Giving Job Talks in Industry

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Workshop goals

By the end of this session, you will be able to:

Gather information

Craft your message

Describe the colleague factor

Identify common mistakes

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Submit Application → Phone or Skype interview → In-person

Scenario: We'd like to invite you to give a talk about your work.

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│   Submit    │   │  Phone or   │   │             │
│             │   │   Skype     │   │  In-person  │
│ Application │   │  interview  │   │             │
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Gather information for your talk during the phone interview.

Pay attention to what questions the HR generalist of the Hiring Manager are asking. You can glean information about what is important to them. Write them down. I'll tell you why.

Use the job description, too.

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Ask. Don't guess.

The hiring manager wants you to be successful and give a good talk. They don't want to waste anyone's time.

Ask. Sample language - "I want to prepare for the job talk and wanted to ask a few questions, so that [share your motivation].

Sample language for your motivation – "I want to cover topics of interest to the group. I"ve got two major topics to present, which do you think I should focus on?"

"The job description said this – or- in our first conversation you said that- What are the specific techniques/skills required for the job? Technical? Trouble shooting? Collaborations?"

Audience

Team   **Topic Areas**

Attire

Skills

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Consider the team and audience

At best – the audience is peers/scientists in your field. Likely includes scientists in other fields. Who else? CEO's, CSO, Group leaders. Research associates. Mostly R&D folks.

Most likely – your audience is a MIX. Keep your message simple and accessible for a non-scientific audience (like you might describe your work to your grandma). Don't assume everyone knows the topic.

Remember to include - What is the take away from your data? What is the impact?

Don't oversimplify it, but make it understandable.

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Consider their motivations

All these people will be thinking about different things.
- Can you accomplish the job?
- What skills do you have?
- Will you be someone they want to work with?
- Will you fit in at the company?

Are they interested in your
- technical knowledge
- clinical knowledge
- a specific technique you developed?

Address their interests and
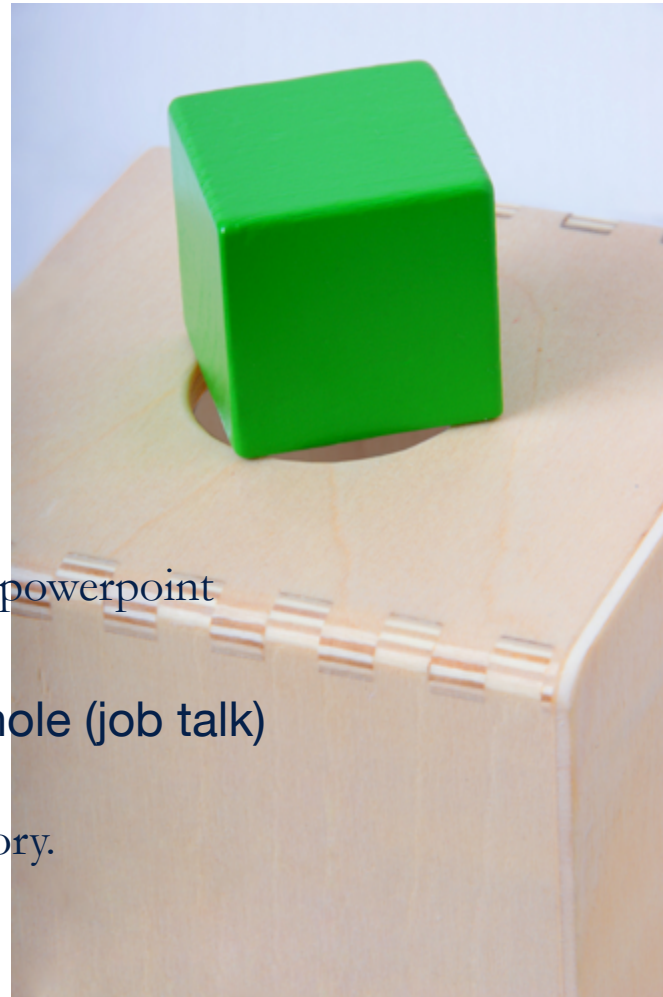Remember the big picture!
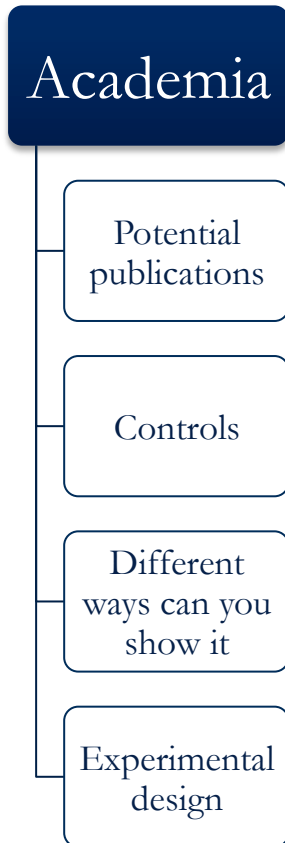
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Craft your message

This is NOT your WIPS talk.
Do not go to your ready-made WIPS powerpoint presentation.

Square peg (WIPS talk) – round hole (job talk)

Start fresh with the big picture, the story.

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Factors that shape your message

Academia

- Potential publications
- Controls
- Different ways can you show it
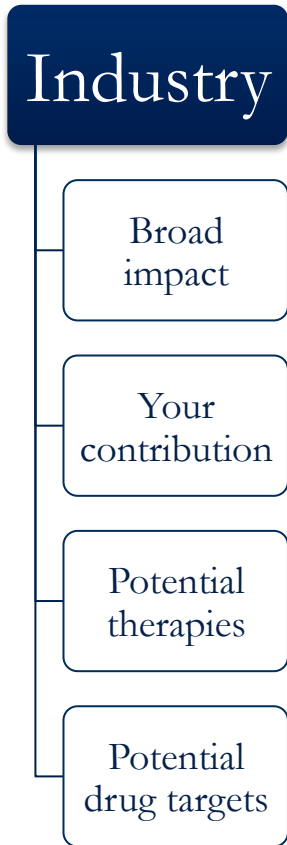- Experimental design

What are the components? We tend to present our research talks in academia like we would present a paper. LOGICALLY. These data lead me to do this experiment. And here are all the controls. Then I did this experiment and here are all the controls. And we tried it this way and that way.

Postdocs and grad students I've coached usually start with this format and it doesn't work for an industry job talk.

(Square peg) Academia: Can you defend your data? Have you thought about all the caveats?

(round hole) Industry: Broader - Are you an expert in the field?

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Factors that shape your message

Industry

- Broad impact
- Your contribution
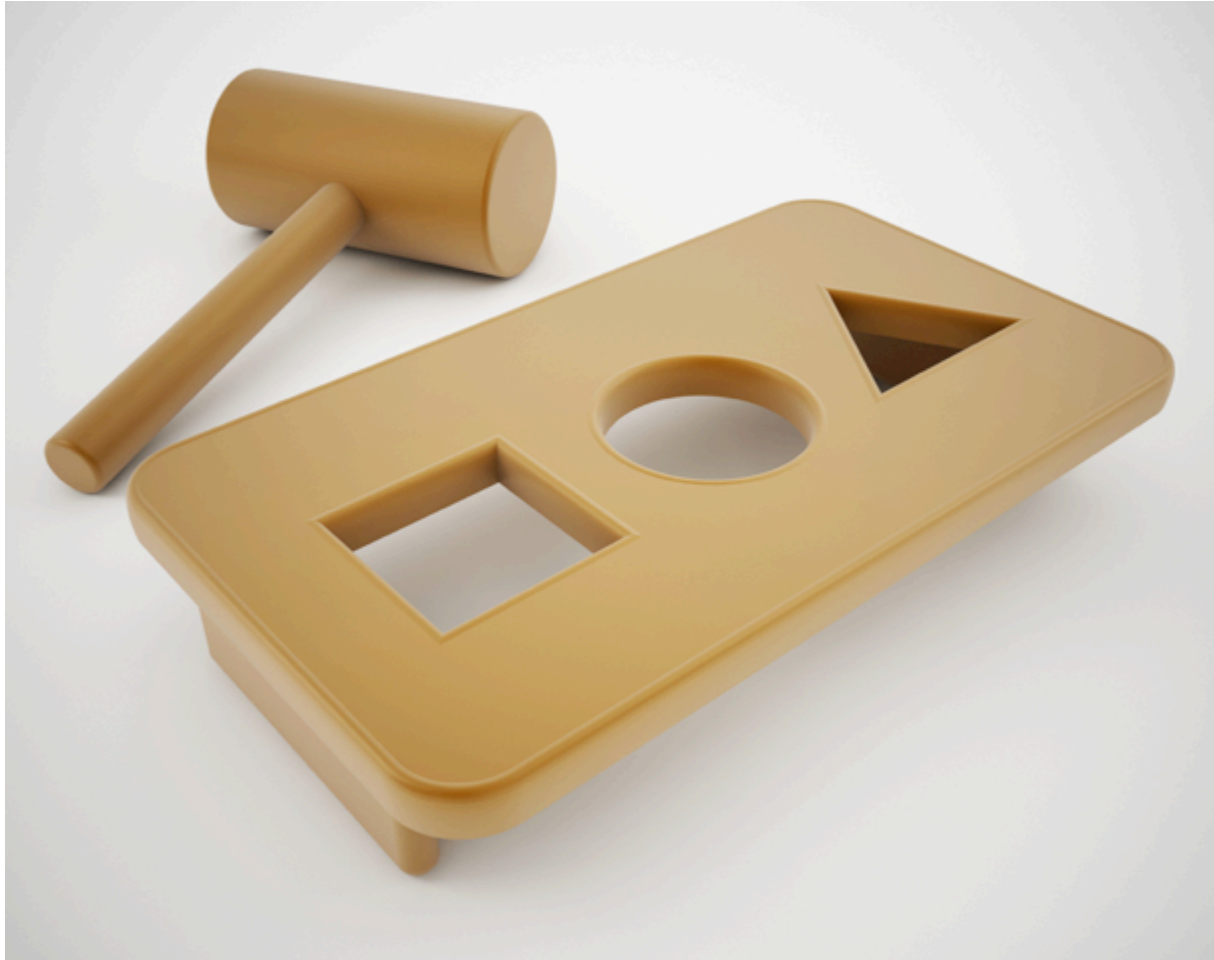- Potential therapies
- Potential drug targets

*Let me give you an example. A colleague of mine, who started as a Scientist I in a start-up is now part of the team that hires new scientists. He told me that a good candidate will give broad conclusions – for example: this mouse model has a ton of Abeta, how do we make a diagnostic out of it? Or how do we increase this protein's expression without increasing other bad side effects or cancer growth.

An even better candidate will then conclude or impress him by saying – and this protein can be targeted via antibodies or small molecules. While some companies are exploring this, I would XYZ. Shows you're thinking about what their goals and outcomes are in industry.

Even if you're not working on a therapy for your current research project, show you can think about it.
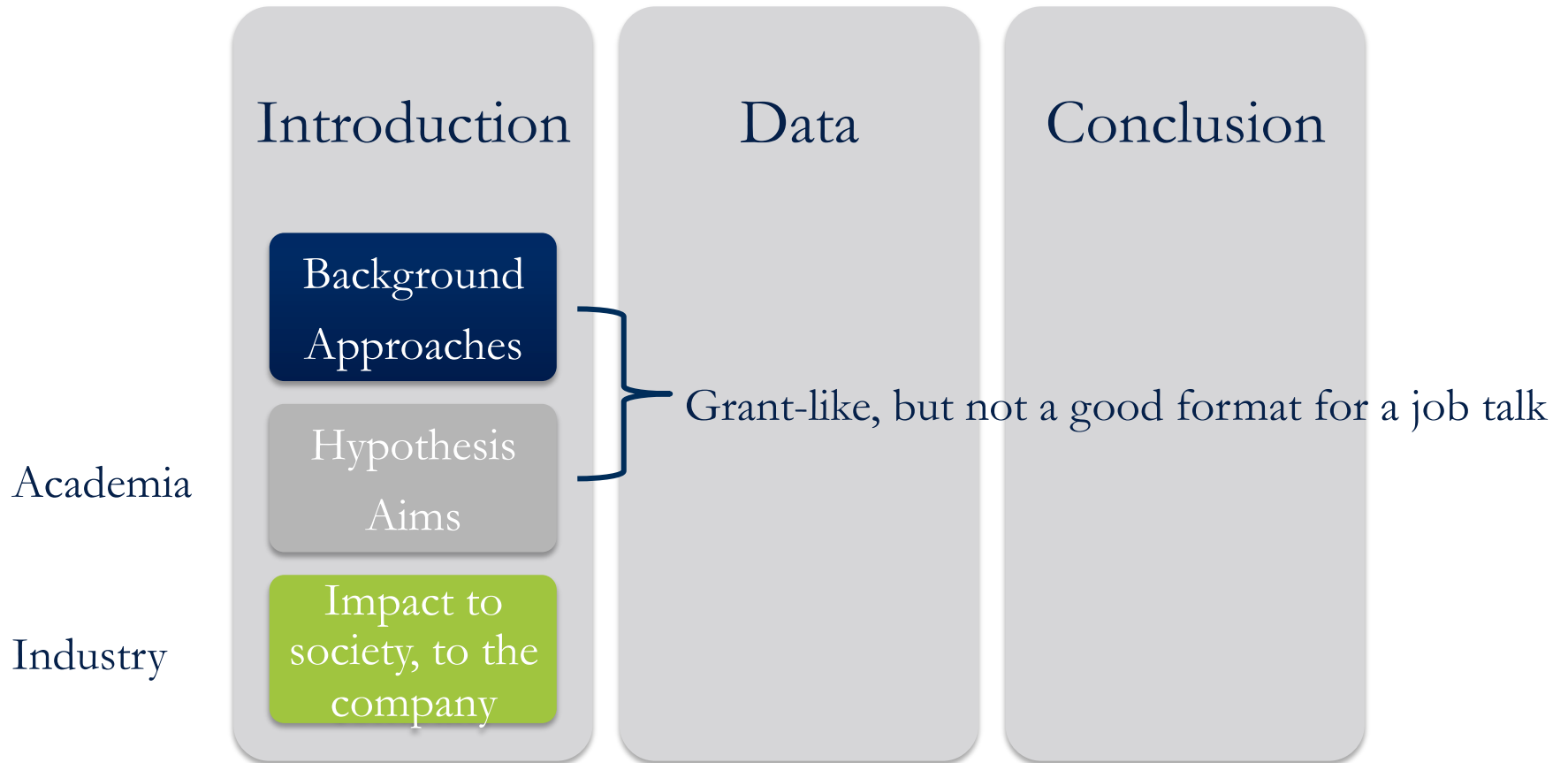
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Three parts of the talk

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Three parts of the talk

Introduction

Data

Conclusion

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Craft the intro

Introduction	Data	Conclusion

Background
Approaches

Hypothesis
Aims

Academia

Impact to society, to the company

Industry

Grant-like, but not a good format for a job talk

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Typical Intro

Hypothesis – some statement about how cells or tissue function, or how processes work

1. Aim 1
   a. approach
   b. approach
2. Aim 2
   a. approach
   b. approach
3. Aim 3

Nailing the industry job talk   07/26/2017

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A typical intro slide

- **593 AA, ~70 kDa**
- **Secreted protein**
- **Growth factor**
- **Modulator of inflammation**
- **Expressed in liver, adipose, brain, kidney, epithelial, endothelial, and inflammatory cells**
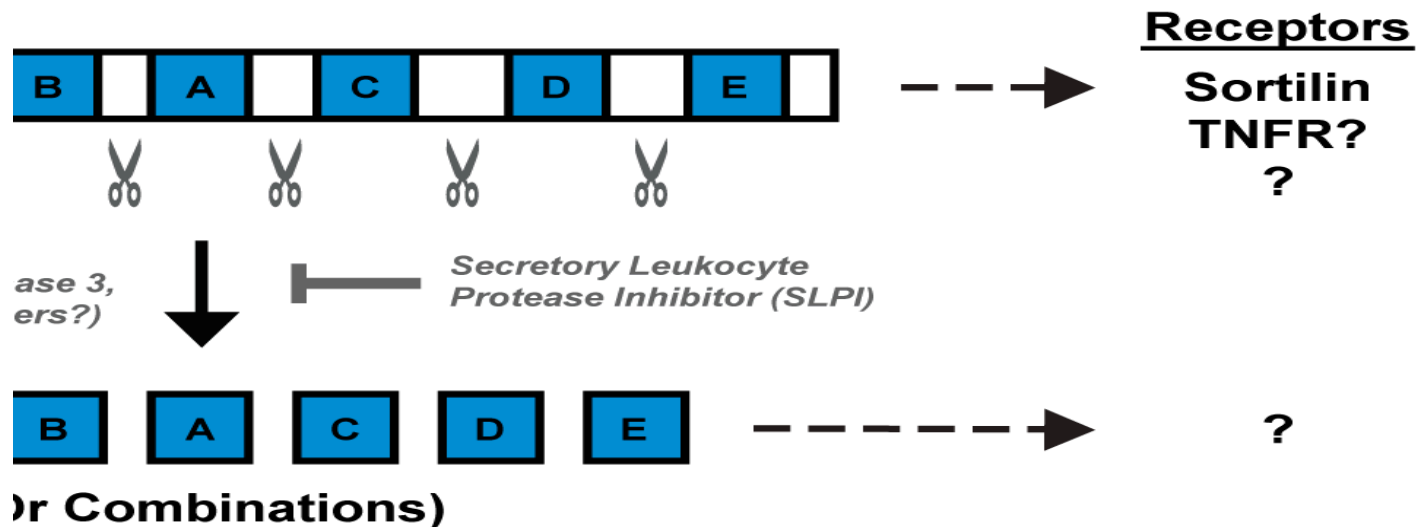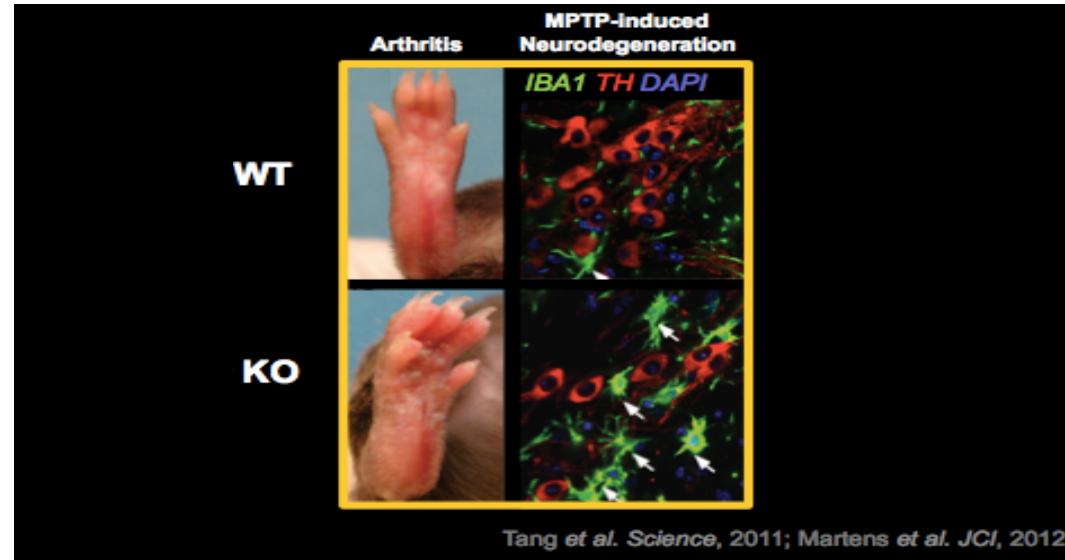
Talk about big picture for a better intro

Introduce the disease or process

1. What we know

2. What we don't know

3. Why should the audience care

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Gene-deficiency exacerbates inflammatory diseases

A broader intro slide

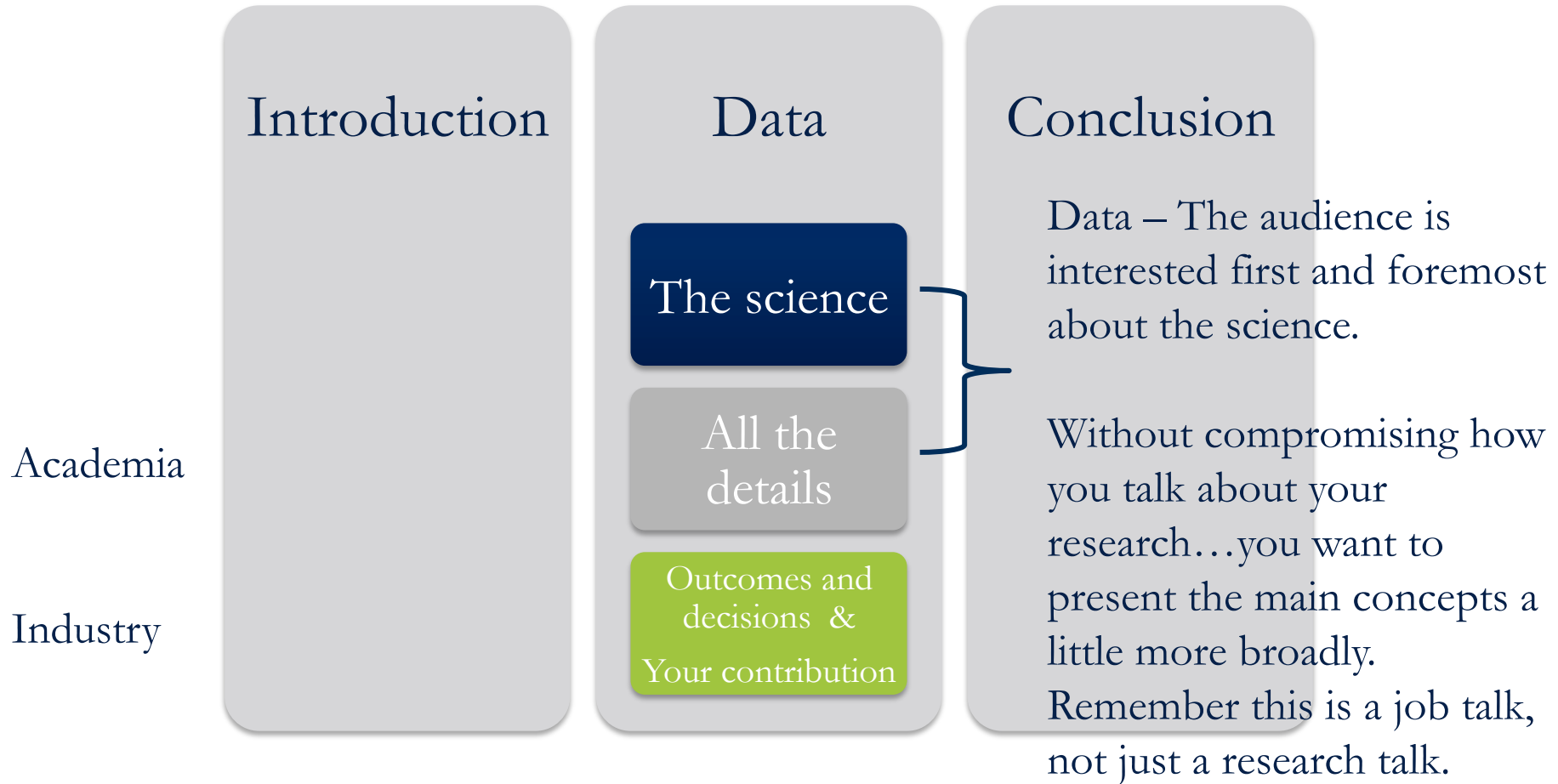
Tang et al. Science, 2011; Martens et al. JCI, 2012

An academic might describe this slide as – loss of this protein leads to inflammatory diseases and you can see that expression of inflammatory cells in increased in the brains of these mice. The protein is this big, it's cleaved into this many products.

A industry-minded candidate might say - we are trying to understand how this protein is expressed and processed, and in what cell types. The goal is to target the protein and develop drugs to alter the course of the disease. As you can see there are many therapeutic areas it could impact. Then share specifics.
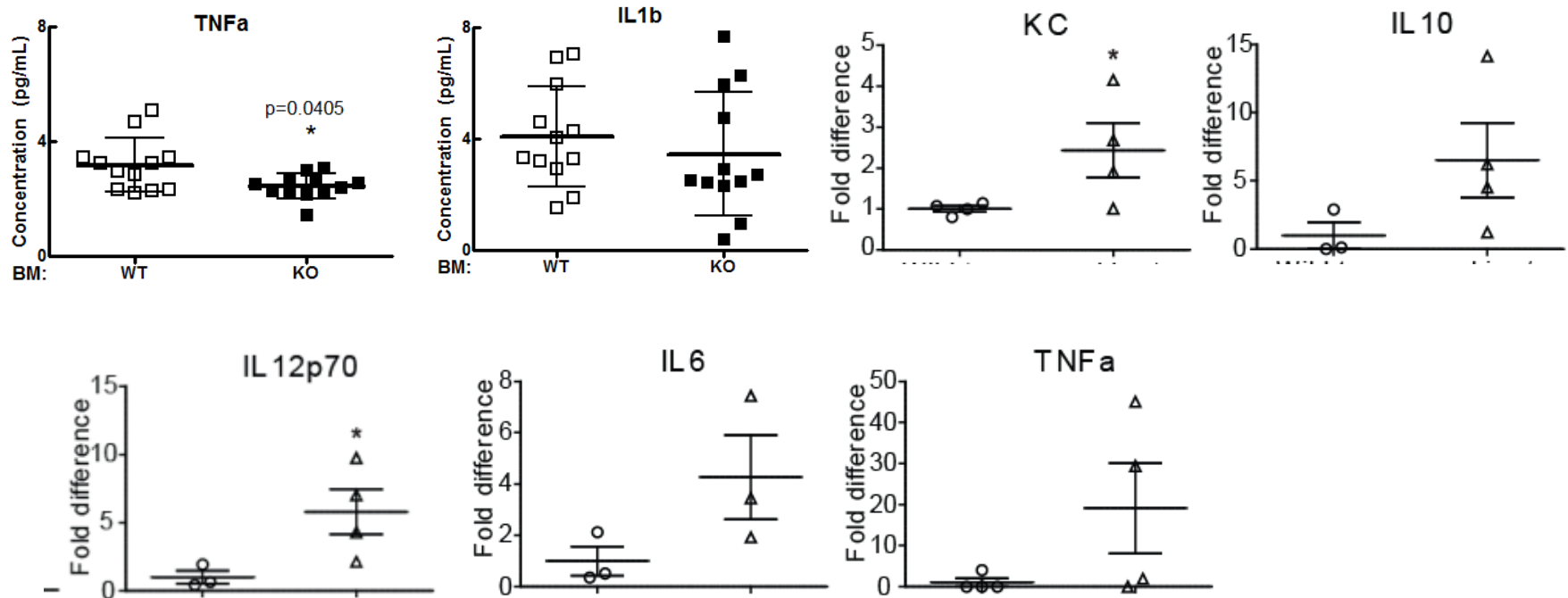
Don't dumb it down, but don't forget the big picture.

Craft the data slides

Introduction

Academia

Industry

Data

The science

All the details

Outcomes and decisions & Your contribution

Conclusion

Data – The audience is interested first and foremost about the science.

Without compromising how you talk about your research…you want to present the main concepts a little more broadly. Remember this is a job talk, not just a research talk.
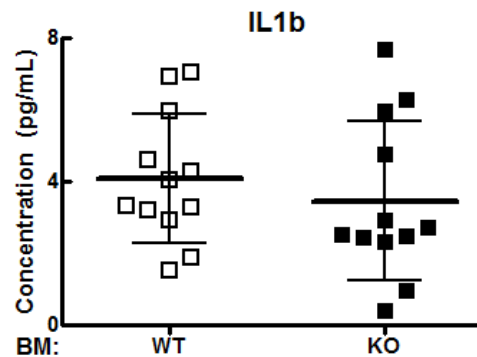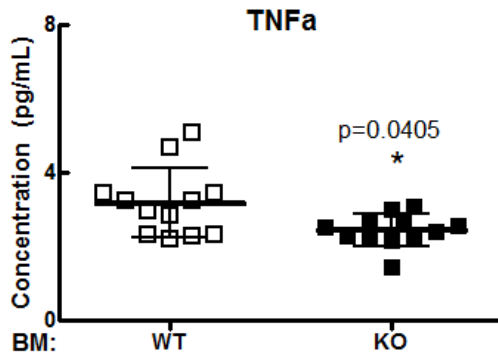
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A typical data slide

IGNORE THE DATA. The point is that there's too much information on here.

No Difference in Plasma Cytokine Levels

A more concise slide

TNFa

p=0.0405
*

IL1b

Also No Difference in:
IL-6
IL-10
IL12p70
IFNg

Show one or two pieces of key information and relate it to the bigger picture. If you collaborated with anyone, talk about those contributions.

From this work we decided to…look at a different time point, try a different dose or mouse model or cell type. This was a critical experiment because…

The audience wants to know − What decisions were made from these data? Who made those decisions. Sharing this information shows you think about milestones and that your decisions are data-driven.
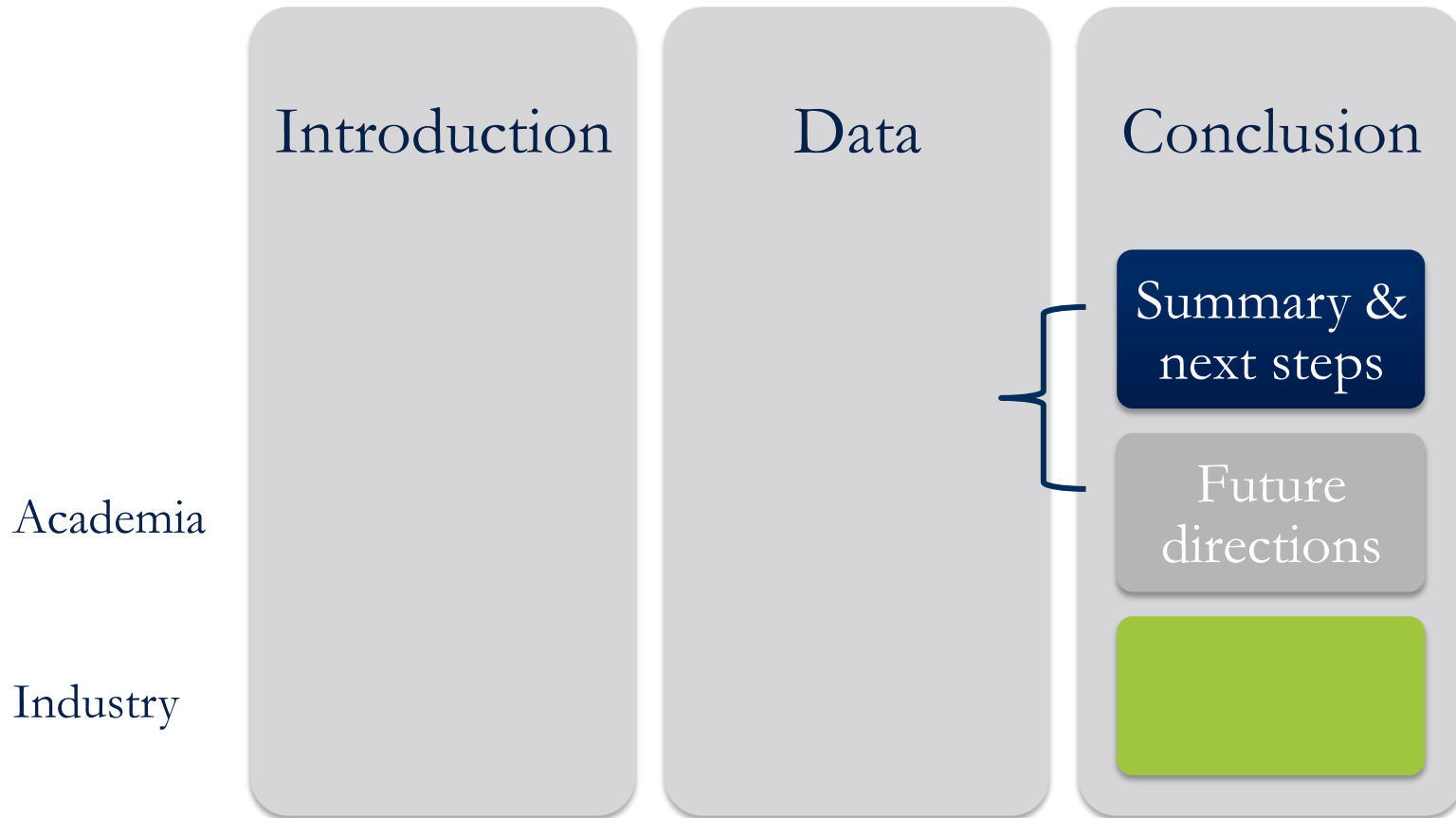
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Craft your conclusion

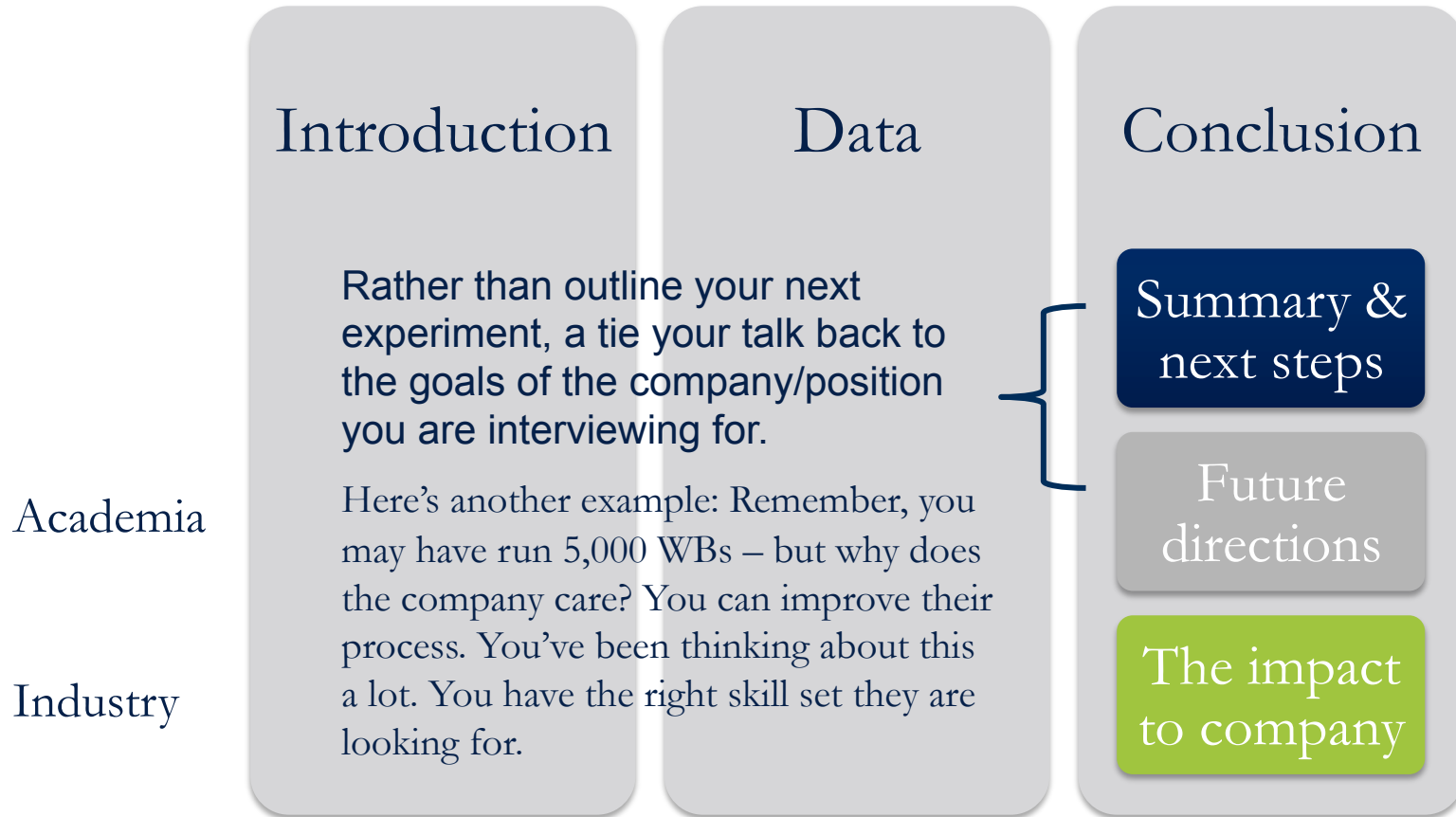Introduction

Data

Conclusion

Summary & next steps

Future directions

Academia

Industry

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Craft your conclusion

Academia

Industry

Introduction	Data	Conclusion
	Rather than outline your next experiment, a tie your talk back to the goals of the company/position you are interviewing for.	**Summary & next steps**
	Here's another example: Remember, you may have run 5,000 WBs – but why does the company care? You can improve their process. You've been thinking about this a lot. You have the right skill set they are looking for.	**Future directions**
		The impact to company

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Typical conclusion (too tedious, a laundry list of experiments)

1. Stimulated with X in cell type 1a, and increased response in area a, b, and c

2. Stimulated with Y in cell type 1b, and increased response in area a, b, but not c

3. Did this experiment to increase response in c using technique 1 and 2

4. But not with this control

5. Cell type 2a showed upregulation of this gene with transfection of XYZ
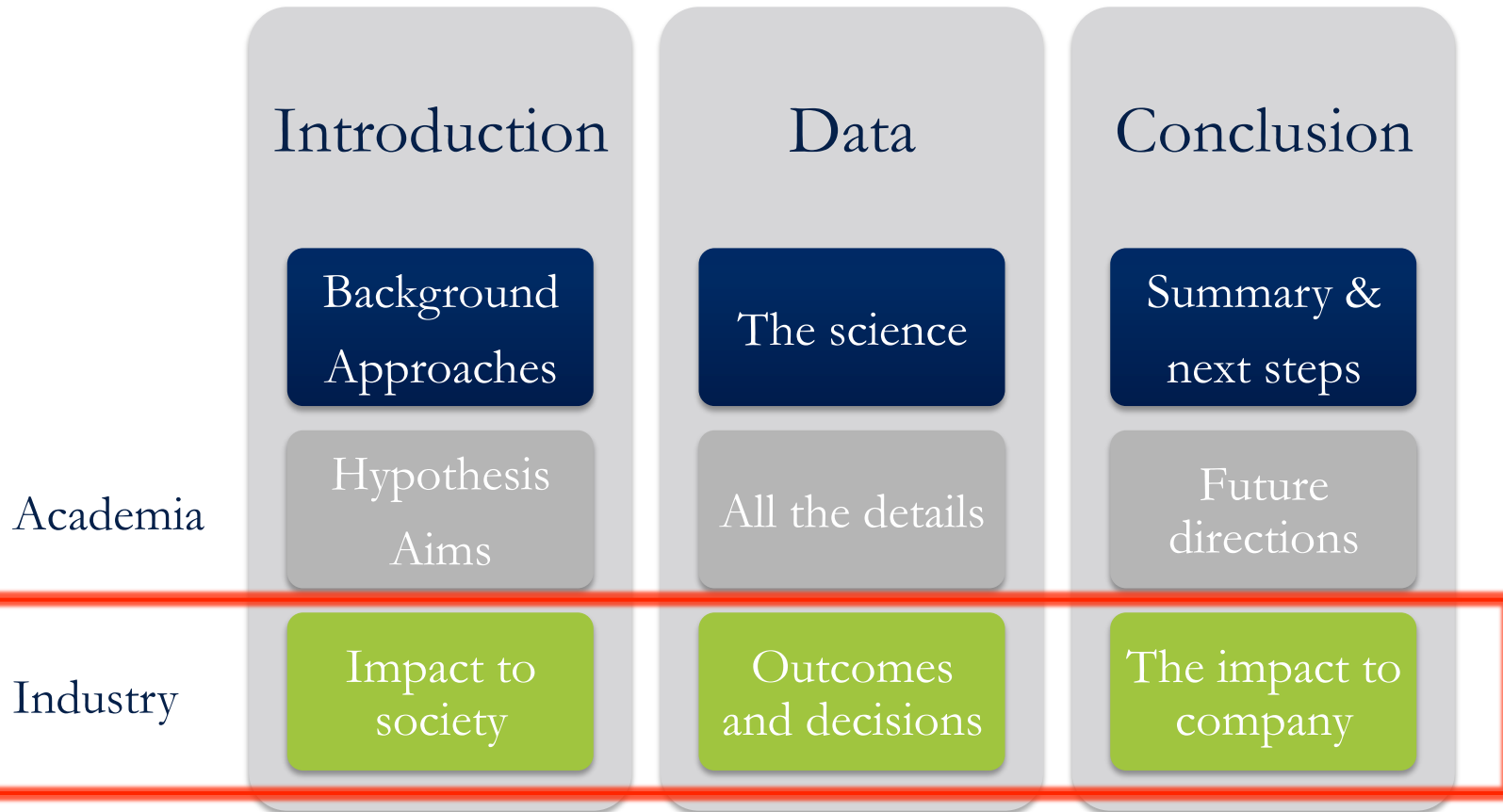
6. Plans in animal model

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Gene-deficiency exacerbates inflammatory diseases

Tang et al. Science, 2011; Martens et al. JCI, 2012
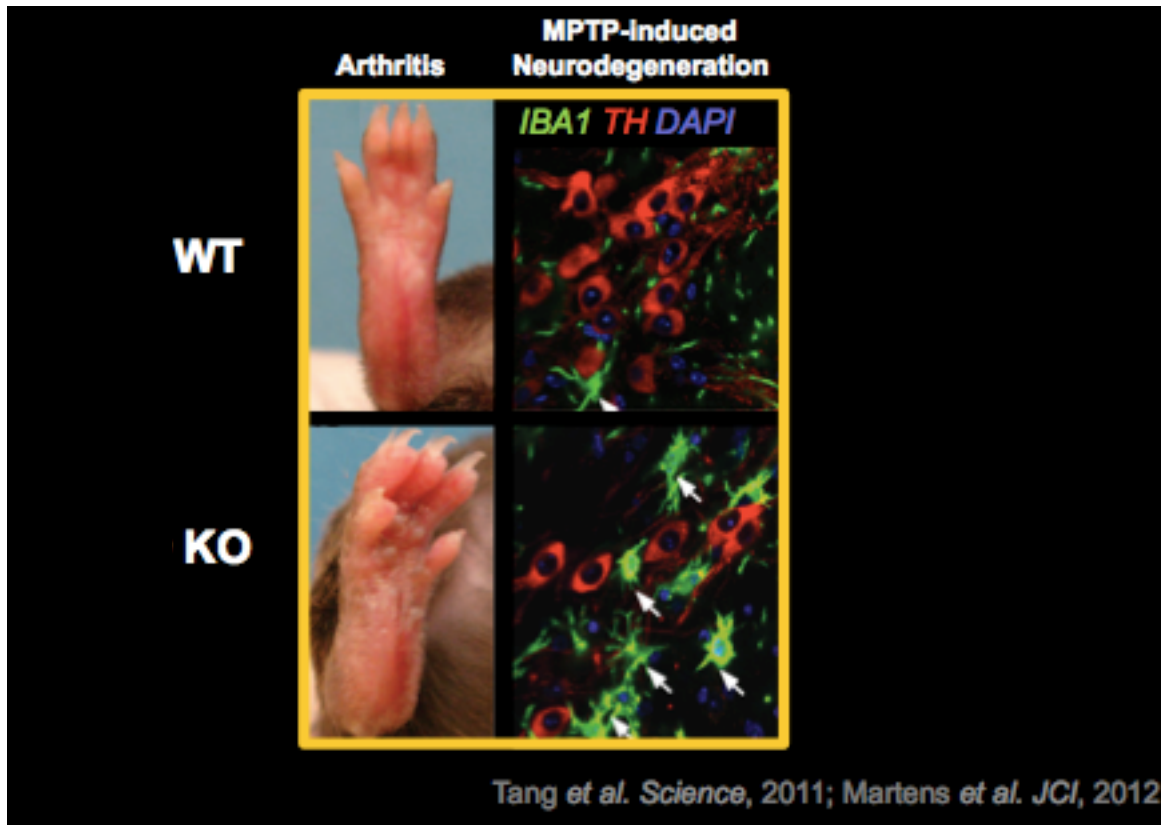
Be like TED – present the big picture.

1. Findings

2. Impact

3. Potential targets

4. Potential applications

Craft your message for industry

	Introduction	Data	Conclusion
	Background Approaches	The science	Summary & next steps
Academia	Hypothesis Aims	All the details	Future directions
Industry	Impact to society	Outcomes and decisions	The impact to company

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Describe the colleague factor

Ask yourself - Why would a CEO or CSO hire me over someone else with the same conceptual knowledge.

What non-verbals does this translate to?

EYE CONTACT IS THE BIG ONE.

Be polished.

Be confident.

Smile – makes you feel better and makes people around you more comfortable

Use a confident voice.

Trust means you'll be a good colleague, a good employee.

Competence

Trust

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Skills to convey during your talk

Competent	Colleague
• Strong understanding of your field • Creative • Problem solver	• Communicate clearly • Adaptive • Team player • Leadership capabilities

Hiring manager is wondering
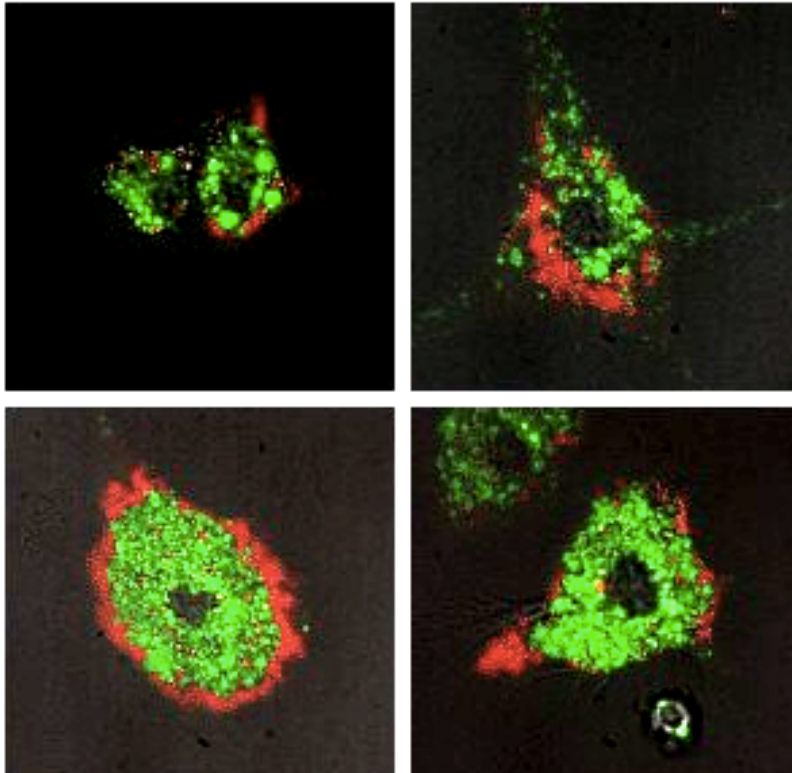 How can I solve my problems by hiring this person?
 Can s/he tackle job challenges and contribute from Day 1?
So Answer
 Why should they hire me?
 Focus on your skills as a problem solver

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Talk about the data like a colleague

- Collaborations?

- Leadership?

- Adaptability?

Highlighting your ability to be a team member, doesn't dilute your contribution. Demonstrate your independence and problem solving, but you make decisions with your lab mates, colleagues AND advisor.

The ripple – talk about your contribution and one ripple out is your team's contribution to the project, and another ripple out is your boss's reaction to your work.

But, I'm…

An introvert

Thoughtful

Tend to practice

A non-native English speaker

Avoid too much text on the slides

Tend to practice

Neuro-diverse

Include cues for non-verbals

Use descriptive vocabulary

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What about these issues:
(Talk about it/Don't talk about it)

1. But the relevant work was completed in grad school, not during my postdoc…If it's relevant to the job, then talk about it, especially if it's a technical area they care about or a therapeutic area they are targeting

2. What if the data are proprietary information? Don't talk about it. They want to know that you can honor a contract.

3. Do I highlight all my transferrable skills? If it's related to the job, yes. If you have experience in regulatory or marketing, mention if it helps you with your bench job. Otherwise it might make the hiring manager think you're not being serious about the job you're interviewing for. Be smart about how you portray your other skills.

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What about these issues:

4. What if I'm applying to a different therapeutic area? Ex: if the job is in immunology, but you're a neuroscientist. Remember that you'll be competing with candidates who have expertise in immunology, you'll need to make the case why you are the right person for the job.

5. I'm giving a job talk for an industry postdoc. How is it different? In this case, you want to focus more on your contributions to the science, your decision making, and successes from the projects. Focus more on the science. Don't hesitate to us "I" more than "we" when explaining the data.

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Avoid these common mistakes
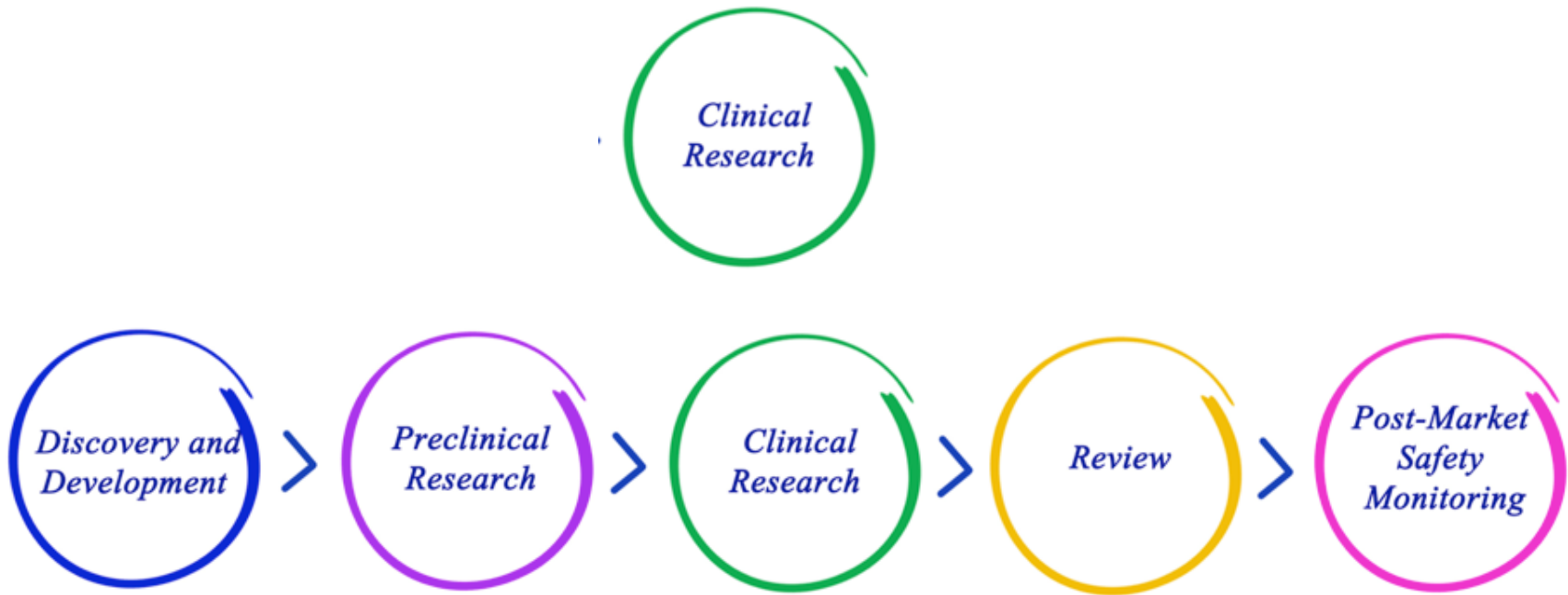
Aknowledgments
Concusions

Be a pilot.

Don't be a conductor in a tunnel, be a pilot in the air. Focused and seeing the 30,000 foot view
Good answer – these are my conclusions.
Better response – these are my conclusions and these are how I would create therapeutics from these targets

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Present your work broadly.

- Don't hone in on one drug/process. It may be old news.
Don't make assumptions based on their website. For example, you may have read that a drug is in clinical trials, but maybe it's failed and the company is no longer pursuing it. Reference it to show you did your homework/researched the company, but don't conclude your research aligns with any one drug target.
- Show knowledge about the DD pipeline. Ask about current projects. Be broad. Talk about the broad applications for your work.

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Sneakers with that suit?
Dress appropriately.

Clothes – I have to say it, because, yes, it still happens. Don't wear sneakers with your suit or clothes with holes. Find out the attire.

Not sure about the dress code? ASK. OCPD has a Pinterest page for suggested attire.

Don't go over time, and no typos.

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Send thank you emails

Thank them for:

- Meeting with you

- Sharing a resource or sharing data

- Making an introduction

- Or to follow-up on a topic

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Workshop goals

By the end of this session, you will be able to:

At what point in the interview, who to talk to, what to ask

Gather information

Consider the broader audience an include information about outcomes and decision making

Craft your message

Not just competence. Also - trust, presence, non-verbal language, posture, confidence

Describe the colleague factor

Identify common mistakes

Don't be too narrow. If you have a doubt, don't wear it. Write thank you notes!

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Wrap up

Resources to help you prepare for your talk

- Sciencecareers

- Amy Cuddy TED Talk

- Talk like TED

- Toastmasters meetings

- Fierce Pharma

- Office of Career and Professional Development

- career.ucsf.edu

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