

Intuition: A business competency?



Rodger Harding, a former lawyer and diplomat, is a business leadership and corporate intelligence awareness consultant. He may be reached by phone at (416) 962-6700, by e-mail at rodger@hardingintelligence.com

The older I get, and the more I evolve in the business world, the more I remain perplexed at how many business folk seem to regard intuition as an irrational element of the decision-making process simply because it is not rooted in proven factual context.

Intuition is akin to receiving a message from an unknown source and defines our innate ability to think about, speculate on and predict what might happen in the future based upon the instinctive human response to people or situations. Whether one believes or not that this response evolves from character traits, life experience or some other source, for me it is a critical element in managing the future.

The Bushmen of Africa referred to intuition as the *tapping*. They took time every day to quiet their thoughts and listen to what the *tapping* told them. In this way they evolved highly intuitive competencies that accurately predicted weather change, animal (food) movement and imminent peril. For them, the danger of ignoring their inner voice was very real.

Decisions made without regard for subjective perceptions in individual, team/departmental and organizational context will result in failure to gather relevant information, reach informed conclusions and make decisions that reflect/shape the culture of our corporate/business dealings.

In business interaction, I find that few trust the spoken word, much less a hunch

or their own feelings. In an age of *Measurables*, *Risk Management* and *ROI*, walking a path with an uncertain end point is not a popular option. Instead there is an almost slavish reliance on recorded Internet and database information. While this trend is perfectly understandable, is it reasonable to rely solely on documented fact as the ultimate verification yardstick?

With the accelerated deployment in marvellous technology that increasingly enables the easy management of information, data and available knowledge, are we limiting ourselves to the known and the proven? Have we fostered an illusory, controlled business culture that considers 100% accuracy entirely possible? I think of my own research habits. In my haste for a quick answer I might rely on the first few *Google* hits to provide the required information. What if the true answer lies elsewhere... or has not been recorded? To what extent do we listen to and trust our nagging inner voice that tells us all is not as it should be?

Ten short years ago, in our own industry, *convergence* protagonists foresaw the impact that emerging technologies would have on careers. Many went out of business because they were talking/working in the zone of uncertainty. Now that convergence is changing the face of the industry there is widespread concern that a large slice of traditional career competencies will become redundant. How much better off are those individuals and organizations that trusted their intuition, and

prepared for the current technology revolution and user mind-set.

My work with the Canadian Women in Communications has involved an intensive exploration of industry members' desire to fully invest their *creative/analytical* competency mix. Analytical expertise manages the known detail while creative excellence provides innovation. This task pits a traditional best practice against what the unknown future will demand.

While I am amazed at their ability to intuitively anticipate, as well as their preparedness to embrace changing technology dynamics, many of the women involved have experienced distinct difficulty in deploying their creativity during the build-up to today's industry realities.

My own simple take is that, for the most part, our primary business objective is to make cash quickly, rolling out a tried and tested recipe as many times as possible with as little risk as possible. In such a culture, intuition has no place as it questions and potentially interrupts the short term profit-making process.

The intuitive mind-set trusts the knowledge we do not know we have. If accommodated, this ability will not only enable us to foresee future events, but also to easily manage their impact. I firmly believe that business leaders that encourage and nurture the *intuition competency*, along with the risk it involves, are those that will seamlessly evolve with changing scientific, technical, cultural and political dynamics.

BROADCAST
Dialogue

ELECTRONIC BRIEFING

The best broadcast newsletter in Canada!

Stay in the broadcast business loop by subscribing today!

**Send your e-mail address to howard@broadcastdialogue.com
or call (705) 484-0752 for details.**