

The Recruitment of Intuitive Managers

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Declaration

We, the authors of the paper, solemnly declare that this paper is an original work and has not been published elsewhere, nor it has been submitted for a degree or any other qualification. Thoughts from external sources, direct or indirect, published or unpublished, have clearly been cited.

Abstract

French scientist, Alexis Carrel said, “*All great men are gifted with intuition. They know without reasoning or analysis, what they need to know.*” Studies among leaders confirm this and underscore the value of developing intuition. Business is all about rational, orderly systems for strategic planning, decision-making, forecasts, operations, budgeting, supervision and control, production and practically every other facet of an organisation. Under rising pressure and ambiguity, rational thinking may not perform satisfactorily. In the context of management decision-making, research conducted by Nutt (1999) reveals that rational/logic based strategies struggle to reach the fifty percent success mark. Business leaders the world over are acknowledging that many important decisions, and career choices are increasingly based on intuition or gut feel. The recruitment of highly intuitive managers can enable organisations to tackle contexts and issues thrown up by the challenges of this century. To identify managers with high levels of intuition is, therefore, a necessary step. Validated and reliable tests are available to measure intuition in managers. The paper further suggests ways to fine tune the process to recruit intuitive managers.

Keywords: Intuition, Recruitment, Management, Intuitive thinking, Intuitive decision making, CSI, REI.

1. Understanding Intuition

Intuition has been defined in different ways by researchers and scholars while hinting at the same fundamental concept. Jung (1933) has defined it as the psychodynamic function transmitting irrational and emotional indications in an unconscious way. Smith (2008) describes intuition as rapid, emotionally charged noesis arrived at without the conscious awareness of the logical processes involved, accentuating that it has the potential to affect and enhance the learning of the individual. He discusses intuition as one of the principal means by which managers and other professionals arrive at judgments. Hodgkinson (2008) describes intuition as the result of the way our brains gather, organise and evaluate information at a subconscious level and so is a real psychological phenomenon which needs further study to help us harness its potential. Researchers have made attempts to distinguish pure intuitive insight from the less refined sense of gut feel. While gut feel is one of the many signs of intuition experienced by different individuals, it can also result from pursuing our instinct and experience whereas pure intuition is both clear and direct, without befuddlement or emotional conflict. Rosanoff (2000), on the other hand, suggests that intuition is how irrational data is accessed and incorporated into the decision-making process to make better decisions. Intuition enhances analytic rational thinking and focuses on the present situation.

Sustainable business development is possible only when an organisation is flexible enough to adjust its functioning to the changing environment. This trenchant adjustment to the dynamic environment is exactly what an intuitive mind is capable of as it is sensitive enough to discern changes in patterns in the environment. Organisations usually ignore this worthwhile information and neglect nurturing intuitive talent (Agor 1989).

“*Often you have to rely on intuition.*” – Bill Gates

2 Intuition in management

Professor John Mihalasky of the New Jersey Institute of Technology is convinced that effective, superior decision-making is highly correlated to intuitive ability. During his research, Mihalasky tested hundreds of business managers for intuitive ability. One of his researches included 25 managers who had held top decision-making jobs for five or more years. He selected all of them from small manufacturing enterprises to ensure that committees had not diffused their decision-making. The results were notable; out of those 25 men selected, 12

decision makers had helped their companies double profits in five years. Eleven of those 12 decision makers scored high on the intuitive test.

Other management researchers have also discovered correlation between intuition and performance. Weston Agor, author of *Intuitive Management: Integrating Left and Right Brain Management Skills*, studied thousands of managers from across numerous industries and companies. He found that thriving managers made effective use of intuitive decision-making.

Henry Mintzberg, management researcher, also found that particularly in unpredictable, unstructured and ambiguous situations, top managers rely on hunches to deal with problems that are “too complex for rational analysis”.

Intuitive thinking is a normal function of the brain, not a mystical precognition. Traditionally business has mistrusted intuitive responses because they have been understood to be based on feelings rather than facts. In fact, intuition is most effectively used when it supplements, rather than deputise, rational decision-making techniques. In connexion with rational, left-brain thought, intuition – which is housed in the right side of the brain, with creativity, imagination, originality, and emotions – can, he believes, empower individuals to work more efficaciously, efficiently and intelligently.

Most researchers claim that intuition can be developed through training. Madeleine van der Steege, Managing Director of Johannesburg corporate coaching service, Leadership Action and Alignment, conciliated: “Intuition or ‘expressing the inner voice’ is a cornerstone of emotional quota and emotional literacy, and is a major focus of executive coaching.”

She believes coaching helps individuals to trust their intuition and access right- and left-brain thinking, synthesise the two responses and brings forth the best possible decision.

A critical first step to developing intuition is learning to listen to intuitive signals being sent from the brain. These messages are usually ignored as being irrational. Learning how to tweak one’s intuitive radar is required to make use of such non-rational thoughts that may have previously been ignored.

Coaching, says Van der Steege, helps executives and teams access their intuition to assay patterns, habits, pressures and circumstances they face, rather than counting entirely on conned facts or technical analysis. It provides means and methods through which people integrate intuitive and rational intelligence and take better decisions.

Dr Marcia Emery of the Intuitive Management Consulting Corporation in California and author of *PowerHunch*, believes that business managers need – more than ever – to hone their intuitive skills to process the voluminous data that is synonymous with the information age.

Intuition can help managers by allowing them to link the internal and external; rational and irrational so that the organization is, in fact, structured and whole rather than amorphous and complex. In the long run, through repetitive use of intuition, objectives/goals must be set and continuously revised. Goals can be sensed in a dynamic rather than a static fashion, and the enterprise can continue to succeed without having to stop and reassess the situation whenever change or conflict begins to mount. Intuition can provide not only the ability to see through the fog of these times, but also provide guidance to identify problems, manage information, recognize patterns, deal with conflict and form strategies that are in tune with the evolving environment (Khandelwal and Taneja, 2010). However, intuitive management does not substitute for factual analysis. According to Senge (1990): “People with high levels of personal mastery do not set out to integrate reason and intuition. Rather, they achieve it naturally as a by-product of their commitment to use all resources at their disposal.”

It is one thing to acknowledge the importance of having intuitive managers and the other, more important, to devise a criterion to test *intuitiveness* of the prospects. Measuring intuitiveness is not easy. It’s a quality that needs to be quantified. Researchers have developed certain tests to measure intuitiveness of the prospects.

3. Recruitment of Intuitive Managers

Managers, as stated above, must be more intuitive for certain jobs than others. How to develop intuitive managers in the organization is thus a crucial task. Khandelwal and Taneja (2012) recommend that managers can be trained in intuition directly on the job. Another way is through recruitment and selection. By virtue of recruitment, an organization can create a pool of prospective intuitive candidates out of which only a few are selected. The process that may be followed to recruit intuitive managers is as under:

- 3.1 Preparing job descriptions and job specifications-** The first step calls for identifying vacancies of various managerial positions where intuitiveness is an important trait to perform on the job. This may warrant a relook at existing job descriptions.
- 3.2 Advertising the vacancy-** To create a pool of prospective candidates, it is necessary to advertise the vacancies; i.e. to inform the prospective candidates thus, persuading them to apply for the job(s).
- 3.3 Managing the response and short listing -** At this stage candidates actually start applying and there is

a need to manage the responses properly. Preliminary screening (on minimum qualification and work experience) is done to reject the unfit candidates right away.

3.4 Conducting selection tests- Organizations may use a variety of tests to assist them in assessing the suitability of applicants. Generally, the following written tests are used: General mental ability, Personality tests, Aptitude tests, Achievement tests, Creativity tests. There is however one more test that must be used: that of intuitiveness.

There are many reliable and internationally validated tests available to judge the level of intuitiveness in managers. The CSI (Cognitive Style Index) was developed by C.W. Allinson and J. Hayes to measure intuitiveness in managers. It is an inventory of 38 items that measures intuitive-analytic dimension of cognitive style on a 3 point scale of True-Uncertain-False. Score of 2,1 and 0 is assigned to each of the responses depending upon the polarity of items; higher scores suggesting an analytic style while lower scores indicating intuitive style.

Yet another test that may be used is Epstein's Rational Experiential Inventory which is a 2 scale questionnaire, one scale being 'need for cognition' (rational), while the other one is 'faith in intuition' (experiential and broadly intuitive). Originally, the inventory consists of 59 items. However, REI-40 and REI-10 have been developed later and recommended over other versions. The entire inventory of REI-40 has been divided into 4 sub-scales (Rational Ability, Rational Engagement, Experiential Ability, Experiential Engagement) each consisting of 10 items.

Probably the first instrument designed to measure intuitiveness is the Myers-Briggs Type Indicator (MBTI). The MBTI is a psychometric questionnaire designed to measure psychological preferences in how people perceive the world and make decisions. These preferences were derived from the proposed by Carl Jung and first published in his book *Psychological Types* (English edition, 1923). Jung proposed the existence of two dichotomous pairs of cognitive functions: the "rational" functions of thinking-feeling and the "irrational" functions of sensing-intuition.

Agor conducted surveys on managerial intuition using the Agor's Intuitive Measurement Survey (AIMS). The AIM Survey is a modified MBTI (Myers-Briggs Type Indicator). It was developed from the 'intuition-sensing' items of the Myers-Briggs Type Indicator. The instrument, therefore, uses the reliability and validity of MBTI (Agor, 1984). The AIM Survey consists of twelve simple psychological questions designed to evaluate a person's potential intuitive abilities and fourteen other questions intended to indicate whether or not the individual uses those abilities to help guide decisions. The test can be completed in fifteen minutes.

Another assessment test available is the Preference for Intuition or Deliberation Scale, or PID (Betsch, 2004). It has been developed to indicate which decision-making approach an individual is most comfortable with. Betsch expounds that there are two ways to reach a decision— an intuitive approach and a deliberative approach. The intuitive approach is based upon implicit knowledge that has been stored in the long-term memory acquired by associative learning.

3.5 Conducting interviews- This is used to complement the tests to know more about the candidates, thus facilitating decision making.

3.6 Decision making- The final step is to select the most desirable candidate(s) from amongst the few candidates who were shortlisted after the test(s) and the interview (or the rounds of interviews).

It may be pointed out that the recruiter himself/ herself must be intuitive enough to make the right choice. In fact, it is not only at the last stage of decision making that the recruiter can use intuition. The entire recruitment process requires recruiters to be guided by intuition right from the short listing of candidates to making the final decision.

4. Conclusion

Recruitment is a continuous process in contemporary organizations. There is a set criterion in every organization on the basis of which it selects the candidates to fill up the various managerial positions. Business environment is much more turbulent now than it was earlier. The probability that a manager would encounter a certain problem repeatedly is low and that too in similar set of conditions is negligible. Any rational manager would take decision on the basis of historical data but looking back would be of little help as the conditions may not remain the same. Another drawback is that the process itself is time consuming. Ambiguity and complexity further reduce the effectiveness of purely rational approaches. Therefore, being rational is a necessary condition but not sufficient. Managers must complement their analytical skills with intuition to cope with the inherent uncertainty of the business environment. Albeit, many recruiters now-a-days do recognise the need to have intuitive managers in the organization, little effort is made to redesign the selection process that would take into account the intuitiveness of the prospects. The recruitment process may be tuned up to select intuitive managers through the redefinition of job descriptions, the use of reliable and validated tests to measure managerial intuitiveness and the involvement of highly intuitive managers to conduct interviews in the final selection.

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