

Generating Your DBA Topic

A Structured Framework for Bridging Advanced Professional
Practice with Academic Rigor in Business & Management

01 / The Foundations

Understanding the unique mandate of Doctor of Business
Administration (DBA) research

The Doctoral Divide

Traditional Ph.D. Focus

Designed primarily for individuals seeking careers in academia. The research aims to expand, refine, and advance core academic theory without a strict requirement for practical, near-term industrial resolution.

Applied DBA Focus

Designed for active business practitioners. The research aims to solve messy, persistent systemic business problems by applying existing theories in novel ways, driving both professional and strategic impact.

| The DBA Topic Sweet Spot



1. Practical Relevance

A real-world organizational "pain point" that executives actively struggle with and care to solve.



2. Academic Grounding

A connection to robust literary frameworks and explicit gaps left by previous researchers.



3. Feasibility & Access

Realistic, guaranteed access to the target companies and subjects to collect high-quality empirical data.

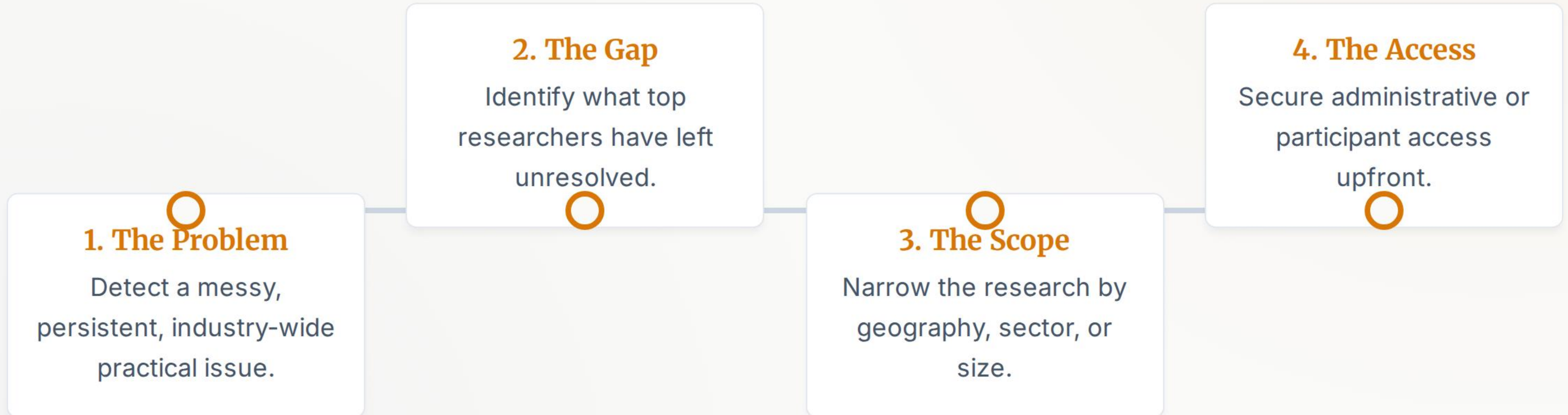
| Identify the Burning Platform

Avoid localized, narrow topics. Target broad, industry-wide phenomena:

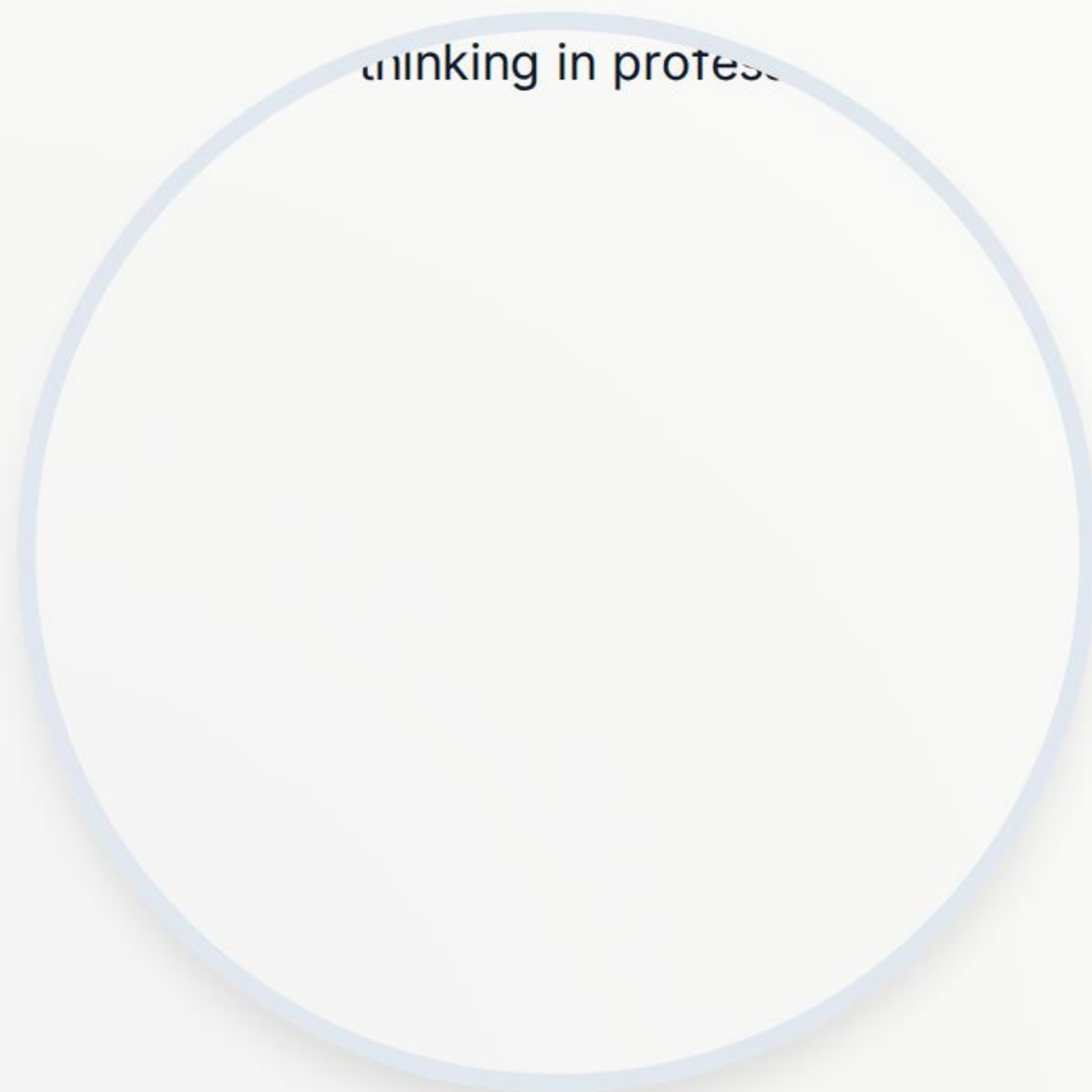
- **Industry Pain Points:** Pinpoint issues affecting multiple organizations (e.g., transition hurdles in hybrid healthcare models).
- **Literature Search:** Scan the "Future Directions" and "Limitations" sections of recent peer-reviewed articles to locate academic gaps.
- **Strategic Value:** Focus on questions that, when answered, provide actionable tools for C-suite decision-makers.



| The Topic Generation Framework



| Framing the Question



Shifting from Pitch to Query

Do not pose consulting questions like *"How can Company X increase sales by 20%?"*. Instead, develop inquiry-driven doctoral questions.

Focus on understanding the systemic dynamics, underlying variables, and root causes of operational challenges. Frame your questions with **"How"** or **"Why"** to explore complex organizational processes.

DBA Conceptualization Matrix

Core Element	Weak / Consulting Example	Strong / Applied DBA Example
Primary Goal	Solve turnover issues inside my company.	Understand how remote hybrid structures alter executive retention.
Theoretical Lens	"None needed; our management knows best."	Leader-Member Exchange (LMX) & Self-Determination theory.
Industry Context	"All global companies." (Too broad to study)	Mid-sized technology startups during rapid scaling phases.

| The Ultimate Reality Check

100%

DIRECT DATA ACCESS

No Access, No Dissertation

Even the most brilliant conceptual framework is dead on arrival without data. Before committing to a topic, secure written agreements, verify participant networks, or confirm database access.

Refining access limits your scope early and protects your timeline from ethics board delays or executive gatekeeping.

Questions & Discussion

Pivot your research. Perfect your practice.

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| Image Sources



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