Sources for finding a Research Area

1. your personal life experiences
   - books and articles your have read
   - cultures you have experienced or would like to find out more about
   - people you have met and observed or would like to find out more about
   - where do you have contacts and knowledge which could be useful in a research project?

2. your personal work experiences
   - what things did you always wish you had known, when you were working, that no one seemed to have an answer for?
   - where do you have contacts and knowledge which could be useful in a research project?
3. your educational experiences
   - what classes and assignments did you like?
   - what did your instructor, textbooks and other reading say was interesting but unknown about knowledge and theory in the area?

Common Thesis Development Process

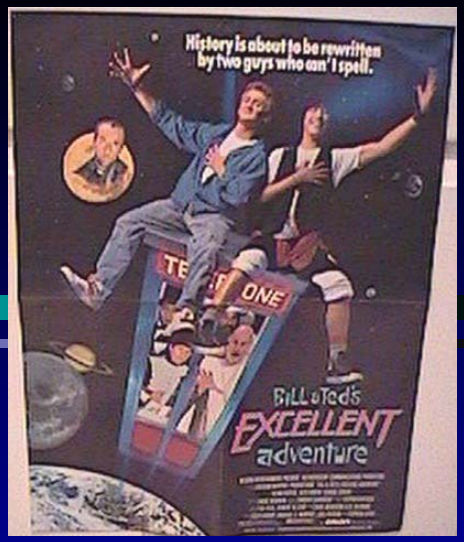
OPTION 1: **Data in search of a theory**

1. **Go ask some firm you have a contact with if they want to do some research.**
2. **Ask them what it is they want done.**
3. **Get an answer**
4. **Go to your advisor and ask him/her what theory you should use.**
5. **Do research, attach theory, hand in thesis.**

Option 2: Lost In Space

1. Tell advisor that you would like to a thesis topic in a narrowly defined area such as “consumer behavior”.
2. Ask advisor what theory you should use.
3. Get thrown out of advisor’s office.

OPTION 3:
An Excellent Adventure



1. Find a research interest.
2. Do some background reading in area (gain expertise)
3. Write up a brief explanation of your research interest.
4. Find advisor with some interest in area.

5. Ask advisor what they expect for a thesis.
   - find proper context to carry out thesis (data source, method, etc.)
6. Follow research plan and finish thesis.
7. Hand in thesis.

Option 4: Scientific Training

1. Find a research interest and do some background research.
2. Find a potential advisor with a similar interest.
3. Ask the potential advisor if you might work on a project for them that could lead to completion of thesis

4. Ask advisor what they expect for a thesis.
   - What part of the research project will be for your thesis?
5. Follow research plan and finish thesis.
6. Hand in thesis.

More about Outline: Problem Definition

- What is the problem to be resolved?
- Indication of why the problem is important and worthy of investigation.
- Specification of how the objectives will be accomplished (overview).

What do we know already?

- Go through the literature that includes facts and methodology.
- The literature review should be selective rather than exhaustive.
- You should demonstrate an ability to discriminate between knowledge that is central to the problem and state what is tangential.

Research Questions

- This is an extension of “what is the problem to resolved”
- Here you should give a brief overview over what questions to study

Literature Review

- The literature should not only be described, but this knowledge should be integrate in the research design.
- The literature should be critically assessed. An attempt should be made to point out methodological and substantive inadequacies to the existing literature.

- Remember that your study must add knowledge to what is already known. Your study must make a *contribution* in some way or the other.
- This chapter should end with a summary of the findings, including a clear definition of all concepts and constructs that are to be used.

Hypotheses

- More precise that “Research questions”
- Define the specific research propositions which will be subject to empirical testing.

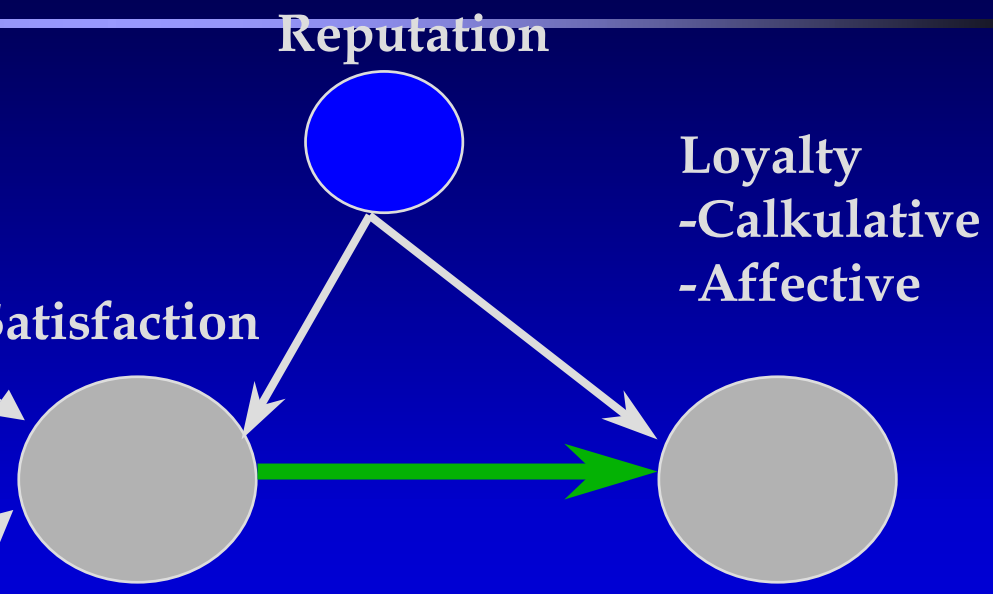
- If possible, make a model that describes different variables and their anticipated relations.
- The hypotheses should be described in terms of H1, H2 etc. Here you should be very sure about what you are going to study.

What is ”Den Norske Bank”?

Satisfaction about:

Cognitive variables
-Price
-Service
-etc

Affective variables
-Aakers 5 dimen-tions



Explains ?%

Explains ?%

Source: AIM A.S., 2003

Describe your Research Design

- Validity
  - Internal validity (causality)
  - Construct validity
  - External validity

- **The methodology should be described in sufficient detail so that the reader could understand the research proposal.**

- You have to be critical to this description, and always be open for other approaches.
- Describe the population and the sample.
- Describe and define the variables intended to be used to measure what you want to measure.

Describe your sample

- Describe the population
- Describe your sample.

Describe your Procedure
(how to perform your study)

- The procedure must be describes in detail.
- The procedure also has to be explained using relevant arguments.
- Method for the data collection must be explained and described.

Data Analysis

- The statistical technique employed to test each research question should be specified but not be described in a general matter.
- The textbook is already written.
- For a thesis that includes quantitative data, multivariate statistical methods are required.

Findings and Conclusions

- The findings should be presented in a well organized way. Tables in the text should contain summaries.
- More Extended tables should be found as enclosure.

- If you have performed a quantitative analysis, it's typical that you are performing four times more analysis that you should present in your thesis

Advisor Roles

1. hands off approach: **advising the student on their thesis (key goal is completion of satisfactory thesis)**

2. hands on approach: **working with the student on their thesis (key goal is the completion of a research program from which a thesis is derived)**

Hands OFF Role

- offering advice on alternative ways of studying the issue
- making the student aware of relevant literature that may have been overlooked by the student in their own search
- making sure the student fulfills the requirements and submits a passing thesis
- best approach for students who know what they want to do and cannot find faculty advisor with close enough research interests to take role 2.

Hands ON Role

- topic comes out of faculty research projects and interests
  - some may be paid research assistantships with funding coming from consulting / research grant moneys
    - requiring strict deadlines and lots of non-thesis related grunt work, and little flexibility on topic as research moneys dictate the required subject and method of studying it.

- other may be unpaid research help, meaning there is little or no extra money to pay students for their time.
  - typically more flexibility on topic and method
  - less work that is not thesis related

Some Common Errors

- The findings are not related to the problems that are to be resolved.
- The candidate makes conclusions that are not based on the findings.

- Important theories are overlooked.
- Concepts and constructs are not defined with the necessary precision.
- The thesis is over all to simple - that is, banal.

Some Tips

- Do not resolve all problems at the same time.
- Be open to all alternatives, start with an open mind.
- Talk to everybody that might have some opinion about the issue.

- Don’t be to critical in the start, that will kill creativity.
- Be prepared to use a considerably amount of time in the library.
- While writing a thesis, you must read a great number of scientific articles, and not many books.

- NMS has a very modern library:
  - Books and journals
  - BIBSYS - user operated
  - CD rom - abstracts, user operated
  - CD rom - full text, user operated
  - Internet access to important databases
  - The library can get everything, however something might be very expensive

About References

Article:

Bornstein, Robert F., Dean R. Leone, and Donna J. Galley. "The Generalizability of Subliminal Mere Exposure Effects." *Journal of Personality and Social Psychology* Vol.53 (1987): pp.1070-1079.

Book:

Aaker, David A., and George S. Day. *Marketing Research.* New York: John Wiley & Sons, 1990.

And in the text:

.....The determination effect is based on multi attribute models (Zajonc and Markus 1982) . Multi attribute models are best known from the attitude literature (Bass and Talarzyk 1972; Bettman, Capon and Lutz 1975) .....