

# Note about electronic material

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You have the option of **printing the material** and taking notes during the course, or **taking electronic notes**

If you print, we suggest you make sure you print the material large enough to take notes on it

We **cannot provide conclusive instructions on how to take electronic notes** in the pdf file on each registrant's device, because of the wide ranges of combinations of pdf software that registrants may have, in addition to platforms, i.e. MAC or PC, tablet, etc.

## COURSE INFORMATION

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This course deals with complex matters and may not apply to particular facts and circumstances. For these reasons, the course material should not be relied upon as a substitute for specialized professional advice in connection with any particular matter. Although the course material has been carefully prepared, neither Stephen Priddle, or the professional body sponsoring this course accept any legal responsibility for its contents or for any consequences arising from its use.

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# ***BIG PICTURE THINKING SKILLS FOR CAREER ADVANCEMENT***

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***PRESENTED BY:***

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**Courses For Accountants**

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# Introduction

Welcome to this course

I put more words on the screen than most as I don't speak that clearly...

There will be some \_\_\_\_\_, we don't want this course to be boring!

You are allowed to disagree with me in the course, send me an email, [spriddle@bell.net](mailto:spriddle@bell.net)

You will get a fully completed slide deck after from me, blanks filled in \_\_\_\_\_, all points, just email me at [spriddle@bell.net](mailto:spriddle@bell.net) it also has a “**cheat sheet**” of main course points

# Introduction

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# Past chats

I have included a few past chats from a past webinar, plus a few fake ones!

They are always in *italics* and you may see typos, and lack of punctuation, due to rushing...

*13:05:12 From David to Everyone: What did they wanted*

# All my live seminars/webinars have an opportunity to win prizes

---

I can't do that on the self-study version

BUT, send me an email with:

a disagreement

a new scenario idea

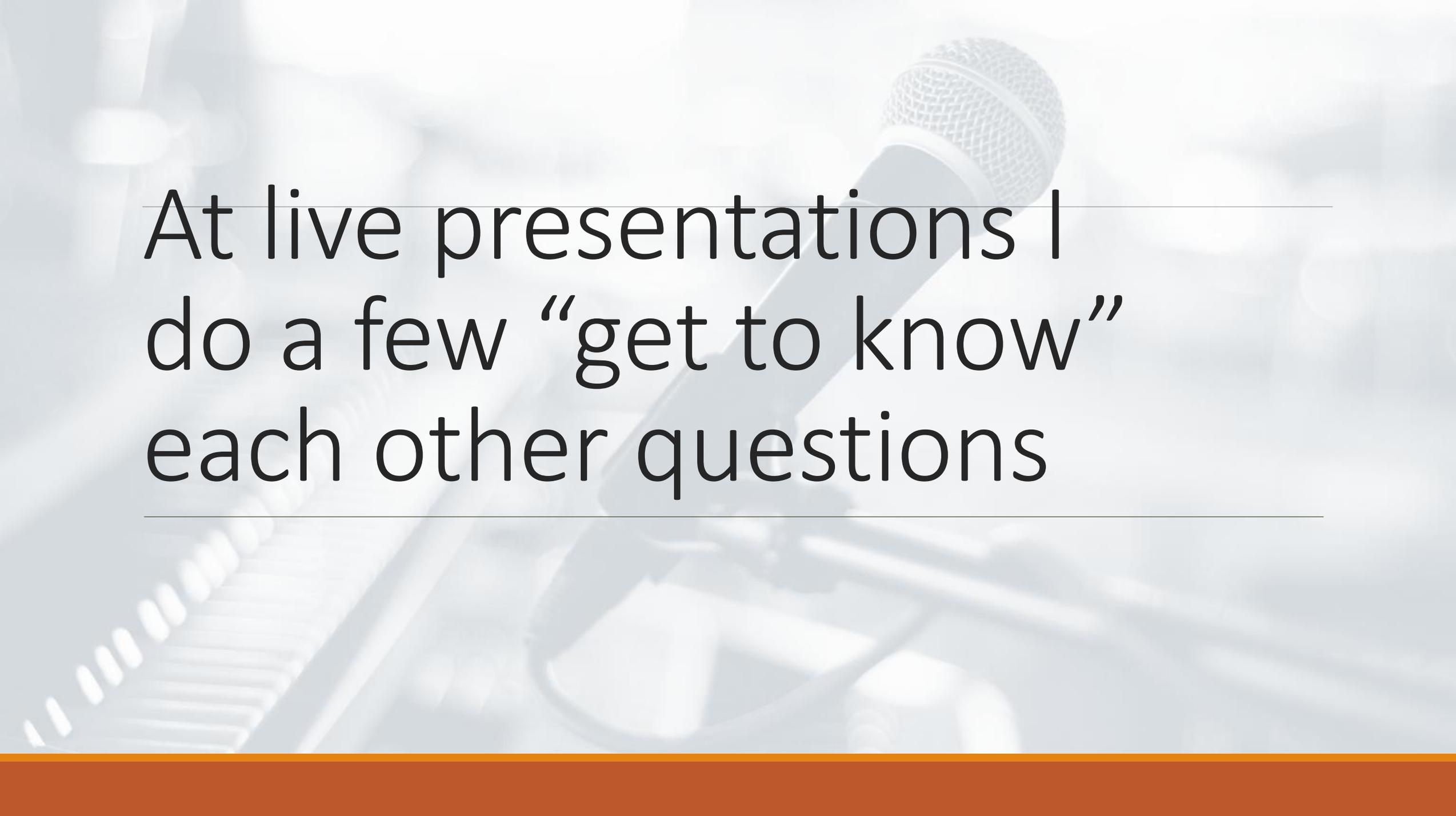
useful feedback

a clean relevant joke

anything else suggested in the video

and you will enter a draw for a prize [spriddle@bell.net](mailto:spriddle@bell.net)





At live presentations I  
do a few “get to know”  
each other questions

---

Let's do a few  
get to know  
you



# I have a real job

---

CFO & VP Finance - **Fidus Analytics Inc.**

I work remotely from Ottawa for this global business, out of Calgary

Tax analytics, using \_\_\_\_\_ for smaller tax jurisdictions around the world, to find value-added tax non-compliance



# Course background

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I created a course called **Elevate Your Career With More Strategic Thinking**, ( 2 hour video) and it was a hit, many customers picked it up, and the feedback has been great, see examples below:



*Really great course to help reframe your strategic thinking and understand the viewpoints of different stakeholders at organizational levels.*



*I wish I could have taken this course 25 years ago (company President)*



*I enjoyed this course as it helped reinforce the idea that I should stop and consider “the forest even when we are deep in the trees”*



*Framework is good, people can ask themselves "Am I thinking like an accountant or a strategic partner in this discussion" Simple and straightforward, easy to remember*



*This course allows the audience to glimpse what is on the mind of their boss and their boss’s boss—it is like insider trading for corporate thoughts (lol).*

# Course background

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I decided that I wanted to build on that course and add to it, with some different nuances

Thus this course

I have included a few more **Not-For-Profit** and **government** scenarios, as many work or volunteer in these sectors, or have a career in the latter



# Course objectives

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- Discuss what is higher-level big picture, strategic thinking
- Learn how to think at a higher strategic, big picture level, primarily by examples in the areas of business, systems, technology, capital budgeting, risk and more
- Get an idea of what is your current thinking level from your interaction with the examples

# Outline

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Introduction

Discussion of big picture thinking

Lots of scenarios to practice, interspersed with lessons

Conclusions

# Course content

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Topic introduction

Bigger picture thinking & angles

Tactical versus strategic

Missing the big picture, big time

Start of scenarios

Bdark Inc, trucking business

Phone app entrepreneurs

# Course content

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Badpear Inc. declining sales

MBA humour

Big picture & interviews

Charity Board call

Elias Inc., supplier call

Pop quiz #1

Contributed scenarios

# Course content

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Synthetic Mind Inc (SMI), AI riding high

Catching or missing booms

Are you entrepreneurial?

Buzzard Inc. part problem

AI to help with big picture thinking

South Peninsula Credit Union KPIs

What is a CSO?

# Course content

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Ministry of Mines & Resources reporting

Advisory Board seat

What prevents higher level thinking?

SAAS opportunity

Airbnb big issue

Fraud at Bay Kids Homes Corp

Alan's Garage Inc. small business capital budgeting

# Course content

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New product opportunity

Maeve & Martin falling out of love

In charge of insurance

How to keep the big picture in mind

The six blind men and the elephant

Cognifeel SAAS company

# Course content

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Arton building acquisition

IFRS the big picture

The mountain illustration

Canadian drug approvals

Mark Inc. bill received

Pop quiz question #2

Barkon Inc, R&D success

McNelly Inc. product problem

Conclusions

A solid orange vertical bar is positioned on the left side of the slide, extending from the top to the bottom.

# TOPIC INTRODUCTION

# Would you like to be the person at work who?

---

Brings out the more important, strategic, big picture issues, which leaves everybody else saying, wow, I \_\_\_\_\_, you are right, I was into the smaller issue

You saw a different \_\_\_\_\_ to the problem that they did not see...

This rarely happened, early in my career, but happens a lot now



# Your points were higher than theirs

I believe a key thing that separates people in the business world, is the level at which they think

I believe I have continuously \_\_\_\_\_my thinking level

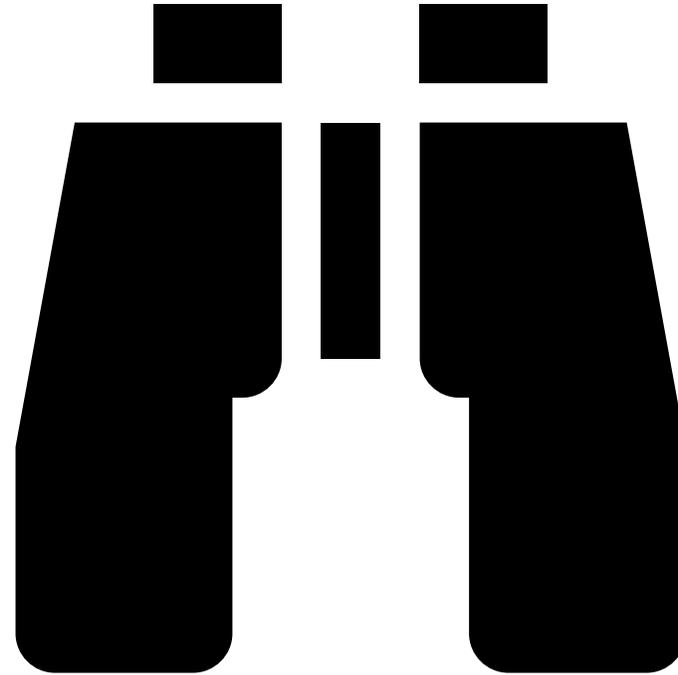
I did this by \_\_\_\_\_

It wasn't from courses or books or my B. Comm

This course will talk a little bit about how to do it, but mostly to provide you with more "practice and experience" doing it

You may not be at this stage yet, but I want to move you there more

Small picture  
thinking  
focusses in too  
closely



What do you see?



# This course is not theory or professor stuff

---



# This will help you

---

“An employee who looks at the big picture is generally an asset, whether they are a VP, or a mailroom clerk” (Source: unknown)

Some listening are rarely big picture thinkers

Some are often big picture thinkers

Some are regularly big picture thinkers

Some have sat in many Board meetings as members, observers or management where there should be more big picture thinking, and some have not been to any Board meetings

This course will help see your thinking of level when looking at many scenarios and also improve it, \_\_\_\_\_you sit in your organization

If you can think more like your \_\_\_\_\_, you will be ahead

Even if you don't aspire to higher positions

I sit on five  
Boards right  
now

It is easier to think big picture and strategy when you don't  
\_\_\_\_\_ all the details that management is aware of, and  
distracted by

I have turned down quite a lot of charity Boards, and may be  
asked to join another one soon

I have seen the difference between Board members who  
primarily vocalize strategic, big picture ideas, and those that  
are somewhat \_\_\_\_\_

# I worked with a very big picture CEO

Who was the single person who modeled this most for me

His father was a big picture person as well

# I worked with a very big picture CEO

Who was the single person who modeled this most for me

His father was a big picture person as well

About 1975: “son, you should take the \_\_\_\_\_ course at school, I know you don’t want to, but one day \_\_\_\_\_

# Issues and decisions face us all the time

Most young accountants think at the lowest level:

- What is the impact on \_\_\_\_?
- How can I get \_\_\_\_\_
- How can this make me \_\_\_\_?

But they need to get to big picture, strategic thinking level

Here are some  
bigger picture  
angles

What problem are  
we really trying to  
\_\_\_\_\_?

Who is this work  
ultimately for  
(\_\_\_\_\_)?

If this succeeded  
perfectly, what  
would be \_\_\_\_\_?

How does this  
connect to my  
employer's \_\_\_\_\_?

How does this  
initiative support  
\_\_\_\_\_?

What would \_\_\_\_\_  
look like — and  
who would be  
affected?

# Reminder, what is tactical versus strategic big picture?

Strategic:

**Where you're going** (vision and direction)

**Why** you're doing it (purpose)

**What** needs to be accomplished to get there (goals and priorities)

Long-term impact (months or years ahead)

Broad consequences and positioning

# Reminder, what is tactical versus strategic big picture?

Tactical:

**How** you get things done

Step-by-step actions

Short-term objectives (days, weeks, quarters)

Concrete tasks and problem-solving

Immediate results and efficiencies

# Both

**Both** the tactical and the strategic must be done well in any organization

The best people can operate at \_\_\_\_ levels, especially if “the devil is in the details”

Great leaders recognize the big picture but are helpful with the small picture

Example, engineer CEO “If we can start \_\_\_\_\_. However, remember these three key points:

Don’t let \_\_\_\_ be in charge of \_\_\_\_, I have noticed, he is weak at \_\_\_\_\_

The \_\_\_\_ is the key component, if it doesn’t work well, we don’t have a product, therefore \_\_\_\_\_, the upfront design work should be focused on it, so it meets these specifications...”

I saw this  
statement  
somewhere

**Vision without execution is \_\_\_\_\_**

So great big picture thinking and vision,  
without \_\_\_\_\_ is no good

Which is another way of bringing out the  
point about being good with the \_\_\_\_

We will study  
this, by  
examples

We have just talked concepts so far, I will illustrate this with many specific examples

Very short scenarios that lend themselves to illustrate thinking levels

All directly or indirectly inspired from real life

They may not be set in your industry or be familiar issues, but they are thinking/teaching tools



# A quick dumb, funny example of missing the big picture

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Cecilia and her friends come across a car that has flipped off the road

Cecilia: How did that \_\_\_\_?

Jasper: That is a lot of \_\_\_\_\_

Alison: I think the driver should \_\_\_\_\_...

(Alison is a lawyer)

Andre: The car could be \_\_\_\_\_

Chris: A tow truck will \_\_\_\_\_

Stephanie: I hope they had \_\_\_\_\_

**Big picture**, where are \_\_\_\_\_, we probably need to \_\_\_\_\_



Missing the big picture,  
big time

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# Missing the big picture

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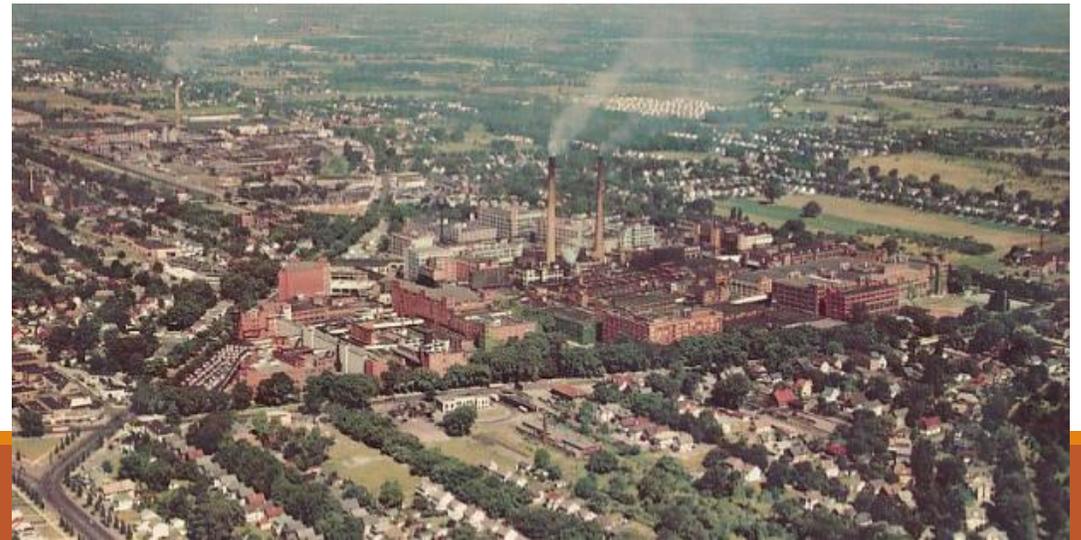
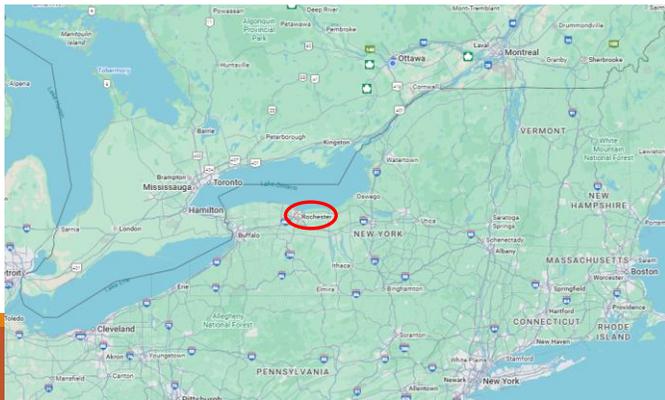
When we were kids, our Dad always took us on educational factory/plant tours

A long-time ago, we took the tour of the main plant for one of the most famous' business in the world at that time, everybody knew the name, just about everyone was their direct or indirect customer

It was in Rochester, New York

The company eventually went bankrupt because it missed the big picture, but has emerged with a completely different business

Can you guess the name of the business?



# Which company?

---

It was \_\_\_ which led the world \_\_\_\_\_

# Scenarios

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# For some scenarios

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You will be saying, what is the problem/what decision is needed?

And I am not going to tell you

Often, in real life the big problem is not just handed to you



# For some scenarios

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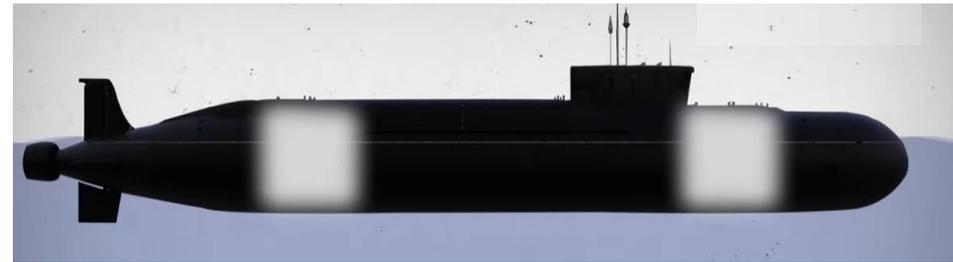
You will be saying, what is the problem/what decision is needed?

And I am not going to tell you

Often, in real life the big problem is not just \_\_\_\_\_



The big problem might be below the \_\_\_\_, or \_\_\_\_\_



# Sometimes we will review scenarios along these lines

---

| Staff (accountant below Controller) |  |
|-------------------------------------|--|
| Controller                          |  |
| CFO                                 |  |
| CEO                                 |  |
| Board                               |  |
|                                     |  |

# What do you think?

Use your experience, your imagination,  
just react

You could do your level, you could do  
one level up, you could do the highest  
you can possibly think of



# Sometimes, I will just suggest big or small thinking, the extremes

---

I know you have big brains, because most of you are CPAs, but sometimes they will still miss the big picture



# Note

I am not just going to present all the scenarios, one after another

I will intersperse them with advice, related teaching, and some jokes and other items

# What is your current thinking level?

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Pause the tape each time, to make it easier



Come up with higher level thinking ideas

Then, see where your answers fit in relation to the class and my answers

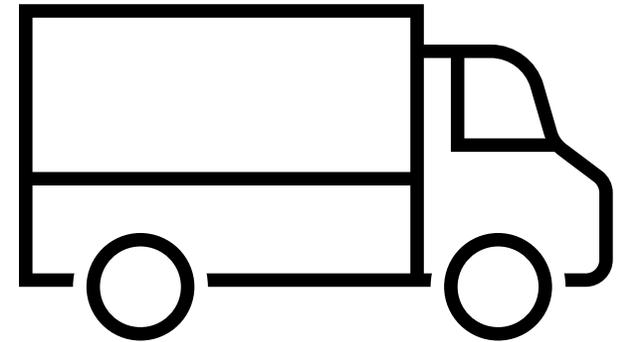
Otherwise, you may just say, aaah, I would have thought of that.... now that I have heard it

You will see what I mean more clearly, as soon as we do some scenarios

# Bdark Inc.

---

Bdark Inc. is a fairly successful medium-size focused trucking business. The company was founded by CEO Nicki Backus in 1985 when she was a new university graduate. She hired two fellow university students, as the VP, Sales and Operations and they have grown with the company and are actually the only other shareholders now. The other key executive is Janni Pkowski, a Harvard MBA, class of 1990. The owners are now thinking about selling the company. Recently, there has been a flattening of sales revenue and small lawsuit against the company.



What do you  
think?

# Comments

If the company will be up for sale soon, start \_\_\_\_\_

Think about potential \_\_\_\_\_ that would be exposed, during a thorough due diligence by a potential acquiror and \_\_\_ them

Fix the law suit problem, it will \_\_\_\_\_

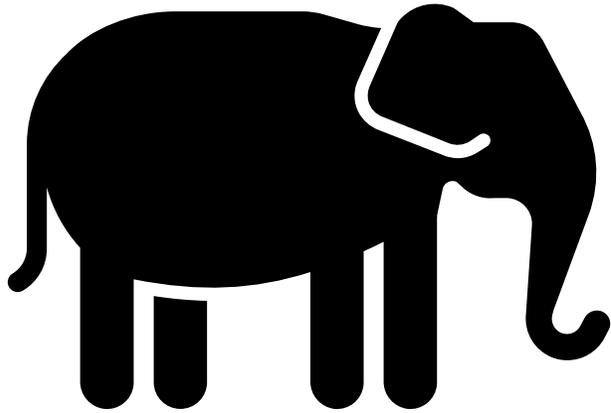
Consider gathering documents for a \_\_\_\_\_

Make a list of \_\_\_\_\_, add them to the list of those who have knocked on the door over the years

But the above is only \_\_\_ picture...

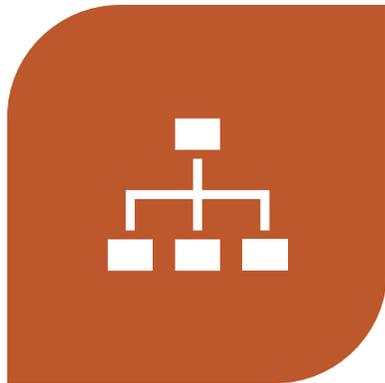
What is the big picture elephant  
in the room?

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# Inspiration

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THE INSPIRATION FOR THIS STORY IS A COMPANY I KNOW VERY, VERY WELL, AND THE MANAGEMENT TEAM SIMPLY HAD MISSED THIS BIG PICTURE THING, UNTIL AN OUTSIDE TAX ADVISOR TOLD THEM



I KNOW BECAUSE I WAS \_\_\_\_\_



ONE LESSON: SOMETIMES IT TAKES AN OUTSIDER TO NOTICE SOMETHING THAT IS BIG PICTURE, BUT HAS BEEN MISSED BY INSIDERS

# Phone app entrepreneurs

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# Apps

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I seem to have met many young people, who are working zealously on an app, that they think will make them a lot of money

Have you seen this?

I focus on the big picture, not the app details, usually saying something like:

How are you going to \_\_\_\_\_

How are you going to \_\_\_\_\_ it?

And usually, they are \_\_\_\_\_!

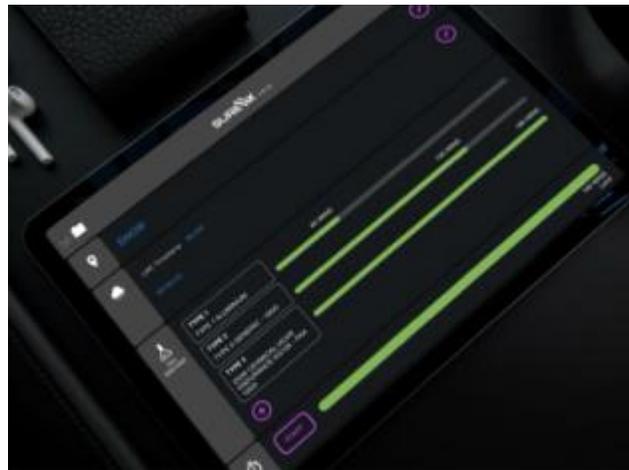


# The SAAS business, which I co-own

---

Has a unique app used by most airline pilots in the western world, backed by regulatory approval, tied to special weather equipment at airports, with a complex algorithm behind it, and without competition

I can talk to almost any airline pilot about it, and they want to \_\_\_\_\_



# Joke

---

I told my CEO his new strategy was a gamble.

He said “good because I’ve got \_\_\_\_\_”.



# Scenario

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Badpear Inc. is publicly-traded manufacturer of industrial electrical equipment. After about 20 good years with annual growth in sales in the 4-9% range, sales have been slipping 1-3% per year and management has not been able to come up with any plausible and specific reasons for the decline. The market and investors are not happy, and management has been on the defensive.



What do you think?

# Ideas, from small to big picture

---

Bottoms up - contact \_\_\_\_\_

Overall market view - hire \_\_\_\_\_

What is the big picture for management, the most important thing

\_\_\_\_\_

**Solution: Bring in a famous, \_\_\_\_\_!**



# I have seen this in real-life

When we were told to engage \_\_\_\_\_

They were rather \_\_\_\_\_

We spent a fortune on them, but they provided no value at all, even in hindsight

Do we have  
any MBAs  
here?

I thought about \_\_\_\_\_ while at KPMG, but changed my mind, I was too busy

It is really meant for those who don't have an \_\_\_\_\_

I like to make friendly jokes about MBAs

Once, half the Board I was on had MBAs

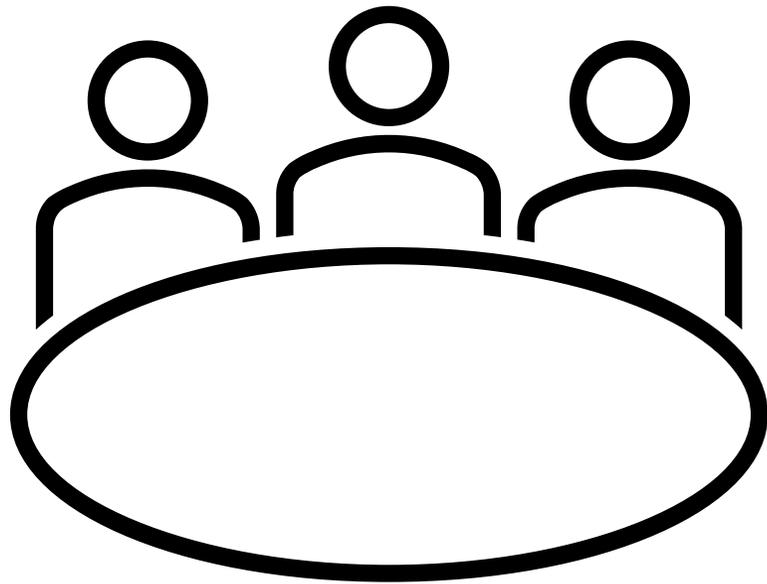
What does MBA stand for, the funniest one gets a **prize!**

I have been the  
Acting CEO of a  
company

For about \_\_\_\_\_

One problem was that the other key executive was also on  
leave...everything was \_\_\_\_\_...

I like being a CFO, I don't aspire to be \_\_\_\_, except in my  
educational business



# Big picture

---

I like to ask about the big picture of what the organization faces in \_\_\_\_\_

It helps me assess if I want the job, and the \_\_\_\_ big picture understanding

The \_\_\_\_ usually appreciates that I am going to the big picture, although I also hit them with them very \_\_\_\_\_

I suggest you do this as well

# Scenario

I may be asked to join the Board of a charity having financial problems. What advice do you have?



# Reactions from you

---

# Thoughts



Can they make the \_\_\_\_\_?

Will it be clear that the problems are \_\_\_\_\_ and not my fault, to all stake holders?

Is there something that can get me \_\_\_\_\_ personally?

Should they actually just shut \_\_\_\_\_?

I might just say, let me be some kind of \_\_\_\_\_



# Elias Inc.

Elias Inc. is the business of sprinkler systems and has revenue just under \$20M and usually earns about 10% pre-tax. One day supplier Valve Inc. calls Elias' head A/P clerk and says: "can you ask your boss if we can be paid early by a couple of weeks for the \$815,335.44 October 12 invoice, net 30 terms, this would help us get your next production run ramping up."

What do you  
think, usual  
roles?

# Let's think through these

---

| Staff (accountant below Controller) |  |
|-------------------------------------|--|
| Controller                          |  |
| CFO                                 |  |
| CEO                                 |  |
| Board                               |  |
|                                     |  |

I tend to think  
this way

Whenever I read/hear about a business/charity with problems/challenges, I try to think through their big picture issues

I start thinking \_\_\_\_\_

This is a good, big picture, mental exercise for all

I recently wrote to the leadership of a charity and said these are your \_\_\_\_\_ in the next five years

# Pop quiz question #1 for review

---

Based on the course, which of the following issues/topics is not really big picture?

- a. The business needs to shut down subsidiaries that don't meet corporate ROI targets
- b. VP, Operations, Randy is the best guy to revise our sales remuneration policies
- c. We need to prepare the 10 year plan that the Board has been asking us for
- d. We need to study to see if our plant facility can function will beyond 2035

Can you share a scenario, which results in a good illustration of big picture thinking/failing etc

---

My favourite gets a very nice **prize!**

# SMI

---

Synthetic Mind Inc (SMI) is a publicly traded artificial intelligence (AI) business, specializing in an AI platform targeting the engineering market. AI Magazine has ranked it the #1 engineering AI platform. In 32 test questions, it was found to be 47% more accurate and useful. Revenues have gone from \$11M in 2023 to \$548M in 2025. The stock price has also increased from \$22 on listing, to \$441 now. It is continuously working on improving aspects of its offering. Cash is at an all-time high.



# Your ideas

---

# Ideas

---

| Staff (accountant below Controller) |  |
|-------------------------------------|--|
| Controller                          |  |
| CFO                                 |  |
| CEO                                 |  |
| Stock market investor               |  |
|                                     |  |

# Joke

---

Why did the CEO go to the amusement park?

To \_\_\_\_\_!

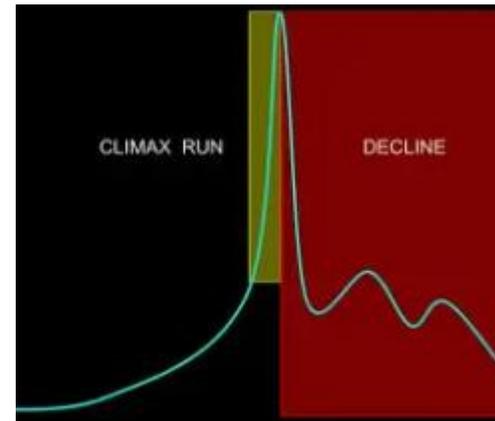
# Booms and waves

---

One company where I worked, we just missed the \_\_\_ boom, it was a bit late

Another did well, but just before the \_\_\_\_\_ **boom** in a sale

But would have done probably 10 X better if it got sold at the peak of the boom



# Are you entrepreneurial?

---

I am somewhat, but one of my brothers  
is a pure entrepreneur



Some of you own your own business or  
firm, tell us who owns one, in the chat



I think this helps \_\_\_\_\_

# My first business idea

---

I was about 10 years old

There was a church down the street which had a lot of weddings, where they throw confetti (in recent years, it seems to have been banned)

I recruited my three younger brothers to \_\_\_\_\_





# Scenario

---

Buzzard Inc. makes ABAR (Aircraft Birstrike Avoidance Radar) used at airports worldwide to detect hazardous bird activity that could result in aircraft crashes. Recently a product engineer found that one component from supplier Reller Inc. can fail more frequently than predicted.



# Your thoughts

---

# Bigger picture

---

Is this part \_\_\_\_\_?

If it is and \_\_\_\_\_

Therefore, this a \_\_\_\_\_

We also need to decide whether to \_\_\_\_\_

Can the \_\_\_\_\_ immediately \_\_\_\_\_?



# Let's get AI to help us

---

I put the scenario into ChatGPT, the prompt being to advise in this scenario

It did OK, here is the short answer it gave:

*Buzzard must \_\_\_\_\_.*

# Polling question on AI

---

You use AI at work

On average once a day

On average, once a week

On average once a month

You have never used AI at all

You are not sure what AI is

# Use of AI to solve business problems and go to the higher level

---

I put some of the scenarios in this course into ChatGPT, and it generally gives decent, but fairly generic answers on the surface issues and did not go to the bigger strategic picture

It missed the big picture in the Elias Inc. supplier phone call case

I think it is still worthwhile getting feedback from AI on situations, but don't expect it to \_\_\_\_\_

And of course, do not fall into the trap of relying solely on AI for anything and not using your brain



I got a report from my webhosting company, saying ChatGPT is looking at my course website [www.practicalpd.com](http://www.practicalpd.com) for \_\_\_\_\_....

# Note

I won't respond to any more scenarios via AI, you can of course do this yourself

# The credit union

---

The South Peninsula Credit Union that has over 14,000 customers, most of whose parents and grandparents were employees of the South River paper mill, before it closed in 1979, when the Credit Union was known as the South River Mill Employees' Credit Union. Business has been steady with savings accounts and home mortgages and management is wondering if they should add to their existing locations or not and if they should make any other changes. New CEO Jean Percent, put in place a key dashboard reporting scorecard for management just about a year ago, it is set out on the next page.



# The dashboard

---

## South Peninsula Credit Union dashboard

# loan approvals/full time employees

Total capital/total assets

Return on assets

Current total members

Operating expenses/total income

Loan writeoffs/total loans

# Comments, straight to big picture

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# Don't be discouraged if you

---

Feel like you \_\_\_\_\_

I have \_\_\_\_\_

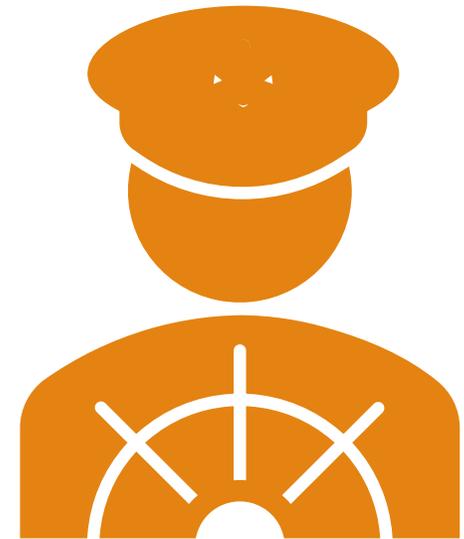
And learning from your mistakes is always good

It could be said that many accountants are typically \_\_\_\_\_ but not big picture people



# What is a CSO?

---



# Our “CSO”

I have only seen a position like this in one large company I worked for

He was \_\_\_\_\_

# Scenario

---

The Ministry of Mines & Resources is responsible to develop a safe, reliable and affordable energy supply across the province, and to oversee the mineral sector, providing geoscience information and supporting sustainable development.

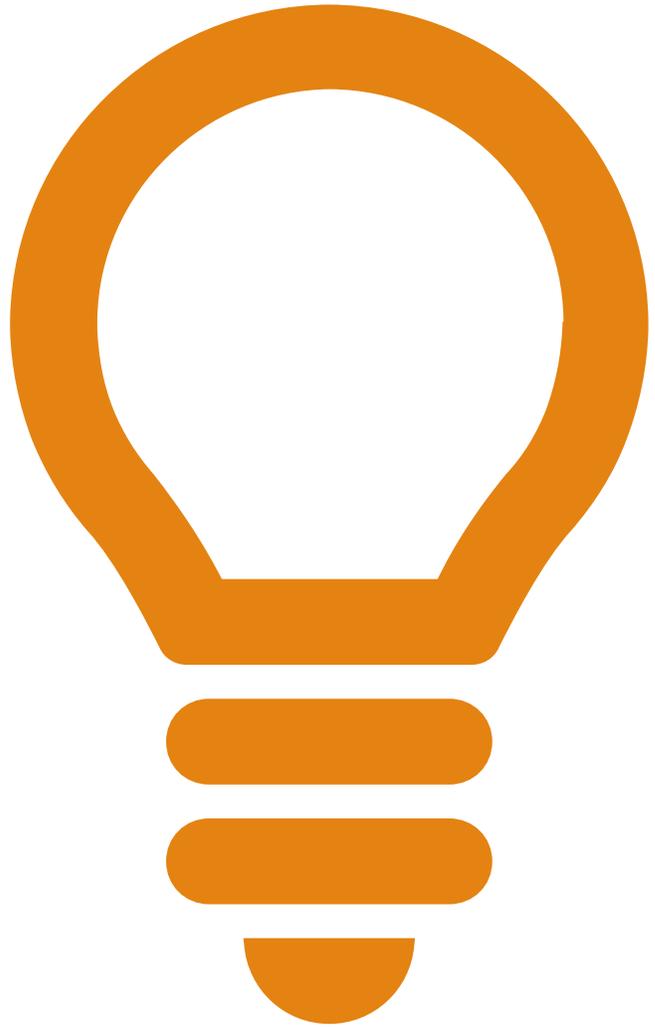
As part of its responsibilities, it must report detailing mining statistics to the Minister. These statistics are gathered through surveys mailed out to all mines each month and which are entered, analyzed and reported via the Mining Statistics Info Database (MSID), a system that was developed internally 11 years ago. Recently, the system has crashed a few times for inexplicable reasons, and it does take 6 programmers to keep it running.



# Advise, based on the following roles, think higher

---

|                                 |
|---------------------------------|
|                                 |
| Staff                           |
| Statistics manager              |
| <u>Statistics director</u>      |
| Deputy Minister                 |
| The Minister                    |
| Government cost-cutting advisor |



Your ideas

# Interesting

---

I sit on the \_\_\_\_\_ Board of a company

Not a \_\_\_\_\_ board, just giving advice to a company, no control, no responsibility, no risk

On it is a former \_\_\_\_\_

The first two are CPAs....

# Question someone asked about this material

*What usually prevents us to have high level thinking:*

*Is it the lack of ambition? The selfishness?*

*What if we don't want to have high level thinking?*

*Maybe it is the symptom of not being in the right job?*

What do you think?

# Ideas

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# Humour

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I asked my CEO how he deals with stress.

He said “I just \_\_\_\_\_”.

# Opportunity in aviation SAAS company

---

We sell our regulated systems product to every airline who is interested

We want to enter the market of our certain large country, where we have no existing business

First issue, get regulatory approval

One of the best bigger picture guys I have ever worked with, is in charge of this

I get a report on the meeting with the regulator from him, where all ten airlines are present, saying they want our system

I say, “why don’t we

---

He says “wow”, I didn’t think of that

(Airlines in Canada buy fuel cheaply through a consortium)



A big picture,  
tactical sales  
idea

# Question

---



Airbnb

I have stayed in them, have you? (about 80% in one webinar)

People I know are making a lot of money from the ones they own

**What is the big picture issue for those considering buying or starting them?**

# Scenario

---

The Ministry of Community Services helps improve outcomes for children, youth, families and individuals who need support. It funds many initiatives, including a not-for-profit which runs six group homes for severely handicapped children who can't live with own families. The not-for-profit, **Bay Kids Homes Corp** (BKHC), receives about \$11 million of funding per annum from this department.

On September 9, 2025, the CEO called the departments Program Director, to report that \_\_\_\_\_ and no actions have been taken yet.



# React, based on the following department roles

---

Staff accountant who looks at BKHC reports

Finance Manager, who verifies funding

Finance Director, above manager

Public Relations Director

Deputy Minister

Minister

Try for high  
level reactions

# Inspiration

---

A charity which I donate to, recently had \_\_\_\_\_

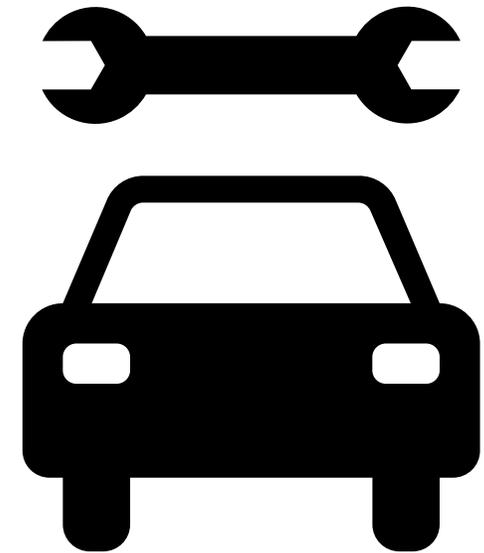
# Alan's Garage Inc.

---

Alan's Garage Inc. is a local automotive repair centre, which you have taken your vehicles for years. Their equipment is not the latest, but they are honest and never over-charge anyone, and have annual revenues of \$355,932. You are in public accounting and Alan's Garage Inc. is a Compilation Engagement Report and tax client. Owner Alan Elaine, recently asked you for paid advice on whether he should buy the very latest diagnostic tool and repair combination machine for \$190,000, to speed up work. He has provided the following information.

Use \$45,000 as the annual improved cash flow

There will be about \$10,000 of annual operating costs



# Missing the big picture

---

Nortel was the Canadian tech giant, which once represented 1/3 of the TSX 300

(Our engineer son works for the former Nortel optical group, purchased by a company called Ciena)

After the great Nortel layoffs in the 2004 era in Ottawa, an engineer I know worked helping laid off scientists and technical people who were starting businesses

They would present their new product/system idea to him for feedback

He was surprised how often this would happen

He would say this after reading their proposal



# Missing the big picture

---

“This is \_\_\_\_\_?”

They would say, “what?!!”

He would say by simple \_\_\_\_\_

They missed the big picture, the biggest picture question is \_\_\_\_\_

A very different  
scenario for a  
change...



Maeve and Marvin fell in love a couple of years ago, and have been married for six months. The couple sat down recently and shared with you....

*Maeve: Marriage is not what I was expecting, it is not romance every day and Marvin doesn't really make me happy, like he used to, before when we were dating*

*Marvin: When I got married, I was in love with me and I thought she was also. Now, I am not sure she is in love with me and she doesn't make me a fulfilled person.*

# Advice from participants

# Responses – small picture thinking

# Responses – big picture thinking

# Scenario

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You have just been hired as the Controller for a federal government crown corporation in finance. You have been put in charge of insurance, in addition to core Controllershship functions, due to a personnel change. The company has over eight different policies with millions of \$ in premiums





What do you  
think, not a levels  
by role  
discussion?



# Rising levels of thoughts/questions

---

I should take \_\_\_\_\_

What about \_\_\_\_\_, as the first protective layer, before insurance?

**Can I ask a dumb question. \_\_\_\_\_?**

**The federal government is \_\_\_\_\_?**

# Questions from someone on this material

---

“I would like to get a better feel for the directions a CEO, CFO, Board's minds might go.... “

“How do they keep the big picture in their minds constantly without losing themselves in the details?”

“How do they sort through what they need to worry about vs the other parties?”

“What is the sorting process?”

# Part of the answer is like

---

Describe how you \_\_\_\_\_

I would say I just \_\_\_\_\_

But I believe we are doing hundreds of micro-adjustments to \_\_\_\_\_

And hard to explain to someone who \_\_\_\_\_...

# Not seeing the big picture

---

One day, an elephant is brought to the village where six blind men lived, and they decide to learn about it by touching different parts of its body.



# Not seeing the big picture

---

**The First Blind Man** touches the elephant's side and concludes that it is like a \_\_\_\_.

**The Second Blind Man** feels the tusk and insists that the elephant is like a \_\_\_\_

**The Third Blind Man** grabs the trunk and claims it resembles a \_\_\_\_.

**The Fourth Blind Man** touches a leg and argues that the elephant is like a \_\_\_\_.

**The Fifth Blind Man** feels the ear and describes it as a \_\_\_\_.

**The Sixth Blind Man** touches the tail and believes it is like a \_\_\_\_.



# The result

---

Each blind man, having only touched a part of the elephant, \_\_\_\_\_. They fail to realize that they are all correct in their own way, as they each describe only \_\_\_\_\_.

# Conclusion

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This story serves as a reminder that \_\_\_\_\_

## Applied here

Cognifeel is SAAS company, in the business of providing special timesheet and scheduling software to diverse clients, but its profitability has declined in the last three years. Several accountants are hired on consulting engagements to “provide recommendations to improve the company’s success”. They are a cost/activity accountant, a tax accountant, a financial reporting expert and then an all-round big picture CPA.

# Like the blind men

---

The cost/activity accountant consultant examines the company and says \_\_\_\_\_

The tax accountant says \_\_\_\_\_

The financial reporting expert accountant says \_\_\_\_\_

But the **big picture, strategic all-round CPA** who examined the entire company and its environment, agrees with the tactical recommendation of the other accountants, but says \_\_\_\_\_

# We are applying this proverb

*Where there is no guidance, a people falls, but in an abundance of **counselors** there is safety.*

Counselors, could read \_\_\_\_\_

Even specialist advisors or employees, should not be afraid to hit on the big picture stuff, that is if they see it....



## Scenario

**Arton** is an arts charity with about 400 members, based in Toronto. Arton recently purchased a new building for a second gallery in Montreal, when a historic building became fortuitously available for a reasonable price. The organization then embarked on a funding drive to get donations to pay for the building. The campaign has already raised \$4.9 million. The terms of the purchase are \$6.2 million due in 85 days. The Board of Directors recently decided that it will be too expensive to operate the building with annual costs including maintenance of \$900,000 or so, therefore it will be used as a commercial rental property, and tenants will have to be found.

Comments

# Who thinks what?

---

| Bookkeeper type   |  |
|-------------------|--|
| Controller        |  |
| CFO               |  |
| Smart outside CPA |  |
| Board             |  |
|                   |  |

# IFRS

---

You have all heard of it!

Some of you report under it, who?

**What is the big picture, higher level, strategic question about IFRS being required for certain Canadian companies?**

I have asked 100s of CPAs and I just get blank looks

- ✓  **CPA Canada Standards and Guidance Collection - Members Only**
  - Copyright
- ✓  Accounting
  - >  Preface to the CPA Canada Handbook - Accounting
  - >  Part I - IFRS® Accounting Standards



# IFRS

---

The answer flows from, “\_\_\_\_\_”

The ultimate purpose \_\_\_\_\_

Therefore, the big picture question about IFRS coming to Canada is:

**“Did financial statements \_\_\_\_\_?”**

# I met a lady

---

She was in charge of the IFRS conversion from Canadian GAAP at Bell Canada, a big company

I asked her the big question

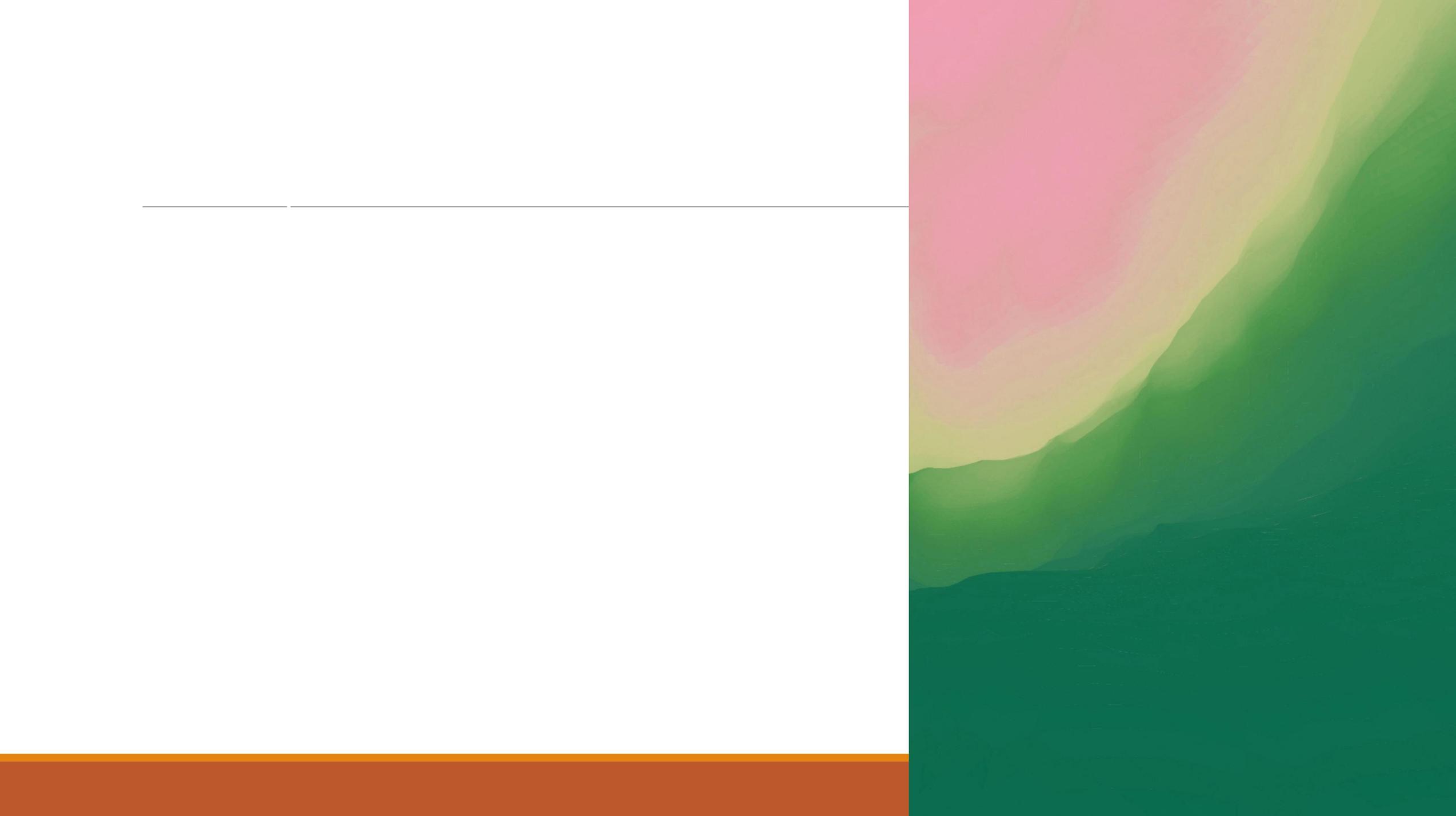
Her answer was: “\_\_\_\_\_”

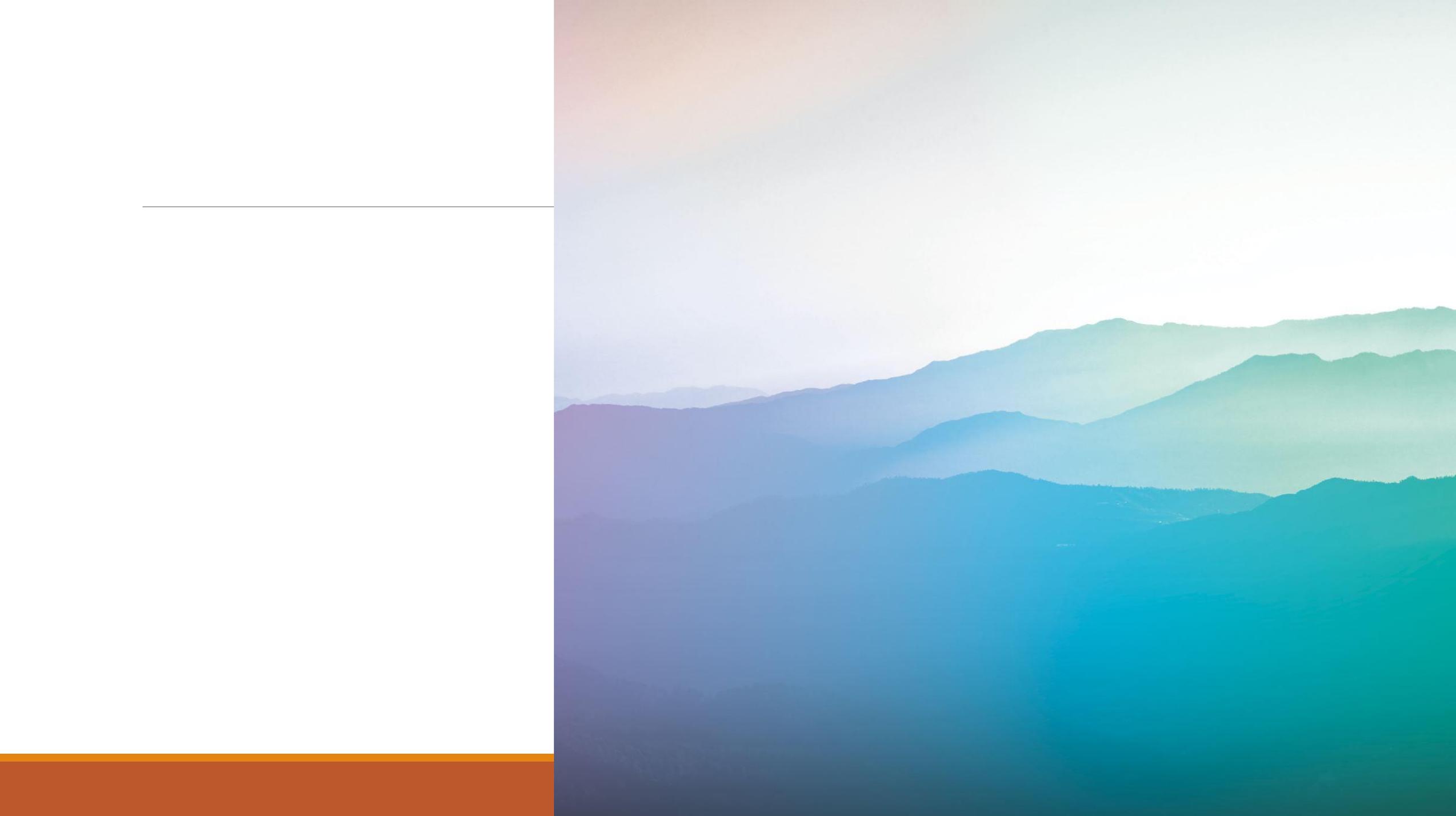


# An illustration – the mountain

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I love climbing mountains, especially the feeling when you get to the top and the view from the top and eating lunch there





---

It is easier to listen to this course and think big picture

It is much harder to \_\_\_\_\_

# Note

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I try remind \_\_\_\_\_ to take a step back and think big picture and strategic, periodically



Put this in your \_\_\_\_\_ say monthly to force yourself...

# Scenario - government

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In Canada, the drug approval process is managed by Health Canada, where your friend works, ensuring that all medications are safe, effective, and of high quality before they can be sold. This is from their website:

**Submission of Drug Application:** Pharmaceutical companies must submit a New Drug Submission (NDS) to Health Canada, which includes comprehensive data from preclinical studies and clinical trials demonstrating the drug's safety and efficacy and they must pay a fee for the review.

**Review and Evaluation:** Health Canada conducts a thorough scientific and regulatory assessment of the submitted data. This includes evaluating the results of clinical trials, manufacturing processes, and labeling information to ensure compliance with the Food and Drugs Act and its regulations.

**Market Authorization:** If the drug meets all safety and efficacy criteria, Health Canada issues a Notice of Compliance (NOC) and a Drug Identification Number (DIN), allowing the drug to be marketed in Canada.

# Comments

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You have a  
friend who  
works there,  
what is the  
big picture?

What I have always  
thought

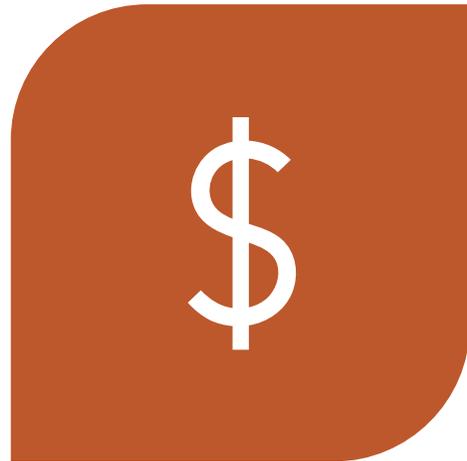
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**Mark Inc.** has received a bill from a software company to develop a new tool to help in the manufacturing process

# What do you think?

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*14:39:17 FROM PATTON TO  
EVERYONE: PAY \_\_\_\_\_*



*14:39:20 FROM MACARTHUR  
TO EVERYONE: I CAN'T \_\_\_\_\_*

# Levels

---

| Staff      |  |
|------------|--|
| Controller |  |
| CFO        |  |
| CEO        |  |
| Board      |  |
|            |  |

# Pop quiz question #2 for review

---

Which of these comments about a company losing market share to a growing competitor, is more big picture

- a) Would a 4% price drop, turn things around?
- b) What advertising would convince our customers to come back?
- c) What new product offerings could gain market share in the long term?
- d) Let's fire and replace the entire sales team

# Surprise?

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Why did the CEO install a mirror in her office?

So she could practice \_\_\_\_\_

---

# Barkon Corp



Barkon Corp is a three-year old company that have found a way to produce energy from pine needles. It is from a distillation and renjuvination process invented by scientist Dr. Omer Fariq. The input is pine needles, the output is 280 degree Celsius heat and a certain type of corrosive acid. Four commercial customers have already bought the technology, they are lumberjack businesses, which strip branches in forests, during logging operations, and use energy to heat their base camp accommodations Continued R&D efforts are focused on increasing the efficiency percentage of input versus heat.

Reactions – try to think bigger...

---

# Their thoughts

---

The company seems to \_\_\_\_\_

How can \_\_\_\_\_

Suppose \_\_\_\_\_

Suppose they \_\_\_\_\_

# Even bigger thinking

---

The company produces \_\_\_\_\_

Is there any \_\_\_\_?

Or is it \_\_\_\_?

Are there any \_\_\_\_\_?

# With one company I am involved in, we decided to pick the brain

---

Of an apparently great big picture strategic consultant, who has significantly helped several companies we were aware of, in this area

Working with the medium-size, not just Fortune 500s

# Scenario

---

**McNelly Inc.** is a privately-owned manufacturer of snow blowers. It has many different models, from large commercial units that are attached to trucks, to small residential models. We are now joining the recent January management meeting, where the team is discussing the pre-Christmas sales of the new SNOW600 hybrid (gas-electric), residential machine.

# Scenario

---

**McNelly Inc.** is a privately-owned manufacturer of snow blowers. It has many different models, from large commercial units that are attached to trucks, to small residential models. We are now joining the recent January management meeting, where the team is discussing the pre-Christmas sales of the new SNOW600 hybrid (gas-electric), residential machine.

VP Sales Doff: They are just not selling, and I think it is because we didn't make what our customers were asking for

VP, Engineering & Production Skis: How do you know what they want?

VP Sales Doff: I am in sales, so I know

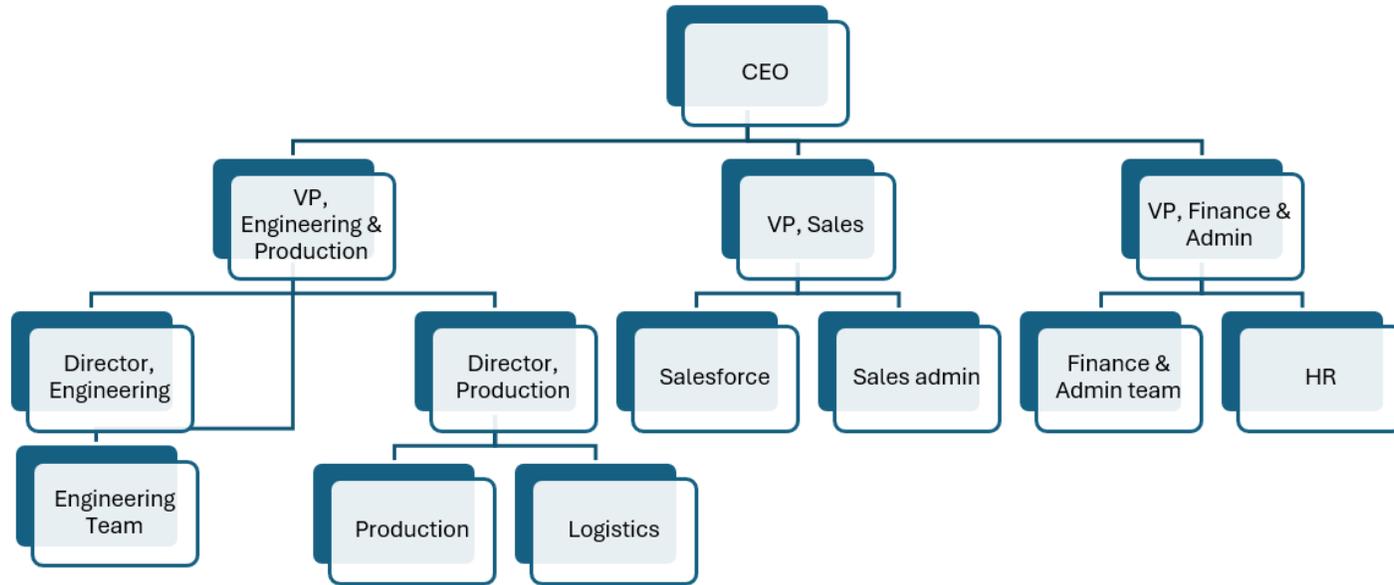
VP, Engineering & Production Skis: We designed and manufactured what we had in the Spec Sheet. Looks like a bit like Tesla Cyber truck, hybrid, key start, and couldn't meet that one at all, so we didn't

VP Sales Doff: That was a big part of the problem, we feel that customers want lighter machines...

VP, Engineering & Production Skis: If you can get me some more budget, we could do more R&D to find ways to make it lighter for the next winter season

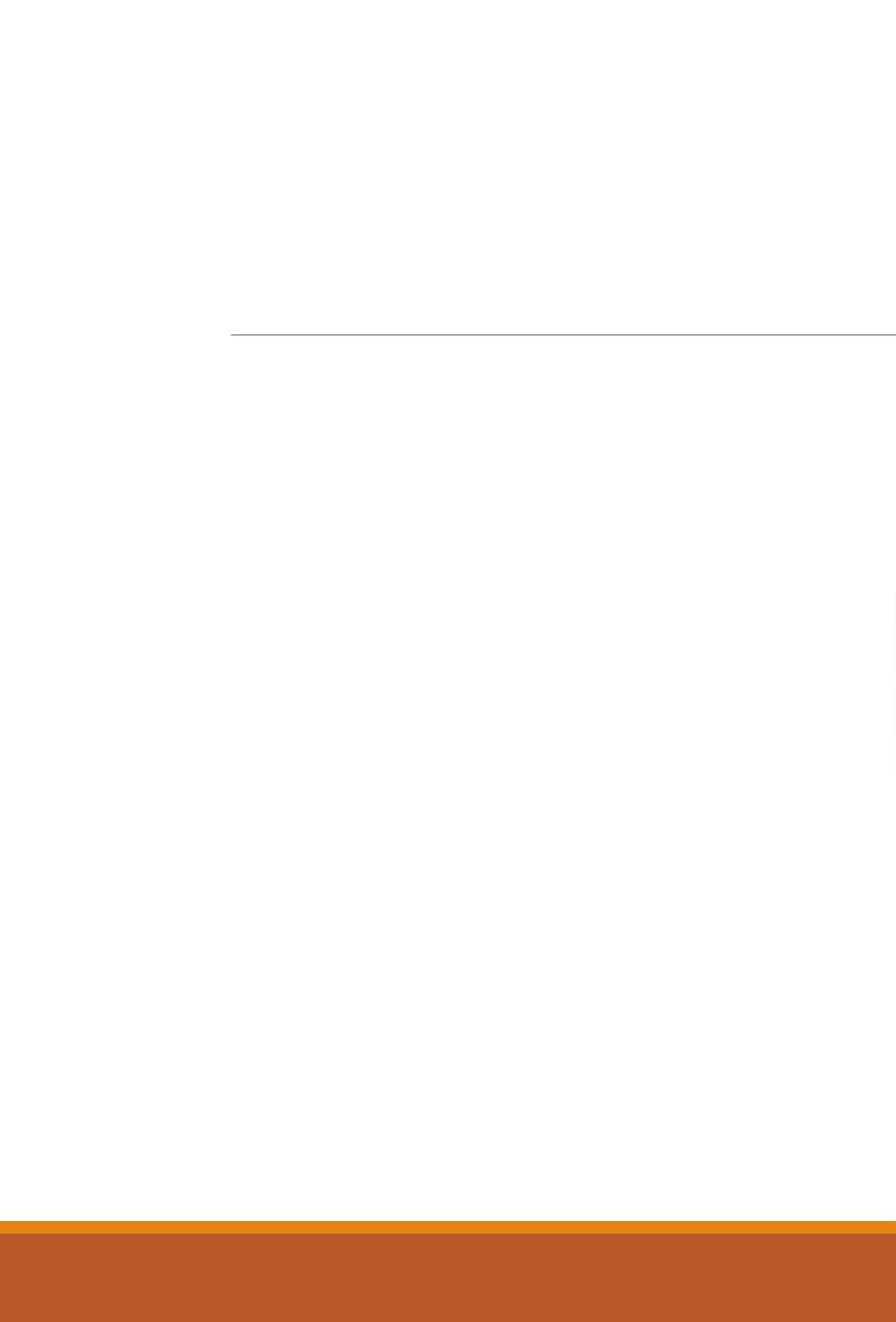


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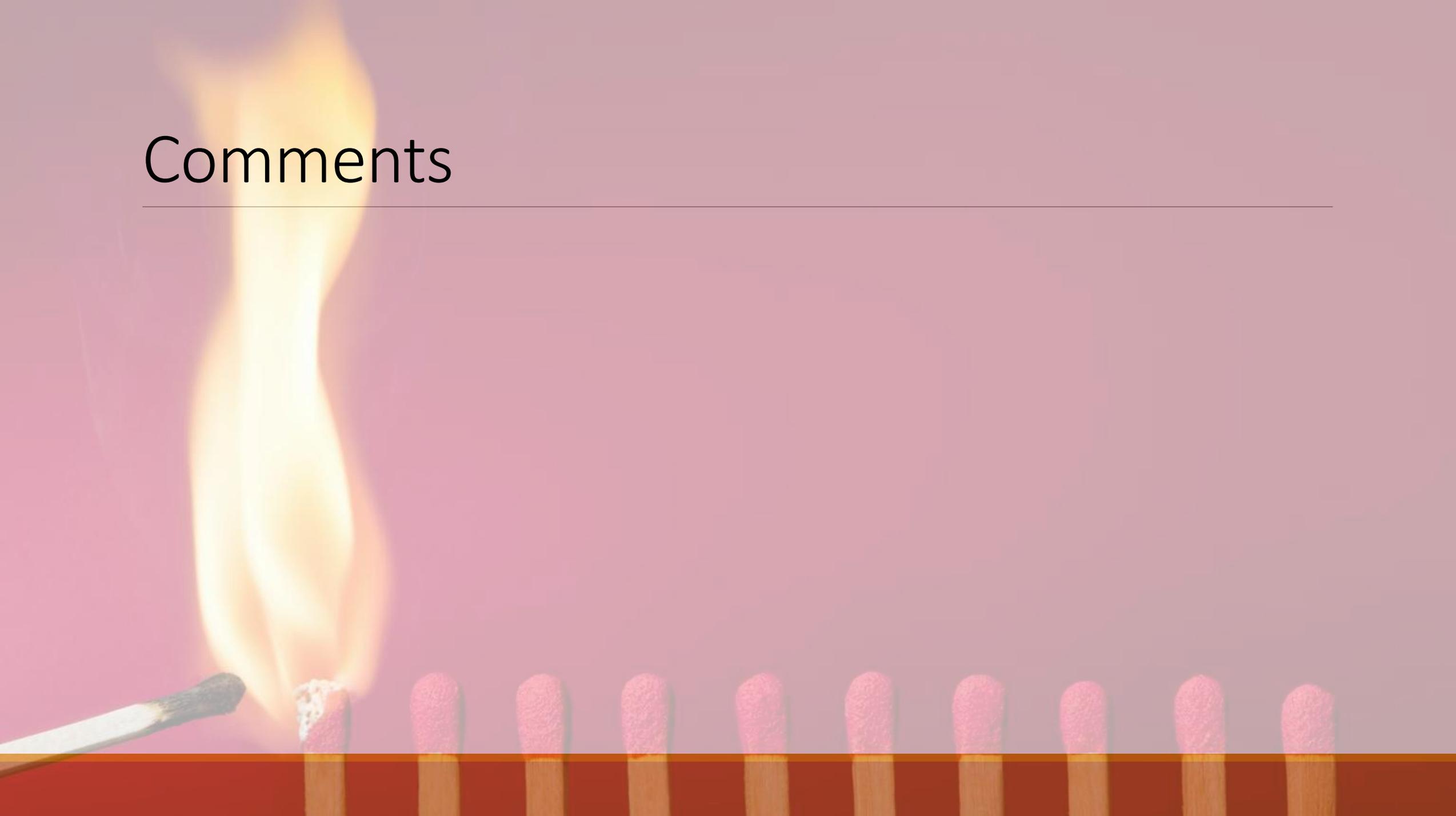
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The organization chart is



# Comments

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# Analysis

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There is the immediate issue of \_\_\_\_\_



# CONCLUSIONS

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# Thoughts

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Big picture thinking may not be in your job description

Do a good job on your \_\_\_\_\_ and they are more likely to listen to your strategic ideas, outside of your work area

And the good part about bringing up ideas above your level, is you don't have to make the final, \_\_\_\_\_

# Don't make things worse

---

You start focusing on the big picture all the time, when there are pressing tactical issues that have been assigned to you...



Ideas on how to insert your big picture thoughts into a discussion

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This course is a reminder to keep thinking higher and bigger

Best wishes in your own bigger picture thinking, I hope it improves and helps your career





Based on this course:



You don't think fairly well big picture, but are OK with this, at this stage of your career



You don't think fairly well big picture, and you really want to keep improving it



You think fairly well big picture

The top participant prize in the  
webinar

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There is  
higher level  
thinking in all  
my courses

It is not always labelled as such, but it is there, I didn't really think about this until I developed this and the related course

---

Primarily all kinds of specific tips to help you in all kinds of work and management situations, as well as ethical dilemmas

Check out the companion, parallel course, **Elevate Your Career With More Strategic Thinking**, a 2 hour video, lots more, different scenarios

# Closing comments

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Was the course boring?

Send me an e-mail [spriddle@bell.net](mailto:spriddle@bell.net), to pick my brain or for questions, or to get the completed slides as well as “**cheat sheet**” of main course points

Do LinkedIn with me, if you want



Thanks for watching, you can now complete the quiz, where applicable

[www.practicalpd.com](http://www.practicalpd.com)

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