

# Home Run Theory Ideas

>> or at least a solid double off the left field wall

*Overall theme:*

***An important idea will be ignored  
if it is positioned poorly. You must connect  
to what your audience knows/believes.***

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## Three things to think about:

1. Idea Generation is a balance of science and art.
2. Make sure your idea addresses a gap that matters.
3. Position your idea to be interesting

# 1. Idea Generation: Science and Art

A. "Science": Do a systematic literature review to insure you aren't positioning vs strawmen (and do so BEFORE collecting data).



B. "Art": Be creative and use insight to identify gaps. Sources of insight...

- ❑ Puzzling findings in studies you read - boundaries
- ❑ Theories-in-use (customers, managers)
- ❑ Your past experiences
- ❑ Related or seemingly unrelated literature (**read broadly**)



# 2: Evaluate the Gap your Idea Addresses

A weakness to

Critical: Explain clearly why the gaps are important

- ❑ Why is new theory needed? What specific weaknesses does your improved theory overcome/better explain?
- ❑ If you extend to a new context, you must articulate why extant findings would NOT be reasonably expected to hold in new context.

for



### 3: Evaluate if your Positioning is Interesting

Reviewers are busy ... And thus are looking for quick signals to be able to reject (wrong, dull, already known...).



Your position has to grab their attention without generating fatal counter-arguments.

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### 3: Evaluate if your Positioning is Interesting

#### **An Excellent/Useful Tool:**

Murray Davis (1971), "That's Interesting,"  
*Philosophy of the Social Sciences*, 1 (December), 309-345.

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## What makes a study interesting?

- An interesting proposition is “always the negation of an accepted one” (Davis, p. 313).
- “...an audience finds a proposition ‘interesting’ not because it tells them some truth they did not already know, but instead because it tells them some truth they thought they already knew was wrong. In other words, ***an interesting proposition is one which denies some aspect of the assumption-ground*** of its audience...” (Davis, p. 327).

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## What makes a study UNinteresting?

- ***That's obvious!*** “... the proposition affirms some aspect of their assumption-ground.”
- ***That's irrelevant!*** “... the proposition does not speak to any aspect of this assumption-ground at all.”
- ***That's absurd!*** “... the proposition denies the whole assumption-ground.”

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# What makes a study interesting?

- Interesting proposition: “... denies some aspect ...” (Davis, p. 327).

(e.g., this aspect that seems \_\_\_ is actually \_\_\_)

- |   |                                |
|---|--------------------------------|
| ▪ Stable → Dynamic                          | ▪ Compatible → Incompatible    |
| ▪ Positive → Negative                       | ▪ Independent → Interdependent |
| ▪ Local → Generalizable                     | ▪ Ineffective → Effective      |
| ▪ Independent Variable → Dependent Variable | ▪ Similar → Opposite           |

## Three things to think about:

1. Idea Generation is a balance of science and art.
  - Systematic review of domain; new insights
2. Fully flesh out the need for your idea
  - Identify inconsistencies or gap(s) in prior research
3. Position your idea to be interesting
  - Connect to (but challenge/extend) your reader’s current beliefs ~ create a little intrigue