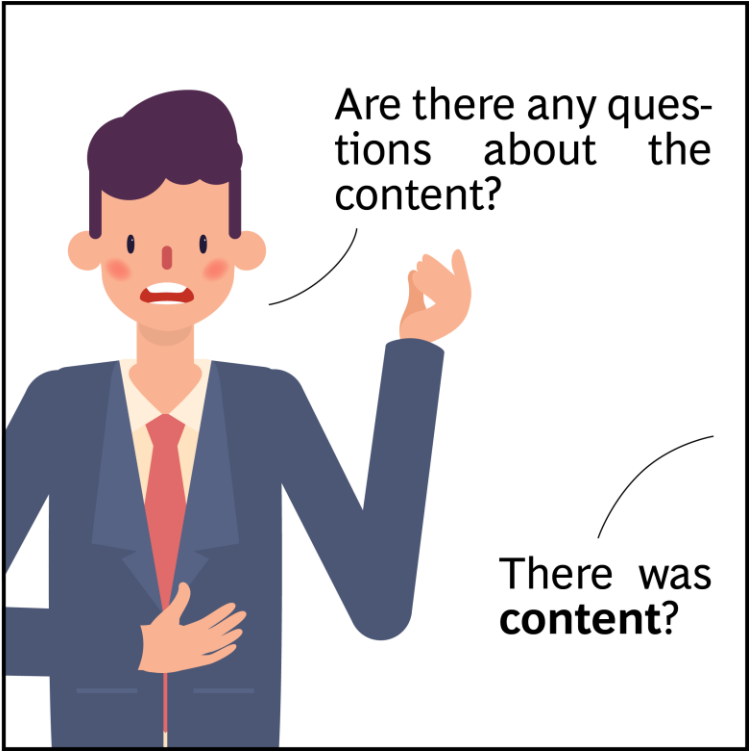


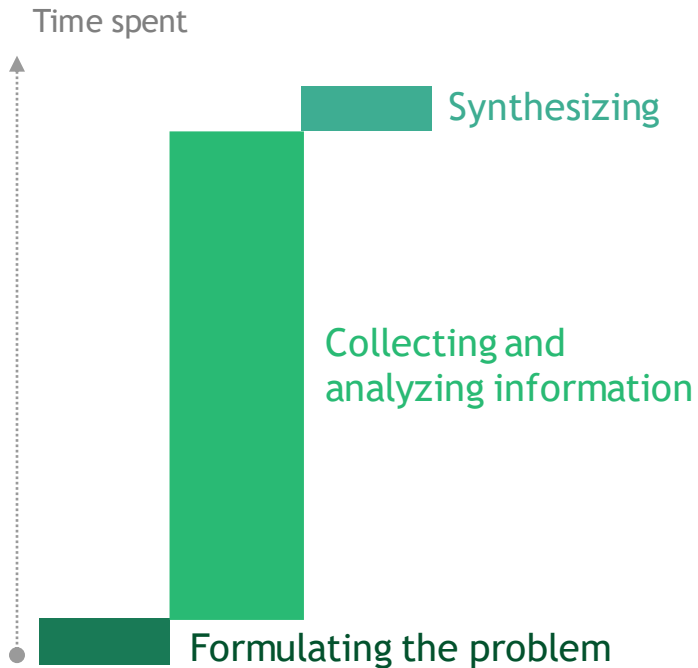
5

# Build recommendation

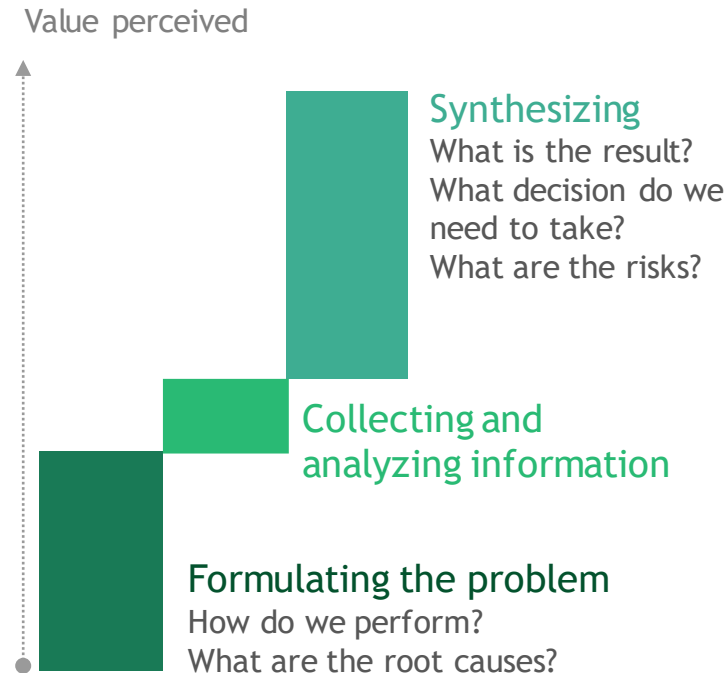


# Synthesizing is so important because it helps you deliver what your audience needs most - the “so what”

You will often spend most of your time collecting and analyzing information...



...but in the end, your audience is mainly interested in the 'so what' for them



At the end of the analysis take 1-2 minutes to structure your recommendation and present it in a concise and actionable way

# A strong recommendation is...



## Insightful

Goes beyond the observation  
Moves from discovering a problem to showing how to fix it  
Motivates the client with a strong rationale



## Actionable

Spurs the client to action  
Lays a plan the client can follow  
Ensures the client knows what to do next



## Specific

Leaves no room for interpretation  
Gives the client precise steps rather than vague concepts  
Quantifies expected impact whenever possible

Use the **pyramid principle**:

Divide the overall question into more specific underlying questions

## Overall question

Should the presentation audience purchase a new dishwasher to replace the current dishwasher?



## Underlying questions

- 1 How does the current dishwasher perform?
  - Does the dishwasher clean effectively
- 2 Is the current dishwasher reliable?
  - Does it ever break down?
  - How costly/frequent are repairs?
- 3 What are potential dishwashing options?
  - Can dishes be washed by hand?
  - Can the current dishwasher be repaired?
  - Can a new one be purchased?
- 4 If a new dishwasher is required, which should be purchased?
  - Option A
  - Option B

Answering these questions should generate a list of insights

# Cluster these insights and summarize them in a number of key messages

Gather the different insights that came from your research...

Cups are dirty - drinking out of the bottle

Repairs take over a week - no clean dishes

Utensils are dirty - forced to use plastic

Nobody likes doing dishes by hand

Current dishwasher breaks down 1x a month

New dishwashers are more reliable

Model X has good reputation, on sale

Repairs are costly

Dishes piled up in the sink for 2 weeks

Can afford a new dishwasher

... cluster them, and formulate messages that summarize each group of insights

**Current dishwasher does not perform well**

Cups are dirty - drinking out of the bottle

Utensils are dirty - forced to use plastic

Dishes piled up in the sink for 2 weeks

**Current dishwasher is costly and unreliable**

Current dishwasher breaks down 1x a month

Repairs are costly

Repairs take over a week - no clean dishes

**Various solutions available - action needed**

Nobody likes doing dishes by hand

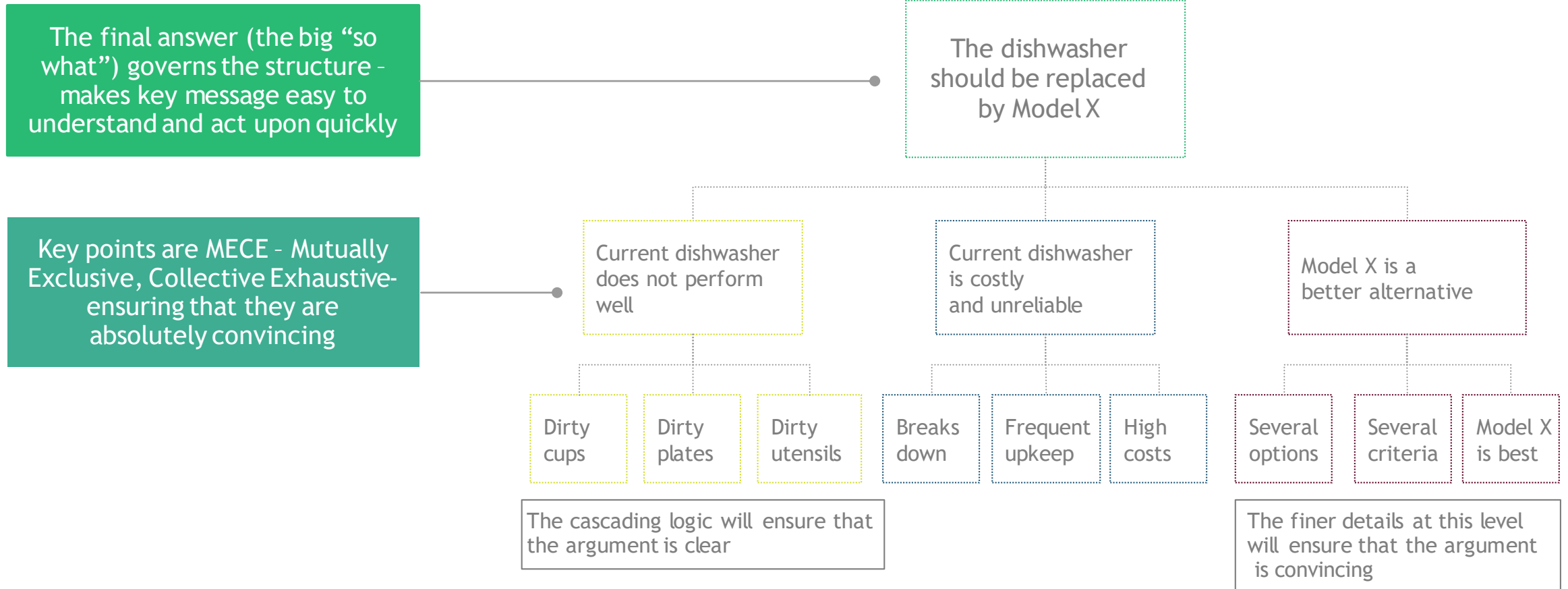
New dishwashers are more reliable

Can afford a new dishwasher

Model X has good reputation, on sale

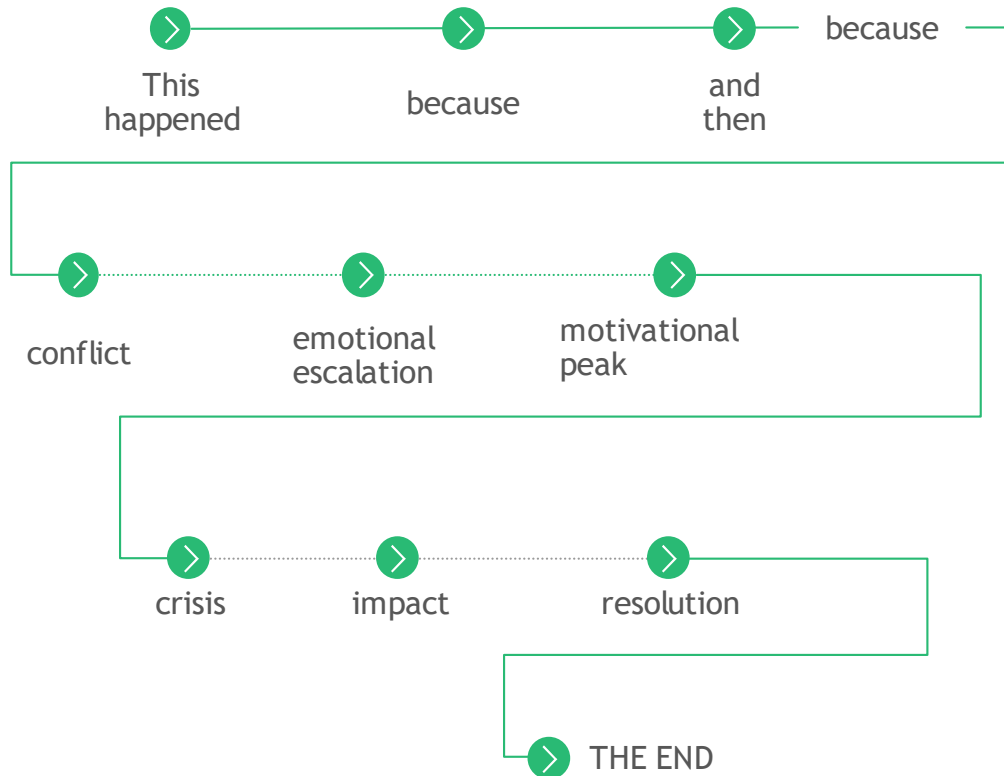
# Map out these key messages in a logic tree

With a hierarchy of key conclusions and supporting arguments



# Build recommendation using 4 steps: specify the situation, identify the problem, propose a solution, and discuss impact

Conventional story: Builds over time to a climax, conclusions buried at the end



Executive summary:  
BCG story in four steps

## Situation

Setting the situation and background

## Problem

Identify the problem(s) or opportunity(s)

## Solution

Propose solution

## Impact

Discuss impact and implications



# Example recommendation

## Structure

Situation

Problem

Solution

Impact

## Sample recommendation

Company X has been active in the white goods market for 20 years

Growth in Company X sales has been stagnant for three years. Moreover, the market is forecast to shrink by 1% per annum

There is an opportunity to grow sales by 20% over the next five years through expanding into the dishwasher segment

In order to enter the segment, Company X needs to invest \$Y million over the next two years

## Tips

Be succinct - aim for 1-2 key lines, supported by bullet points if needed

Be precise - use exact figures instead of words like "very, mostly"

Be to the point - don't evade the harder messages or sidestep the issue

# Understand your target audience and the best way to tell them the story

## Two ways to tell your story

## Best fit with audience



Bottom up

- Initial question
- Methodology
- Analysis results
- Conclusions
- Recommendations

- Reluctant/hesitant
- Little background knowledge
- Focused on detail
- More time to listen
- (Often: lower and mid-level audience)



“I’m not sure whether he really understands our way of thinking”

“Who does he think he is, telling us what to do?”



Top down

- Key insights and/or required decisions/actions
- Followed by supporting information

- Confident
- Enough background knowledge
- High level overview
- Little time or patience
- (Often: senior audience)

“I’m sure he knows what he is talking about.”

“So what actions do you recommend we take?”



# DOs



Takes notes, keep key information in front of you - inputs and key question



Listen



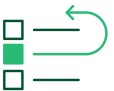
Communicate concisely and be to the point



Validate your assumptions with interviewer



Communicate interim results of your analysis: "so what" and next steps



Apply short-cuts and 80/20 rule - 80% of the effect comes from 20% of the cause



Be curious and excited

# DON'Ts



Wait for interviewer to propose analysis



Perform the whole analysis silently



Stick to your knowledge and experience



Waffle



Panic