








Talking to Busy People

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** from an internal Google training program:
"Effectively Communicate with Busy Executives"*

Antipatterns (you know these)

- too much tiny text
- expecting things to go  perfectly 
- audience mismatch 
- over-narration, meta-talking
- fully scripted 
- (don't run out of battery) 



Option 1

I want to update the professor*
on progress of my final project**

* parent, boss, advisor, VP

** essay, chores, proposal, prototype, code, thesis

Option 2

I want the professor to **endorse our decision** to focus the project on topic A so we can complete it **on time** and **satisfy the requirements.**

Greater specificity
Action oriented
Defined outcome

Introductions should **tell a story** and lead to **one question**

1. Limit the introduction to what the reader will agree is true.
2. Anchors the reader in a specific time and place.
3. Always put historical chronology in the introduction.

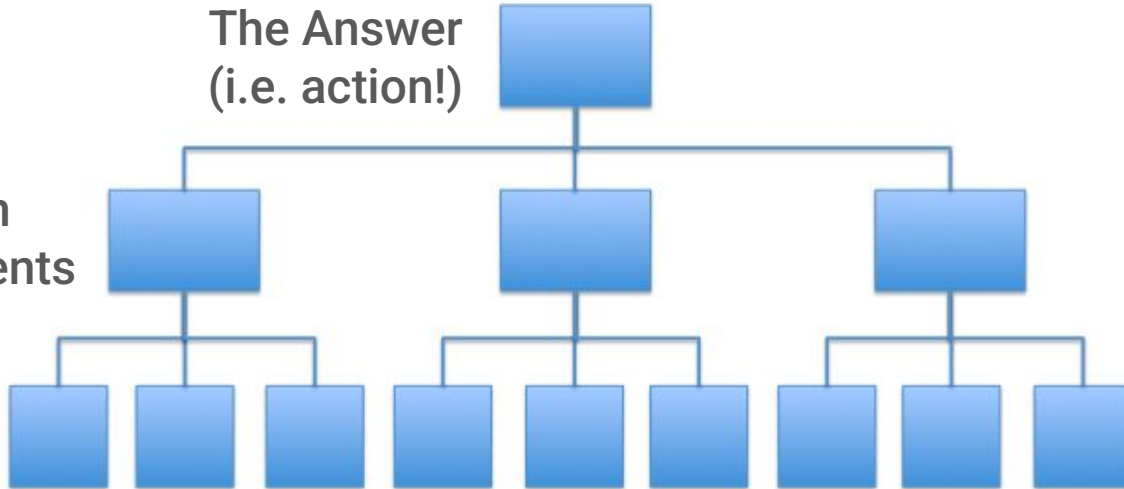
Every (business) story ever told: Situation, Complication, Question, Answer

- Situation - *What are we talking about?*
- Complication - *Why are we talking about it? Why now?*
- Question - *One question only!*
- Answer - *What's the key point?*

Situation
Complication
Question

The Answer
(i.e. action!)

Main
Arguments



Reschedule to
Thu 11:00



More convenient for
JC and KR



Permits KB to attend



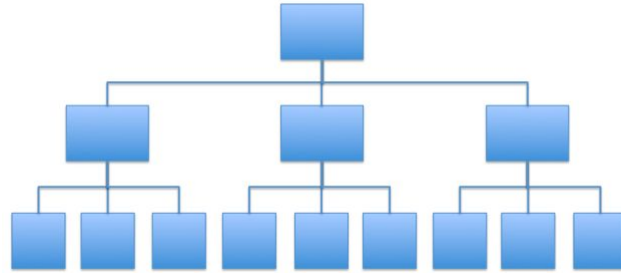
Room free

1: Start with the answer first

What should we do? → “You should do X”

- Executives are busy and impatient
- Executives think in a top-down manner
- You are more persuasive when you are direct

2: Group and summarize your supporting arguments



- Audience will group and summarize your arguments, with or without you
- Ideas should always form a pyramid under a single thought (i.e. your answer)
- Ideas at any level must always be summaries of the ideas grouped below them

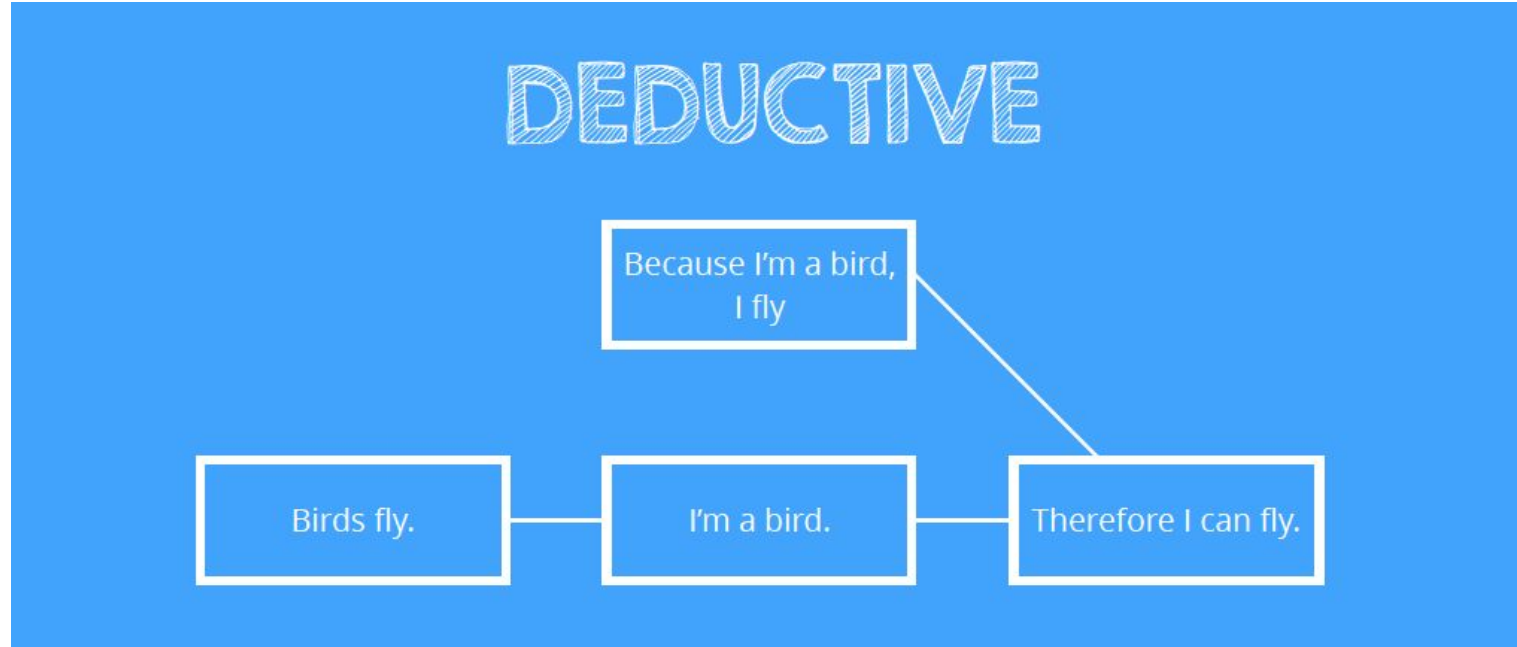
DEDUCTIVE

Because I'm a bird,
I fly

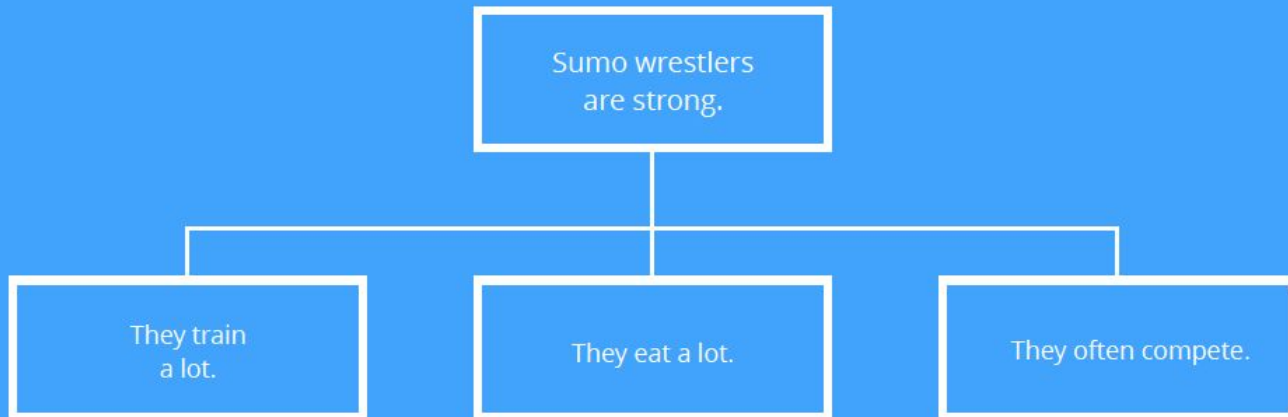
Birds fly.

I'm a bird.

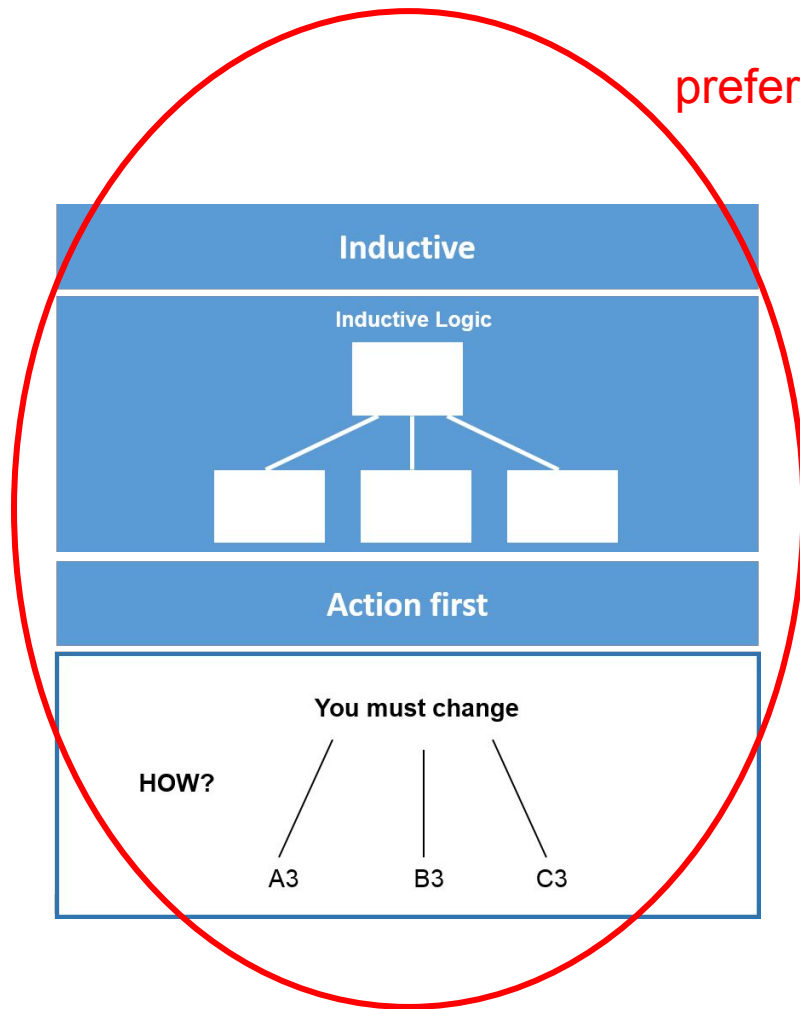
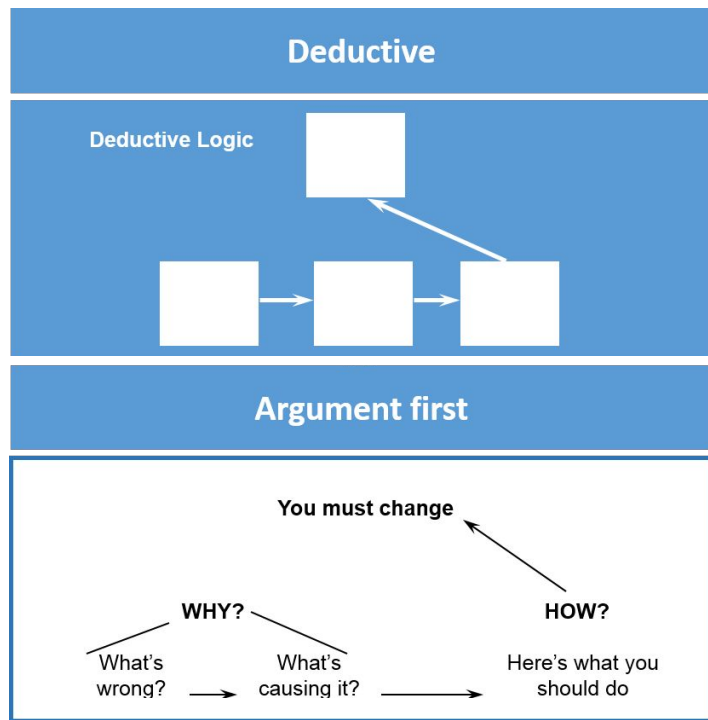
Therefore I can fly.



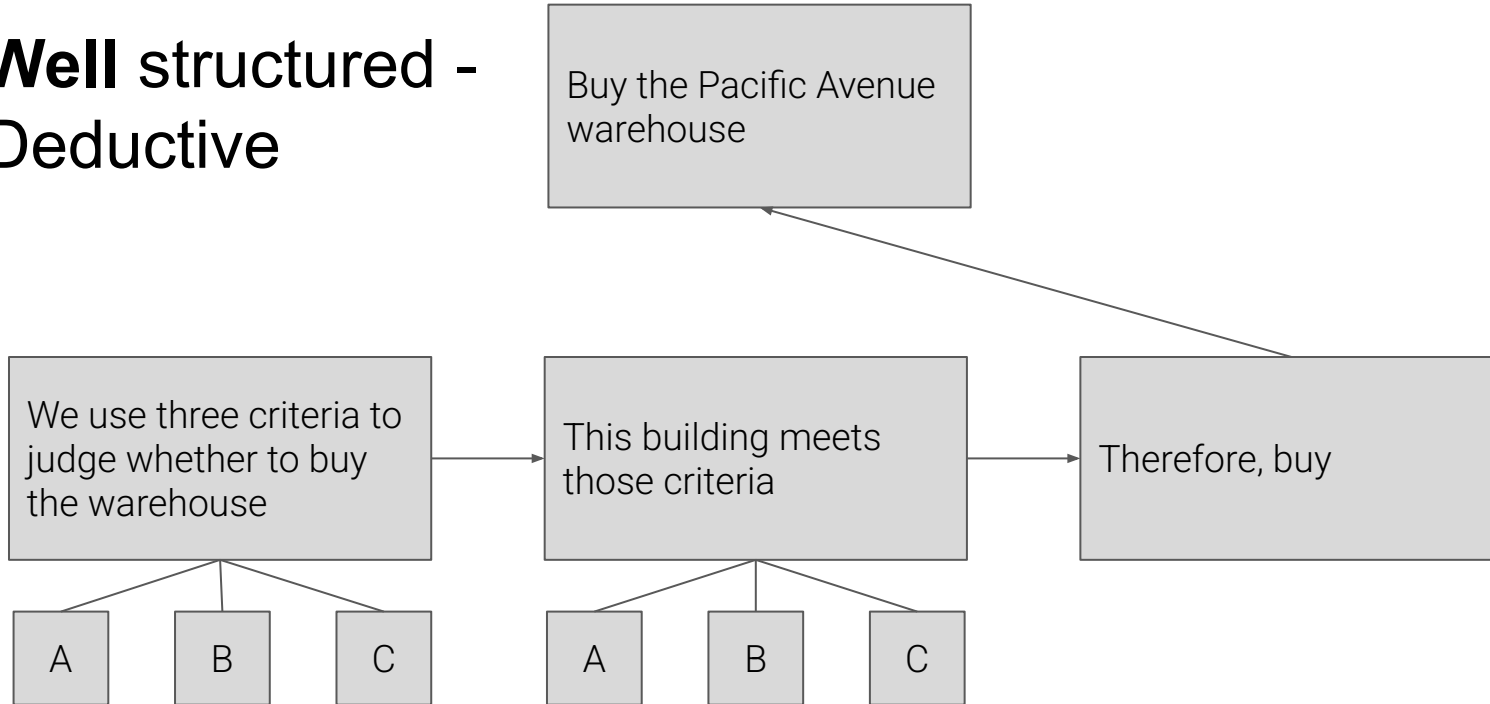
INDUCTIVE



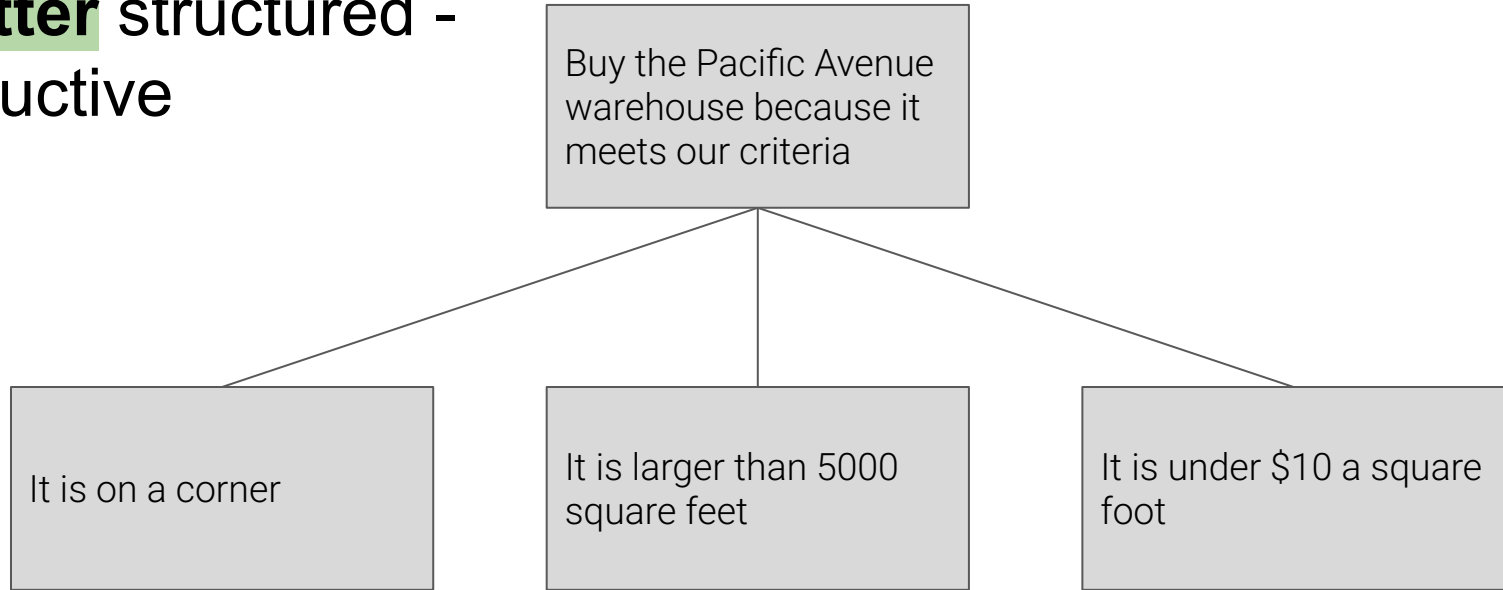
preferred



Well structured - Deductive



Better structured - Inductive



The plan for this session...



Update on Cookie Theft landscape: context on the business problem for Google



Goals for 2H2021: how teams x-Google are aligning



Key investments & opportunities to accelerate: key bets to make it uneconomical for attackers

Today's session will be 30 mins

What's wrong with this exec summary?

- Why are we talking about this?
- What's the problem?
- What's the answer?

Since last we spoke in March

Cookie Theft Landscape

Attack volume growing further

Commoditization

Scaled attacks, e.g. Ads incident

What's Going Well

Tactical fighting with PAs

(*) We have a separate update on coverage/incident mgmt

Begin to track takeover chain end-to-end

AV vendors engaged

Risk-based detection on track

Tailoring protections for product teams

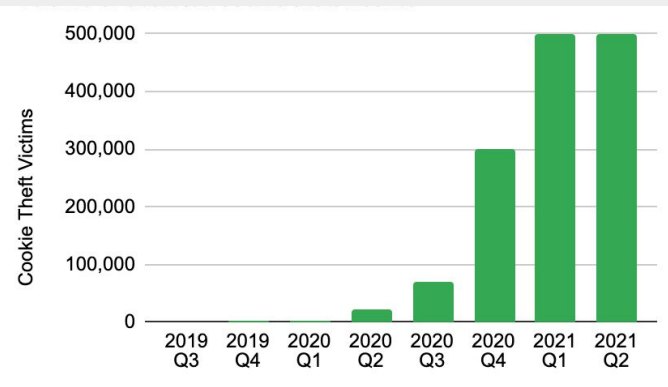
Since last we spoke in March

Current state: Strategy correct, but attacks grew further & require tactical fighting in the meantime

How might we go faster?

- Accelerate ongoing efforts by doing X
- Set Y boundaries on tactical fighting
- Invest in long-term initiative Z

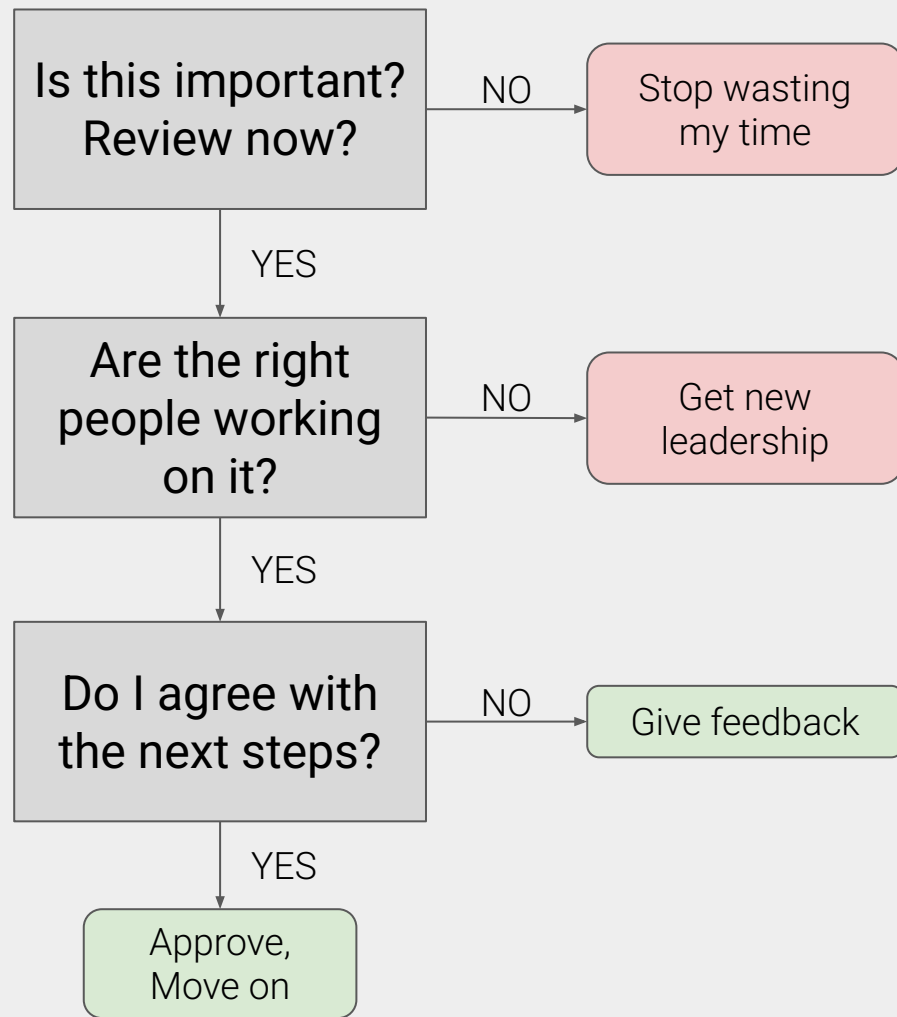
**Ongoing tactical fighting,
~1 incident / quarter**



* Cookie theft victim & monetary impact detection may be biased or incomplete.

The busy executive's thought process

At their level, almost everything is a trust and leadership problem. They either trust you to get it done or change leadership. Do it themselves is not an option.



Common patterns

1. Action Plan
2. Explain “How to” - e.g. solve a problem
3. Pitch, Seek Approval
4. Choosing among alternatives
5. Updates - red / yellow / green

Further Reading

1. Barbara Minto, “The Minto Pyramid Principle: Logic in Writing, Thinking, & Problem Solving”. [Website](#)
2. Davina Stanley and Gerard Castles, “The So What Strategy: Introducing Classic Storylines That Answer One of the Most Uncomfortable Questions in Business”. [Website](#).