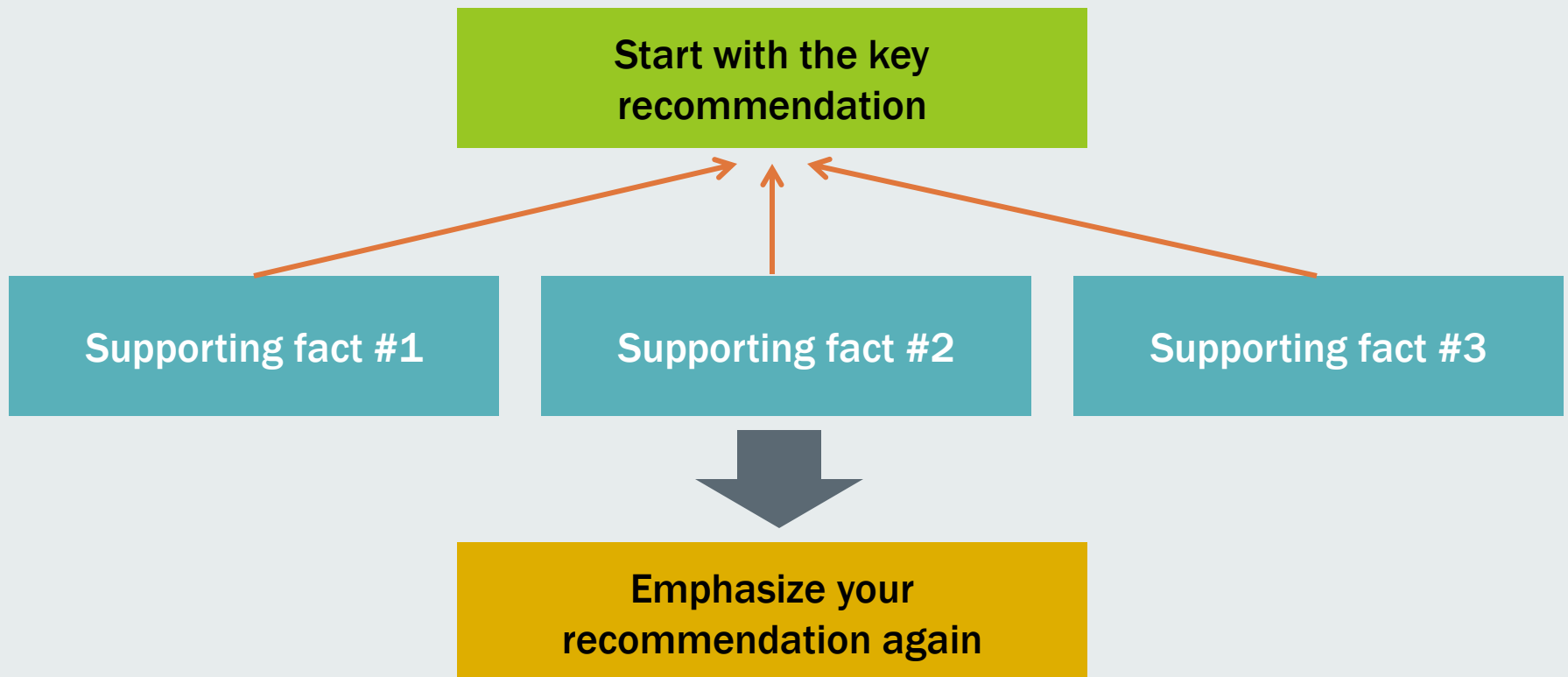
When the time is up

Interviewer will tell you that the time is running out and ask you to conclude the case.

3

HOW TO CLOSE A CASE (3)

This is how a good closing should be



TYPES OF CASE INTERVIEW QUESTIONS

1

Profitability problem

2

Strategy problem

3

Market Sizing

4

Brainteaser

PROFITABILITY PROBLEM

Example:

“Our client, company X, had satisfying profit growth during the past 3 years. However, recently, the profit of the company drops drastically. The client asked us to find the root cause of the drop and recommend solutions to rejuvenate the profit growth.”



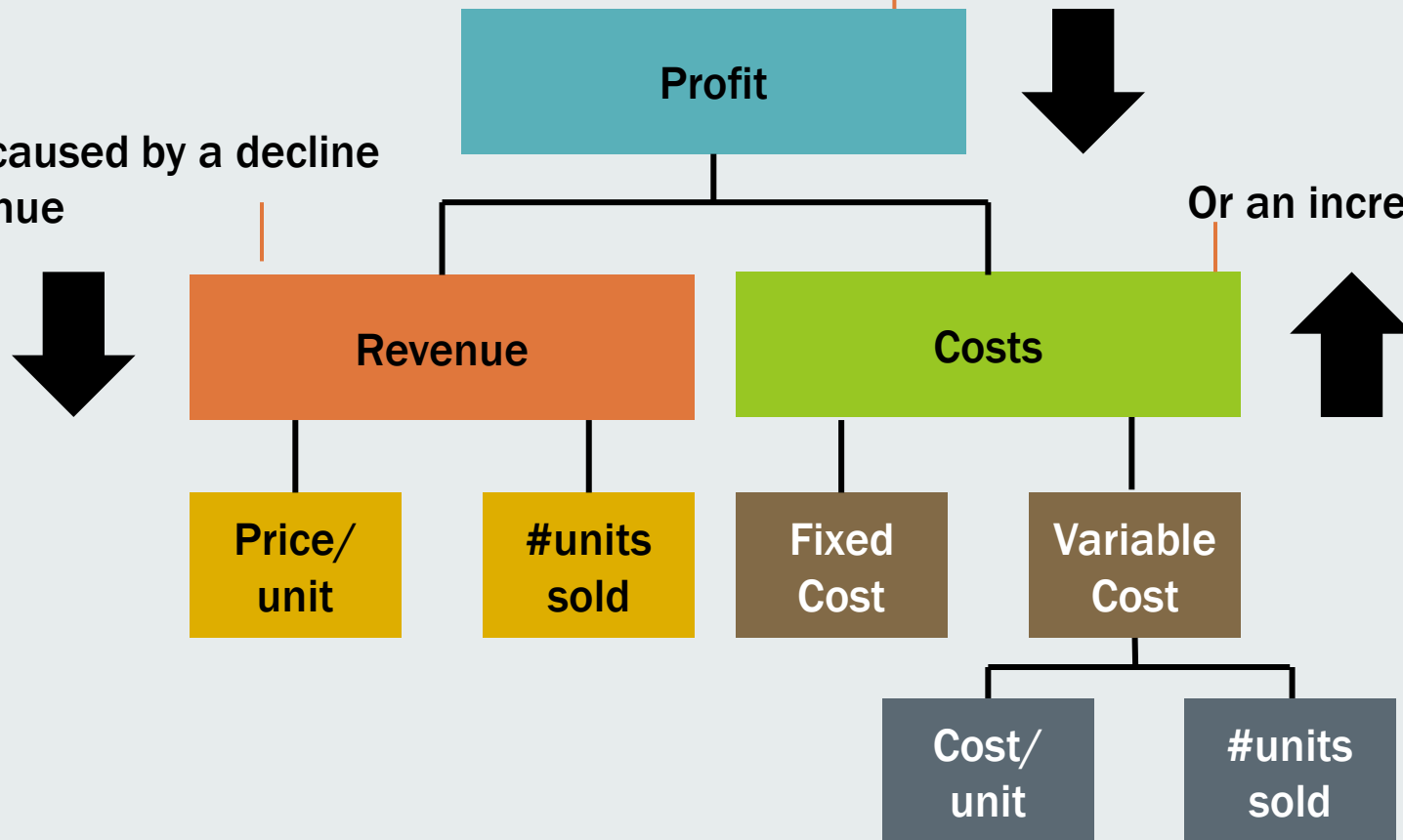
PROFITABILITY FRAMEWORK

Your primary objective:
Find the root cause of the decline in profit

A decrease in profits

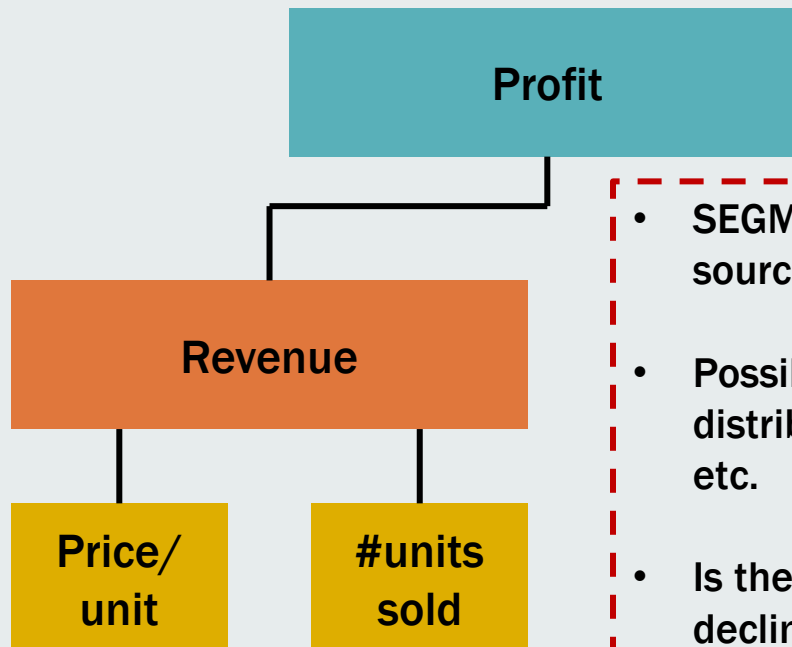
Either caused by a decline
in revenue

Or an increase in costs



PROFITABILITY FRAMEWORK

1. Start with the revenue branch

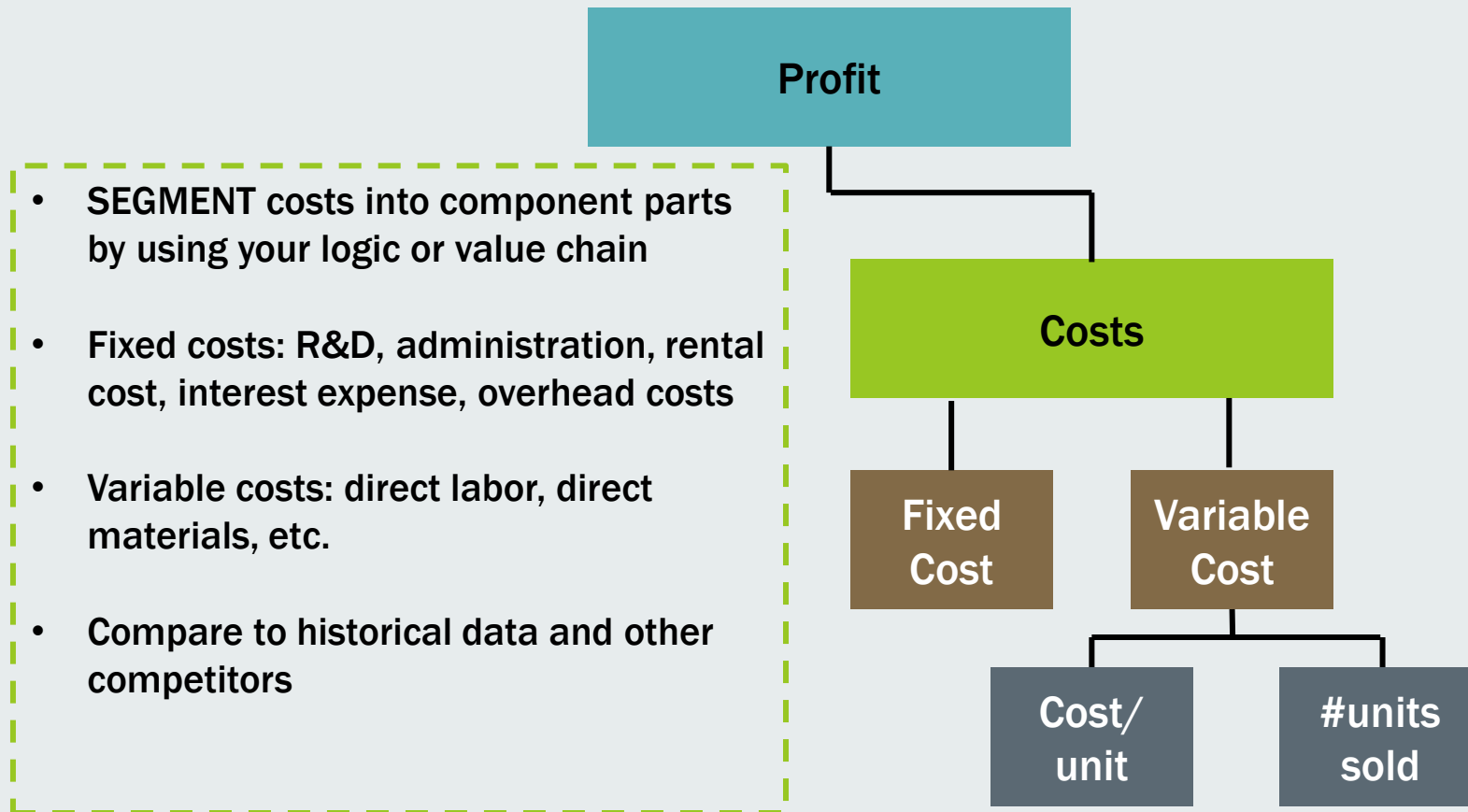


BIG TIPS:
**SEGMENT &
COMPARE**

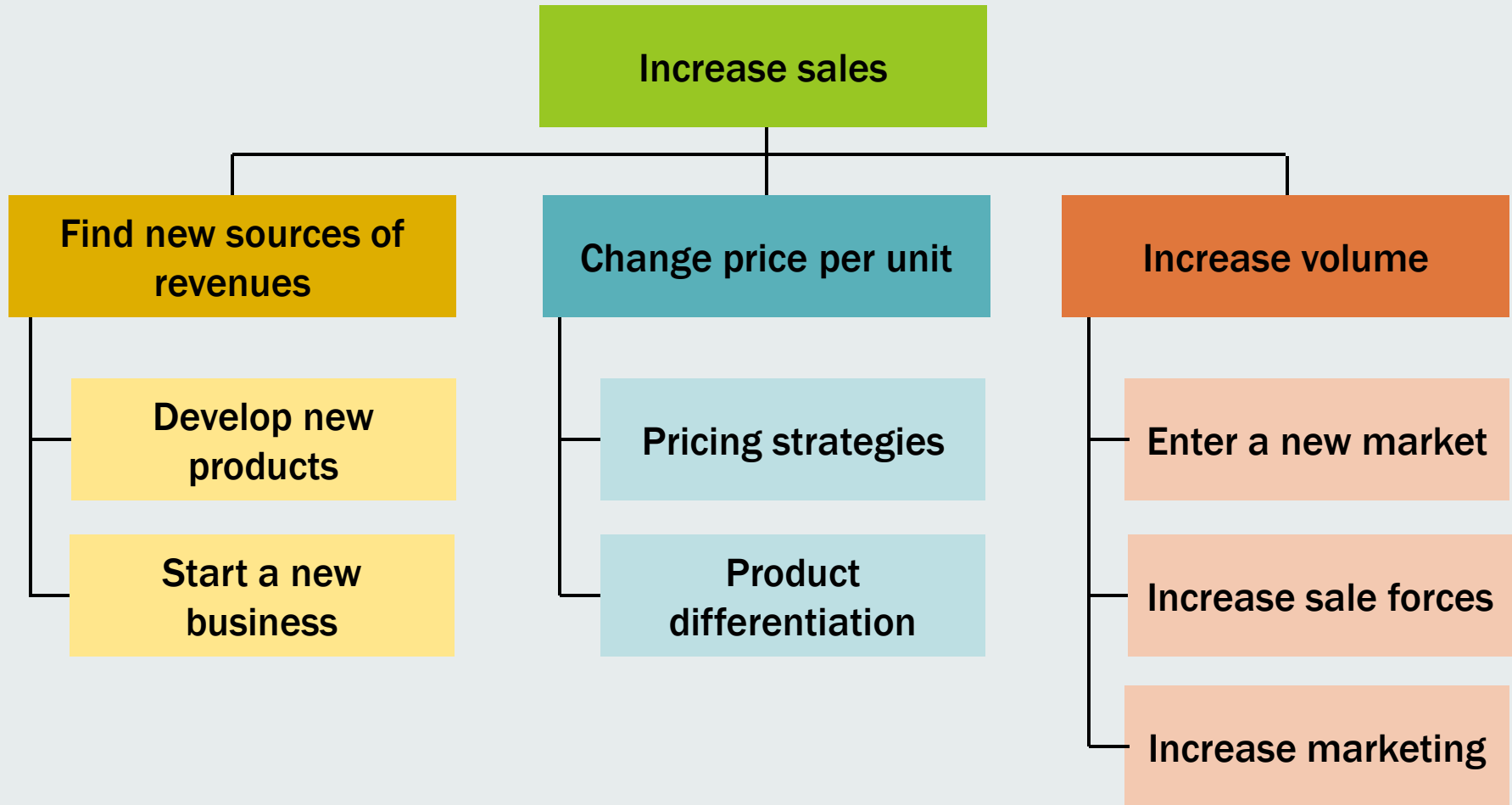
- **SEGMENT** the revenue into different sources of revenue streams.
- Possible segments are types of products, distribution channel, region, customer type, etc.
- Is the decline in revenue caused by a decline in price or a decline in quantity. Compare with historical data and other players.
- Industry-wide or company-specific?

PROFITABILITY FRAMEWORK

2. Then, check on the cost branch



INCREASE SALES





ENTERING A NEW MARKET

STEP 1

**Start thinking why
company should
enter a new market**

- ✓ **Determine why?**
- ✓ **What's our goal?**
- ✓ **What's our objective?**
- ✓ **Does it fit into over all strategy?**

STEP 2

Determine the current and future market

- ✓ **Size**
- ✓ **Growth rate**
- ✓ **Customer segmentation**
- ✓ **Life cycle**
- ✓ **Competition respond**

STEP 3

Investigate
the market.

Is it good to
enter?

Company
should looking
what is going
on in the
market

- ✓ Product differentiation
- ✓ Barrier to Entry
- ✓ Barrier to Exit
- ✓ Major player
- ✓ Market share
- ✓ Strengths
- ✓ Weakness

FINAL STEP : DECIDE HOW TO ENTER THE MARKET

- Figure out the best way to become a player.
- Analyze the pros and cons of each, called “**Cost – Benefit**” Analysis.

ENTER

YES!

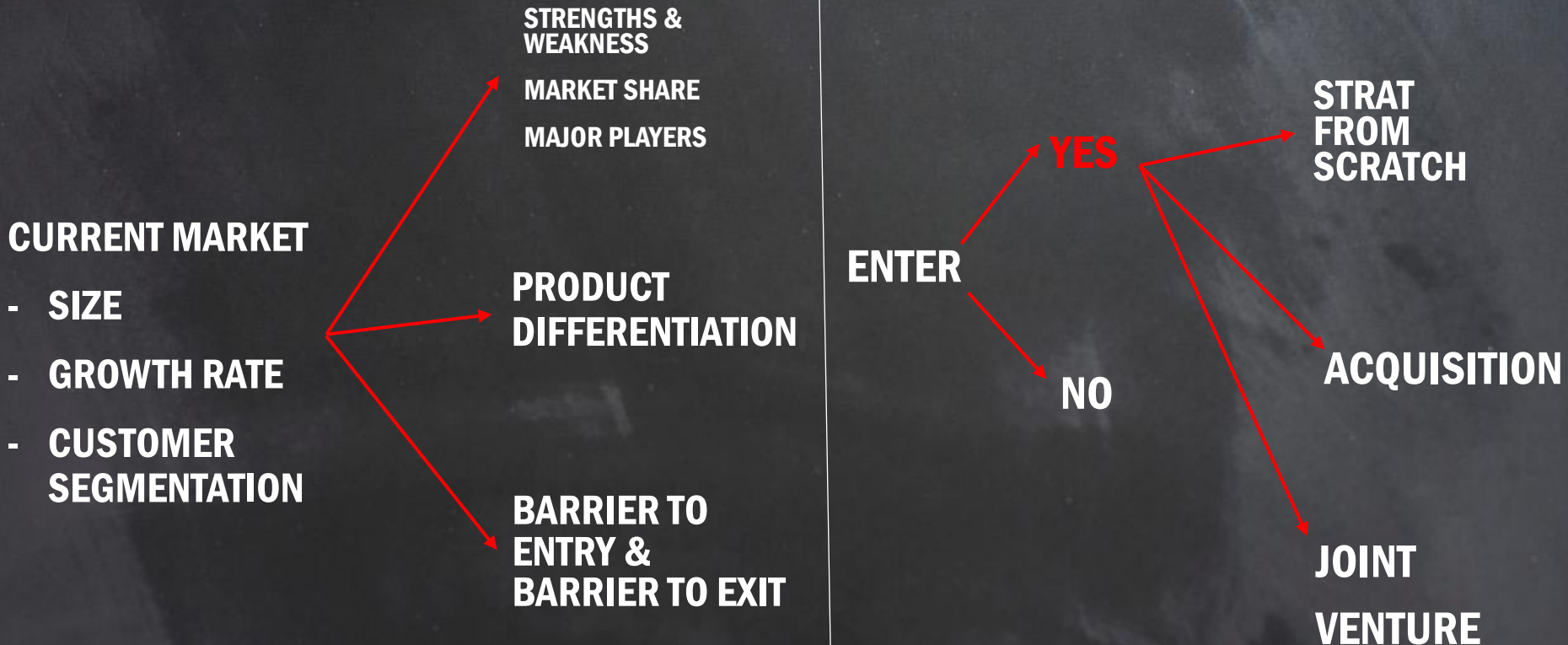
NO

STRAT
FROM
SCRATCH

ACQUISITION

JOINT
VENTURE

SUMMARY



INDUSTRY ANALYSIS

A man with dark, wavy hair is shown in profile, looking out over a cityscape at dusk. The city buildings are visible in the background, and the sky is a mix of blue and orange. The man is wearing a dark coat and a scarf.

Introduction

Steps

Profitability problems

Strategic problems

Finale & Final Tips

I'm thinking of acquiring a company that has holdings in 3 different industries. One of them is entertainment.

That sounds cool, man.





**But I totally
have no
idea about the
entertainment
industry.**

Sh*tttttt




STEP 1

INVESTIGATE THE INDUSTRY OVERALL

- emerging, maturity or decline
 - growing or declining
- how we have been doing compared to the industry ?
 - major players and market share
- any major changes in the industry ?
 - what drives the industry ?



STEP 2 SUPPLIERS

- 
- Have the suppliers been consistent ?
 - What is going on in their industry ?
 - Will they continue to supply us ?

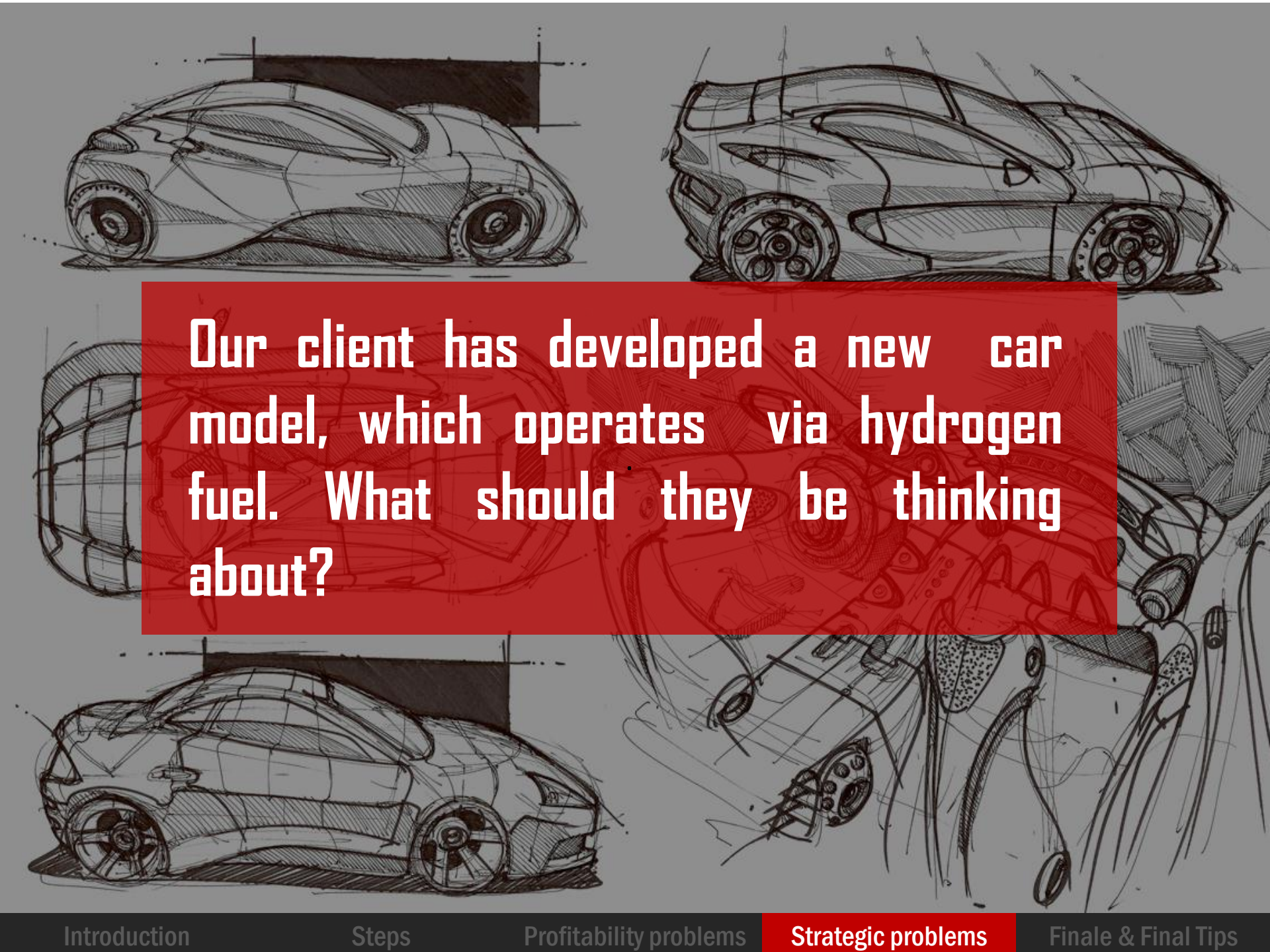
STEP 3

WHAT IS THE FUTURE OUTLOOK FOR THE INDUSTRY ?

- Are players coming into or leaving the industry ?
- Have there been many mergers or acquisitions lately ?
- What are the barriers to entry and/or to exit ?

DEVELOPING A NEW PRODUCT

A black and white photograph showing a hand holding a black marker, drawing a sketch of a product on a whiteboard. The sketch consists of several overlapping lines and shaded areas, suggesting a technical drawing or a conceptual design. The background is slightly blurred, focusing attention on the drawing process.



Our client has developed a new car model, which operates via hydrogen fuel. What should they be thinking about?

STEP 1: Think about the product

What's special or proprietary about our product?

Is the product patented?

Are there similar products out there? Are there substitutions?

What are the advantages and disadvantages of this new product?

How does the new product fit in with the rest of our product line?

STEP 2 : Think about the market strategy

How does this affect our existing product line?

Are we cannibalizing one of our existing products?

Are we replacing an existing product?

How will this expand our customer base and increase our sales?

What will the competitive response be?

STEP 3 : Think about our customer

Who are our customers?

How can we best reach them?

Can we reach them through the Internet?

How can we ensure that we retain them?

STEP 3 : Think about our customer 2

What will the competitive response be?

If it's a new market, what are the barriers to entry?

Who is the major players and what the market share each firm have?


STEP 4 : Think about financing

How is the project being funded?

What is the best allocation of funds?

Can we support the debt? (what if the situation change?)



A group of students is working at a wooden table. In the foreground, a silver laptop is open, displaying a dark screen. To the left, a person's arm and hand are visible, holding a pen over a white piece of paper. A red cable is plugged into the laptop. The background is softly blurred, showing other people and the warm, ambient lighting of the workspace.

A group of students want to start their own tech startup company. They need strategic advice and business plan for getting started. What do you tell them ?

STEP 1 : Investigate the market

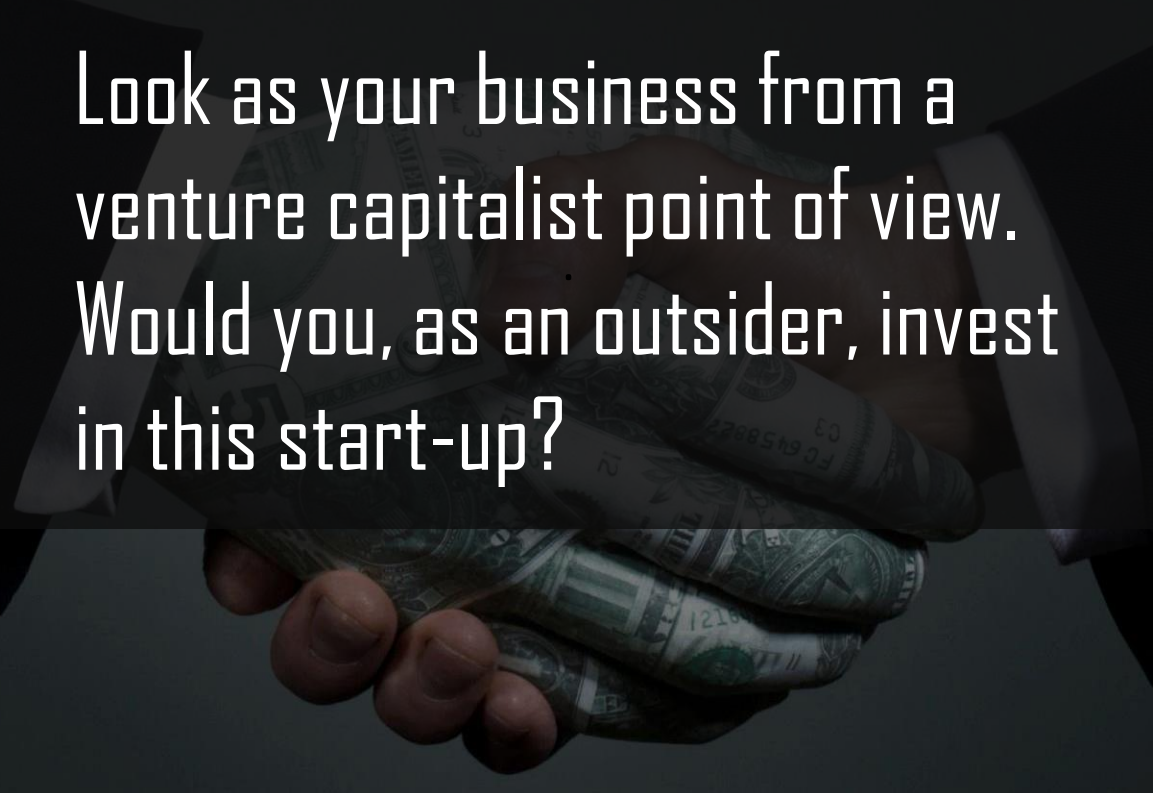
Who is our competitors?

What size market share does each competitor have?

How do their product/services compare to ours?

Are there any barriers to entry?

STEP 2 : Venture capitalist's POW



Look at your business from a venture capitalist point of view. Would you, as an outsider, invest in this start-up?

STEP 2 : Venture capitalist's POW

Management

Market & Strategic plan

Distribution Channel

Product

Customers

Finance



STEP 2 : Venture capitalist's POW

Management

✓ What is the **management team** like?

✓ What are there core **competencies**?

✓ Have they **worked together** before?

✓ Is there an **advisory board**?

STEP 2 : Venture capitalist's POW

Market & strategic plan

✓ What are the **barrier to entry**?

✓ Who is the **major player**?

✓ What will **competitive response** be?

STEP 2 : Venture capitalist's POW

Distribution Channel

What is our distribution channel?

STEP 2 : Venture capitalist's POW

Product

- ✓ What is the **product** and **technology**?
- ✓ What is the **competitive edge**?
- ✓ What are the **disadvantages** of the product?
- ✓ Is the technology **patented**?

STEP 2 : Venture capitalist's POW

Customers

- ✓ Who are our **customers** ?
- ✓ How can we best **reach** them?
- ✓ How can we ensure that we **retain** them?

STEP 2 : Venture capitalist's POW

Finance

- ✓ How is the project being **funded**?
- ✓ What is the best **allocation** of funds?
- ✓ Can we support the **debt**?



MERGERS AND ACQUISITIONS



Question: Facebook is buying **WhatsApp**, an instant messaging app for smartphone.

- Does this make sense?
- **What should they be thinking about?**

STEP 1 : Determine the goals and objective

Why are you going to buy it?
Does it make sense or there
is a better choice?

- Increase market access
- **Diversify their holdings**
- Pre-empt the competition
- **Gain tax advantages**
- Incorporate synergies:
Marketing, Financial,
Operations

STEP 2 : How much is it?

- Fair price?
- **How will you pay?**
- Can you afford to buy?
- **Can you still do well in the economic downturn?**



STEP 3 : Research the company and industry



- Good or bad shape?
- **How secure are its market and customers?**
- How is the company doing overall and how is it compare to the others?
- **How would the competitors respond to this acquisition?**
- Are there any legal reason not to involve in?

STEP 4 : Exit Strategies: Looking for a way out

- How long do you plan to keep it?
- **Do you buy it to break it up and sell off its parts?**





PRICING STRATEGIES

STEP 1 : Investigate the product

What are the **selling points** of the product?

Any **substitutes**?

Stage of Product Cycle

Market size

R&D Cost



STEP 2 : Determine Pricing Strategies

A close-up photograph of a computer keyboard. The central focus is a blue key with the word "pay" written on it in white lowercase letters. The key is slightly raised and has a soft shadow. Other keys are visible in the background, including one labeled "control" and another labeled "alt". The lighting is soft, creating a professional and clean aesthetic.

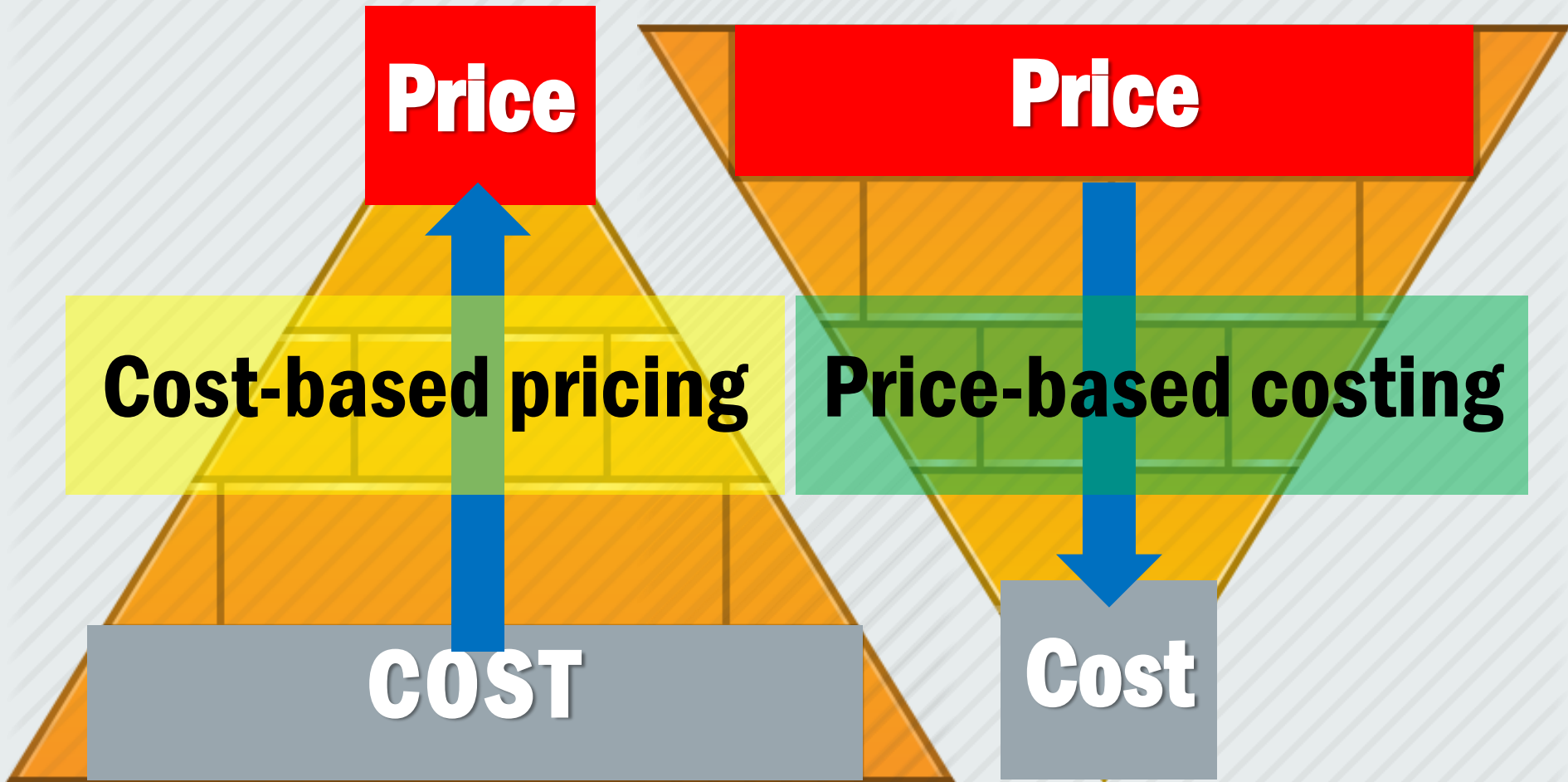
- Total Cost
- Willingness to Pay
- Elasticity
- Educating consumer

STEP 3 : Determine Demand & Supply



- How are supply and demand?
- How will pricing have an affect on the market equilibrium
- Matching competition: What are similar products selling for?
- Are there substitutions?

Pricing Method



Question :

A pharmaceutical company invented a medicine that cure short-sighted and long-sighted problem.

It is the first medicine in the world that perfectly cures eyesight problems with no side effects at all!

The R&D cost is 8 trillion baht in total. Manufacturing cost is negligibly small.

How are we going to

PRICE IT?



Lasik Operation

**Lasik Price = 40,000
Baht**

Medicine

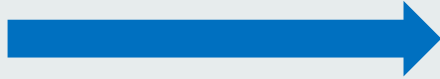
Lower risk

No Surgery Needed

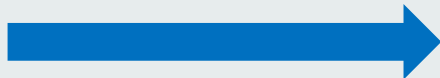
No Side Effect

**Added on Premium =
x2**

=80,000 Baht

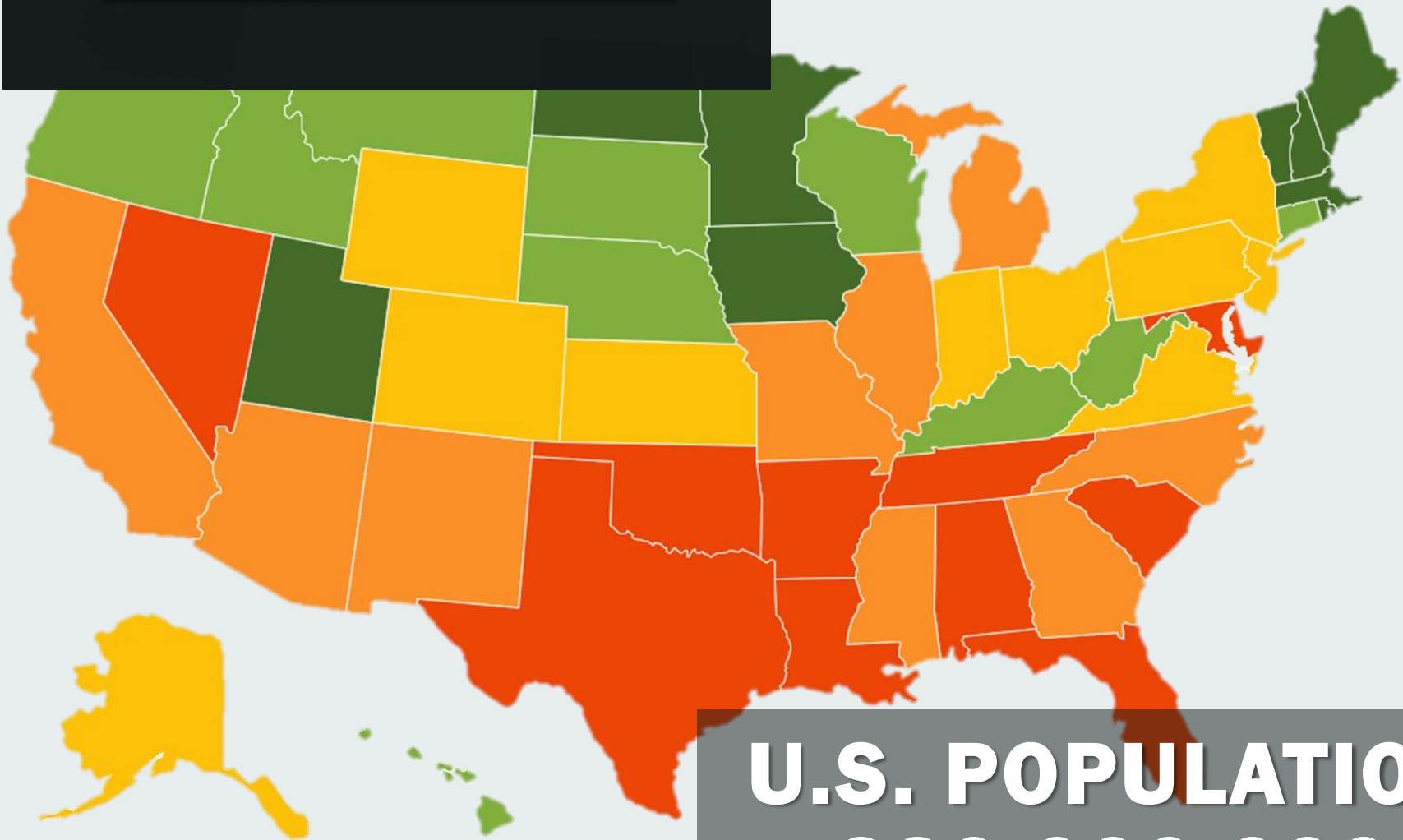


80,000 Baht/Pill
The highest willingness to pay. Setting the upper limit of pricing

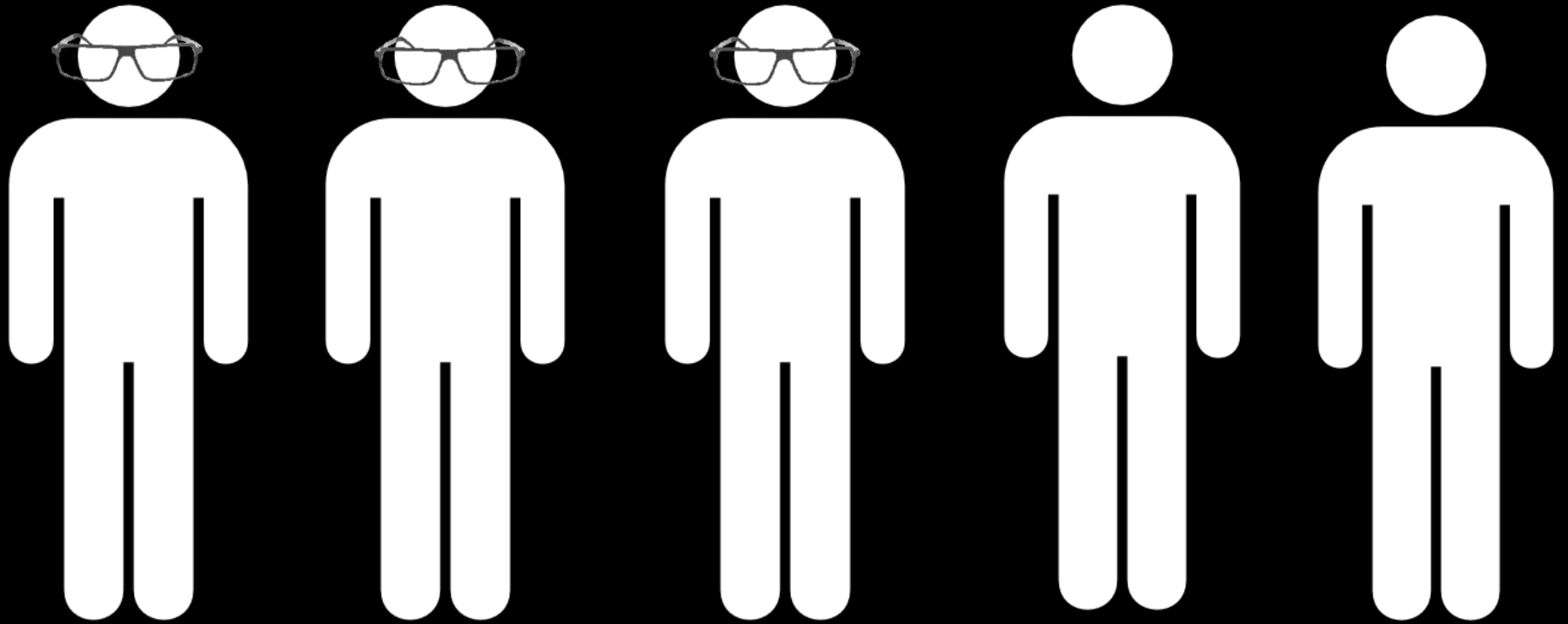


??? Baht/Pill

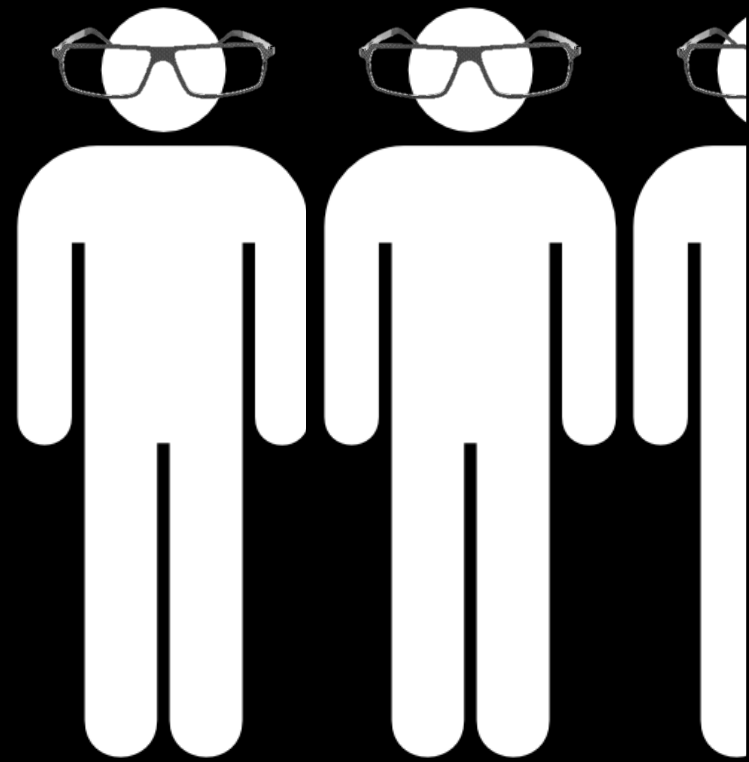
Market Size



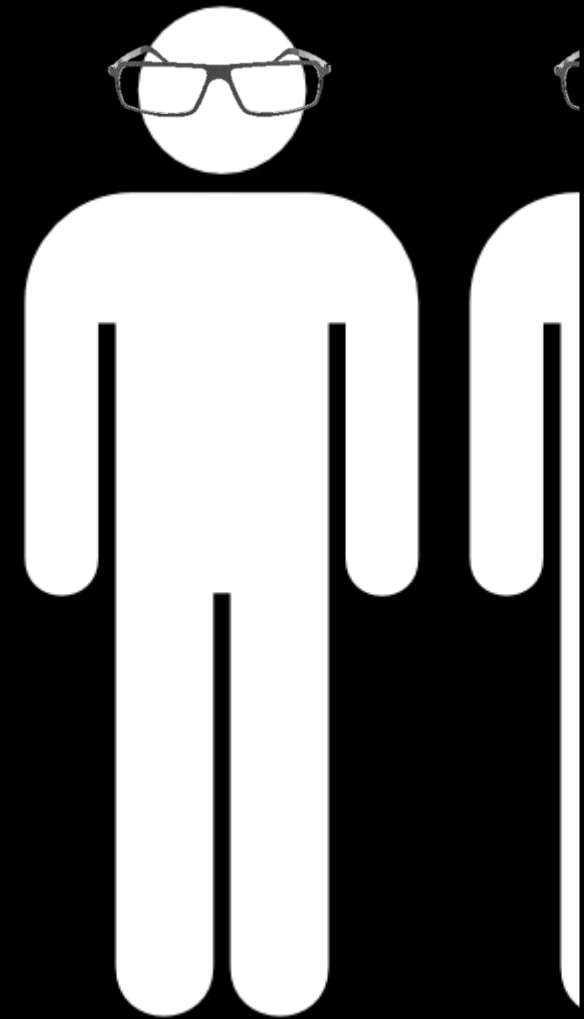
**U.S. POPULATION
320,000,000**



60% of population wear eyeglasses

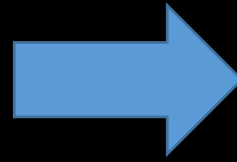
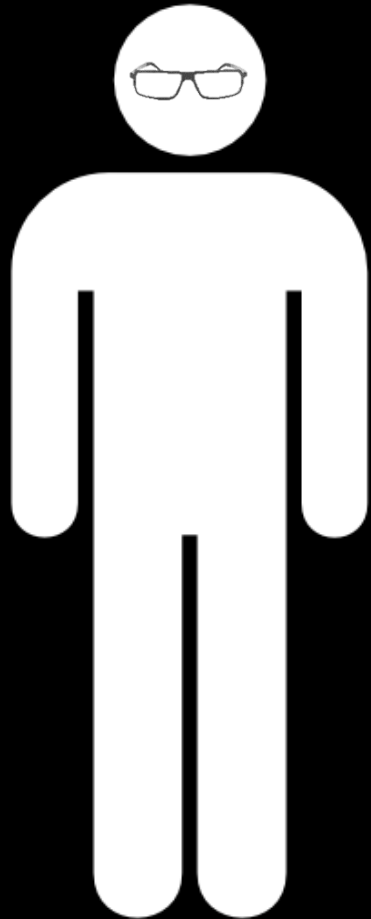


**70% of people
who are wearing
eyeglasses, do
not want to
wear eyeglasses
anymore
= 42% of total
population**



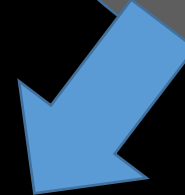
**60% of people
who do not
want to wear
eyeglasses are
willing to pay
for medicine
= 25% of total
population**

U.S. = 320,000,000



X 25%

(Ratio of people who do not want to wear eyeglasses anymore and have willingness to pay)



= 80,000,000 People



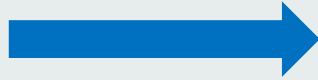
R&D = 800,000,000,000



R&D Per unit = 10,000 Baht



PRICE RANGE



80,000 Baht/Pill



10,000 Baht/Pill
Lowest Price that
would cover R&D Cost

Growth Strategy

Q: XYB Cooperation has a high cash reserve (lots of cash in hand).

How can we best use that money to grow the company?



STEP 1 : Start thinking which parts of the company should be grown

Can be focusing on



CERTAIN PRODUCTS

CERTAIN DIVISION

COMPANY OVERALL

STEP 1 : Start thinking which parts of the company should be grown

Determine the direction of questioning

- ✓ Is the industry growing?
- ✓ How are we growing relative to the industry?
- ✓ Are our prices in line with our competitors ?
- ✓ What have our competitors done in marketing and product development?
- ✓ Which segments of our business have to the highest future potential?
- ✓ Do we have funding to support higher growth?

STEP 2 : Choose the best growth strategy

Determine which following strategies fitted to question:

1. INCREASE DISTRIBUTION CHANNEL
2. INCREASE PRODUCT LINE
3. INVEST IN A MAJOR MARKETING CAMPAIGN
4. DIVERSIFY PRODUCTS OR SERVICES OFFERED
5. ACQUIRE COMPETITORS

Competitive Response



Q: Sperry Topsider has developed a new non-slip sailing shoe that has been eating into the sales of our bestseller, The Commodore 2000. How can we respond?

STEP 1 : Ask a few questions on competitor analysis



Competitive Analysis

Competitor new product ?

What is changed in competitors ?

Have they pick up the market share ?

STEP 2 : Choose one of your response action

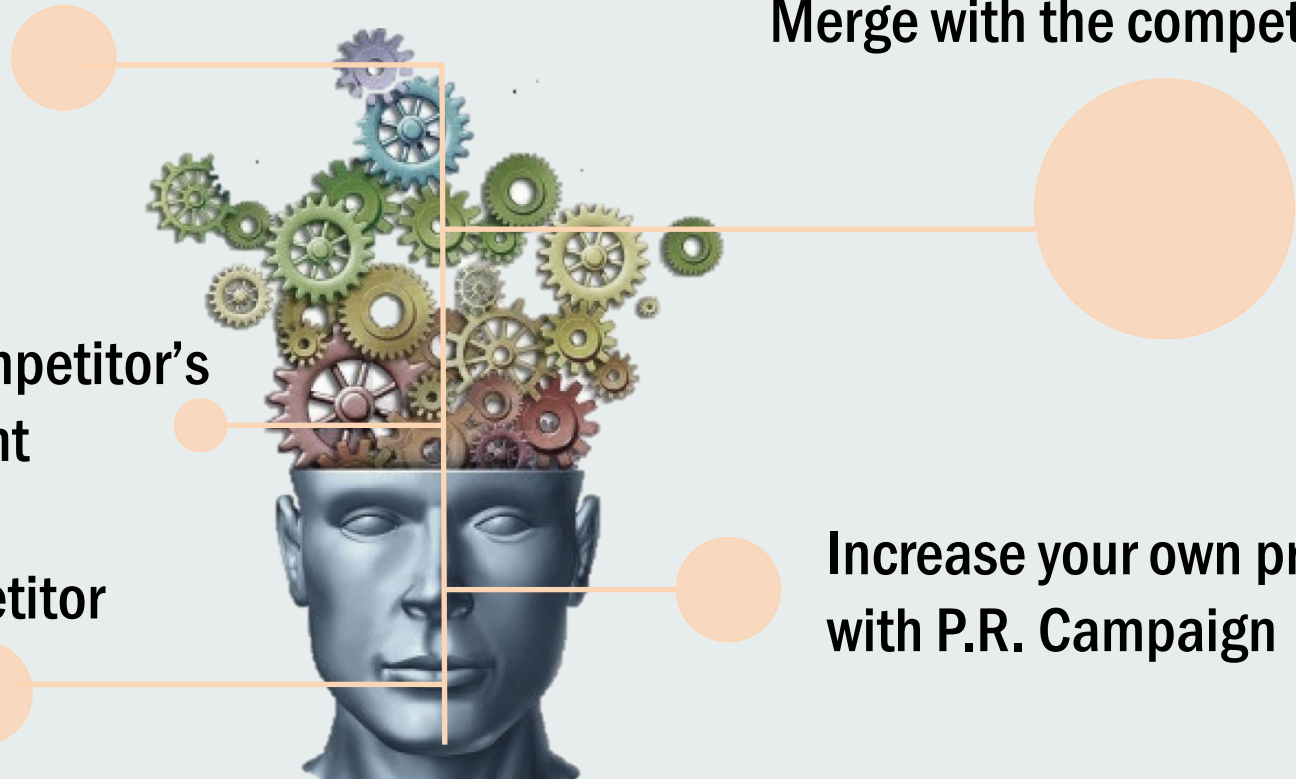
Acquire the competitor

Merge with the competitor

Hire the competitor's management

Copy the competitor

Increase your own profile with P.R. Campaign



FINAL TIPS

During the case interview, you are evaluated on your ability to follow a structured, analytical problem solving process.



Your logic is more important than your final answer!!

FINAL TIPS

1. Be hypothesis-driven

- Start with a hypothesis
- Ask questions to prove or disprove the hypothesis
- If the hypothesis is invalid, re-hypothesize.



FINAL TIPS

2. Think out loud

- Always clearly explain the framework, the process, and your logic behind any statements
- Also write and draw your framework neatly



FINAL TIPS

3. Often right, Never without factual justification

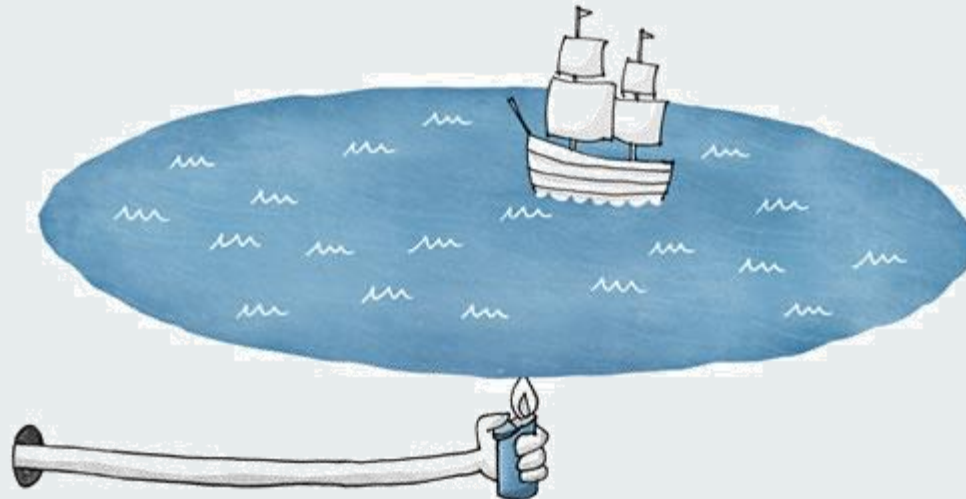
- Always ask data and use it to support your recommendation.
- Your analysis must be **FACT-BASED**, not **SENSE-BASED**.



FINAL TIPS

4. Don't boil the ocean

- Don't ask every question on the check list
- Think before you ask
- Apply 80/20 rule



FINAL TIPS

5. SMILE

- Be relaxed and friendly throughout the whole interview process (but also maintain professionalism)
- Show interviewers that you enjoy cracking case. Never show signs of suffering.

