

# The IB Interview Handbook

Technical Preparation, Fit Questions  
and Offer Strategy

Part of The Investment Banking Practitioner's Handbook Series (Handbook A3)

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**This handbook is for candidates who have secured interviews and must cross an avoidable 98 per cent rejection threshold.**

## Target Reader



Undergraduate analysts



Post-MBA associates



Career changers



Lateral hires

For those who have successfully bypassed the resume-building phase and are facing imminent assessment.

## The Core Problem

**98% Rejection Threshold**

The interview funnel rejects more than **98 per cent of applicants due to structural misalignments.**

Candidates fail because they prepare for the wrong test at the wrong stage—treating HireVue as a knowledge test instead of a delivery test, or treating superdays as standard interviews rather than endurance events.

**You will understand the exact mechanics of each assessment stage and deliver practitioner-grade answers that convert interviews into offers.**



## **Map Preparation**

Align your approach directly to the specific demands and filters of the six-stage interview funnel.



## **Demonstrate Instinct**

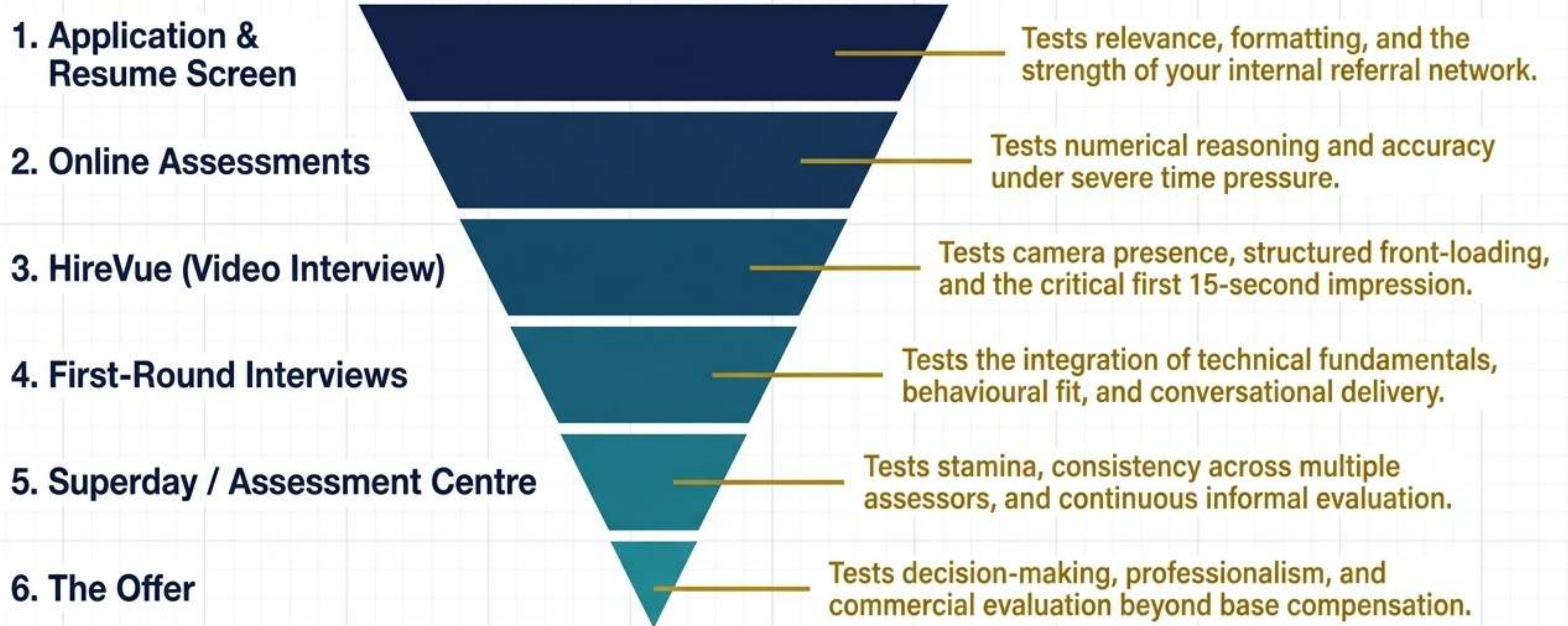
Transition from delivering competent 'textbook' answers to demonstrating commercial instinct, contextual hierarchy, and refined judgement.



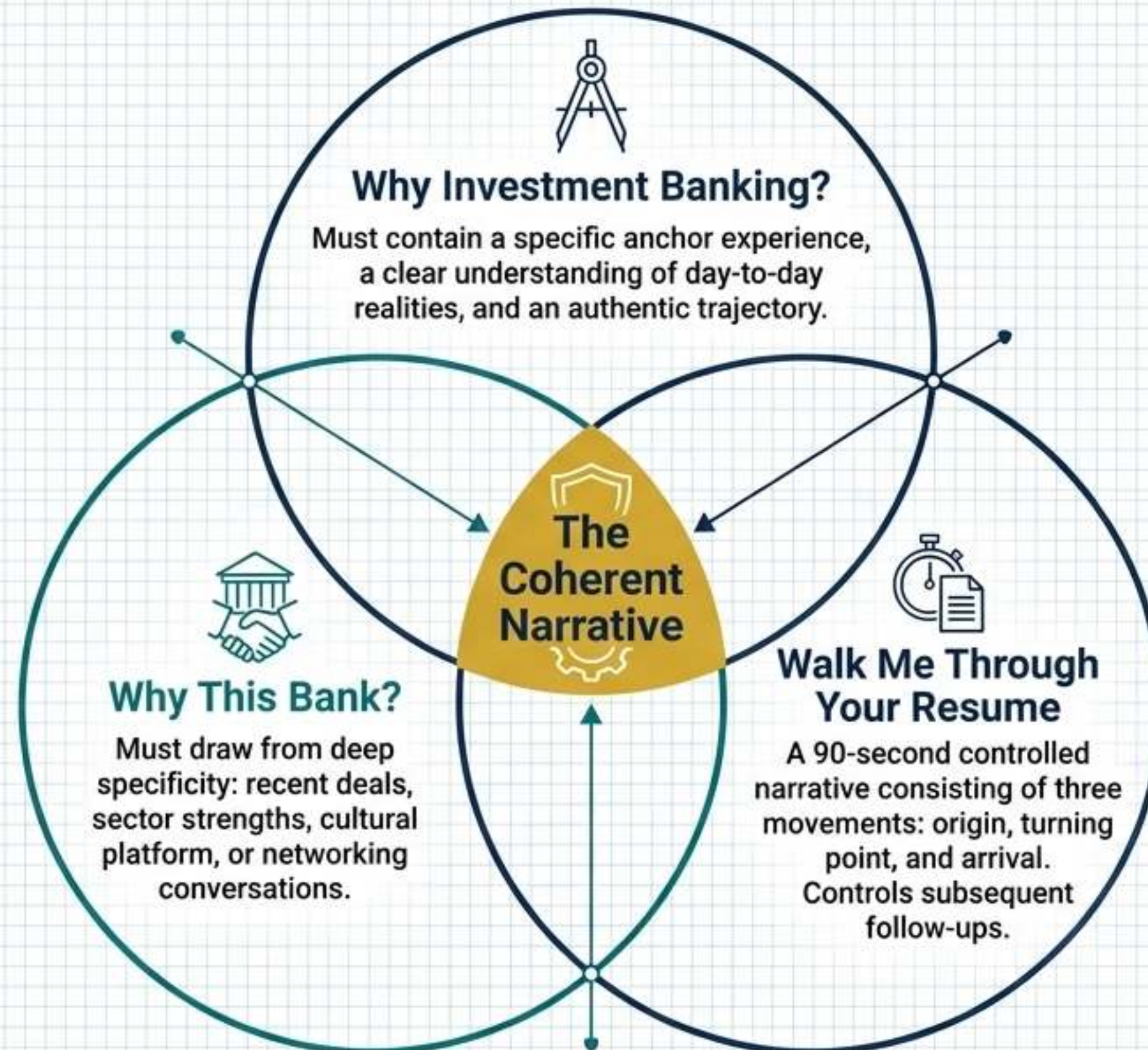
## **Command the Room**

Possess a stress-tested, banking-framed story library and a 90-second deal discussion that survives rigorous senior-level probing.

**The process is not a single event; it is a sequential, six-stage filter designed to expose a single point of failure.**



Get these right, and the interview has a solid foundation; get them wrong, and even perfect technical answers will not recover the lost ground.



# Technical competence serves as a binary filter that shifts from conceptual to applied judgement.

Technical account for roughly 30 per cent of the interview but act as the primary gatekeeper before behavioural fit can be assessed.

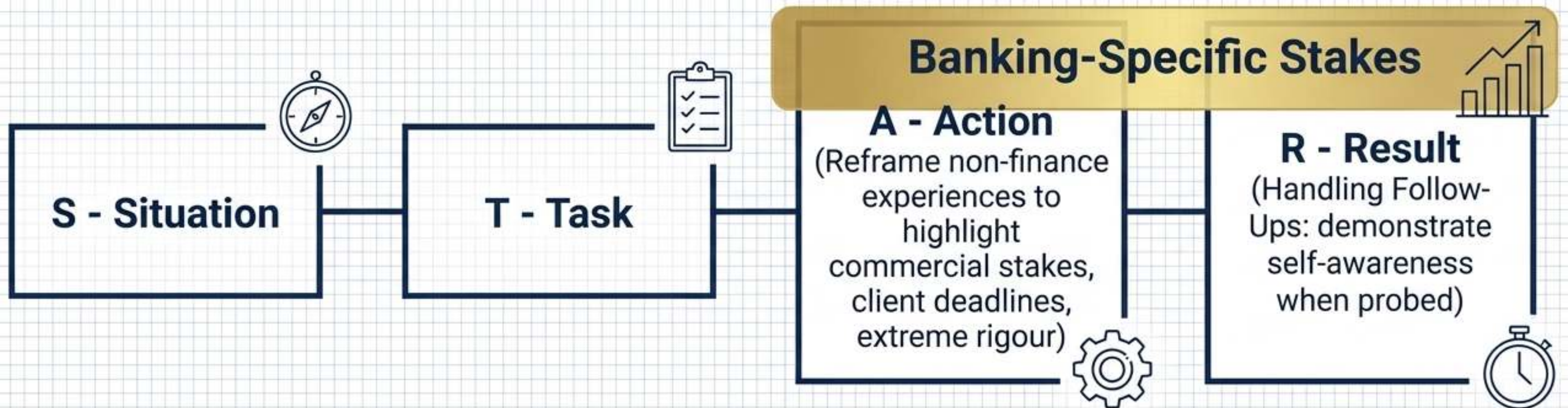
Requires navigation of the Accounting Core (three-statement linkages, depreciation) and Valuation & M&A (DCF mechanics, comparables).

## Calibration by Seniority

<b>Analyst: Foundational Process</b>	<b>Associate: Applied Judgement</b>
<p>Must describe processes cleanly.</p> <p>Flawless navigation of three-statement linkages.</p> <p>Mastery of DCF mechanics.</p>	<p>Must defend assumptions.</p> <p>Debate capital structure trade-offs.</p> <p>Navigate edge cases.</p> <p>Understand when each valuation method breaks down.</p>

# Senior bankers heavily weight behavioural questions to assess team viability under extreme pressure and sleep deprivation.

The **5-Point Story Triage**: Before rehearsal, stories must pass five tests: high stakes, clear personal ownership, visible judgement, a concrete result, and credible follow-up depth.



Being able to discuss a live deal intelligently separates candidates who have merely studied banking from those who think like advisors.

## The 90-Second Deal Pitch



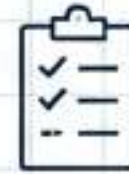
### The Four-Sentence Fact Base

What Happened  
(Buyer, Target, Value)

Strategic Rationale

Implied Valuation  
Metrics

Key Integration or  
Regulatory Risks



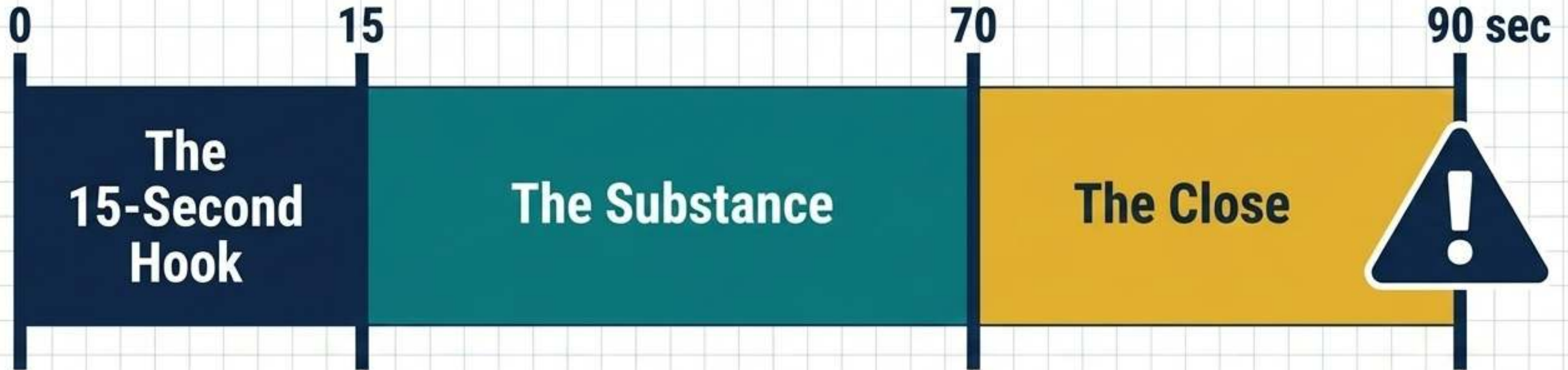
### The Fifth Element (Your View)

Conclude with a **reasoned, defensible opinion on whether the transaction makes strategic and financial sense.**

Acknowledge data limitations gracefully.  
If new facts are introduced, pivot your thesis rather than defensively digging in.



# HireVue eliminates strong candidates who fail to adapt their content to a medium that demands immediate impact and perfect structural timing.



Reviewers watch dozens of videos, often at accelerated speeds. The strongest, most specific insight must be delivered in the opening sentence.

**The 3-Word Anchor Prep:**  
Utilise the 30-second prep window to write exactly three structural words (Opening, Substance, Close) to prevent mid-answer rambling.

**The Recovery Protocol:**  
If you stumble, pause briefly and deliver the next sentence with elevated confidence. Never apologise or restart.

**WARNING:**  
Do not pad to fill the time past 90 seconds.

The primary threat during a final round is fatigue-driven decline, where a candidate's fifth interview is noticeably weaker than their first.



### **The 60-Second Reset**

Establish a deliberate breathing and note-taking routine between interview rooms to prevent the anxiety of a poor session from contaminating the next one.

### **Continuous Informal Assessment**

Feedback is gathered from analysts walking you to the lift, receptionists, and lunch companions. Every touchpoint is an evaluation.

### **Group Exercise Impact**

In UK assessment centres, high scores require analytical contribution—framing decision criteria or surfacing missed risks—not merely polite collaboration.

The gap between a weak answer and a strong answer is not foundational knowledge—it is the ability to explain why a concept matters in a live transaction.

## Textbook vs. Practitioner

### Textbook Baseline

- Monotone delivery
- List-based answers
- Equal weighting of all steps
- Abrupt closings

### Practitioner Ideal

- Natural variation in delivery
- The Hierarchy of Importance: Isolating the driver (e.g., terminal value in a DCF) that dictates the output.
- Deal Context: Infusing technicals with illustrative transaction scenarios to show real negotiation pressures.
- ◇ The “So What?” Test: Explaining the practical commercial consequence of every stated fact. Without this, it is decoration, not substance.

# Translating preparation into an offer requires structural alignment, commercial framing, and delivery stamina.



**Respect the Funnel:** Prepare specifically for the test being administered at each individual stage, from ATS algorithms to superday endurance.



**Control the Narrative:** Use the three universal questions to steer the interview toward your deepest preparation areas and strongest commercial insights.



**Pass the 'So What?' Test:** Elevate every technical and behavioural answer beyond textbook facts by explicitly stating its commercial or team-based consequence.



**Maintain the Practitioner Standard:** Consistently demonstrate hierarchy of importance, deal context, and poise under continuous informal assessment.

# Continue Your Development

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