

## ***THE SIXTH SENSE OF BUSINESS***

'Corporate intelligence' is fast becoming the single most innovative phenomenon within the business world on a global, organisational and an individual level.

Developing the ability to harness, utilise and enhance intuition has become an asset to businesses as they start looking outside the traditional business paradigm to maximise business outcomes.

By definition, corporate intelligence activities are being completed on two levels, the first of which is similar to military espionage whilst the second is learning to better understand the power of intuition and its application in business.

The lesser known of these two activities, intuitive corporate intelligence, allows management to acquire the maximum necessary information before interpreting it to make effective decisions.

### **INTUITION**

Intuition is generally described as a way of knowing spontaneously without the conscious use of logic or analytical reason. It is an innate quality, but it can be developed and cultivated. Intuition may be seen as a continuation or extension of natural processes, like instinct for example.

Intuition synthesises isolated snips of data and experience into an integrated picture.

Intuition does not replace analysis, it complements it. Often executives are presented with lots of information that has previously been prepared. This information is edited according to the research criteria. Then up to the final decision maker to read between the lines to see what is not there or that is there. The only way that executives can really do this is by relying on their intuition.

A good example of this is during the recruitment process. Often employment choices are made on a hunch and a gut feel. The employer may be presented with two similar candidates, it is then up to the employer to make their decision based on their intuitive ability.

A recent study by the ABS revealed that to replace an employee in an organisation costs the equivalent of their annual salary. So it is crucial that the correct choice is made.

The survival of many organisations in Australia as they move forward will depend on the ability of executives to interpret the massive amounts of information and make profitable decisions based on their "intuitive read".

In Australia, most CEO's of top listed companies have some self developed intuitive intelligence capability. Organisations continue to evolve and keep up with the rapidly increasing changes in management systems, intuitive guidance must play an increasingly important role of the 21st Century professional manager.

The implication for individual managers is a shift from self consciousness of the world to consciousness of self, the 'world within.' It implies the growing trend to use both logical and intuitive dimensions.

Intuition does not replace logic and reason, it complements it. In the last 10 years we have seen many companies embracing alternative practices. IBM in the United States, built meditation rooms in their offices and encourage employees to take time and to meditate.

These are techniques that allow people to become more relaxed, and to unleash their creativity. Intuition and creativity are two doorways to the same house. It is only when our minds can be still, and free of stress, that we can access our right brain. This is where our creativity is stored.

These companies have been proven to be consistently more profitable than their counter parts. Strategic use of intuition in every area of their business including marketing, growth analysis, hiring, competitive analysis, R&D and engineering.

We are finding more and more CEO's and upper management openly admitting to the use of 'gut feeling' in their decision making processes.

### **INTUITIVE MANAGEMENT**

Over the last decade our approach to management in has raised complaints that our business schools produce multitudes of managers that are brilliant analysts but could not build and create a business if there life depended upon it.

One of the values of intuition is its ability to go one step further by coupling anticipated managing with intuition. The true function of the modern day executive is to create an environment which comes up with answers before anyone else is even aware of the question.

This means, executives must have the foresight, the training and the perception to identify the real questions plus the ability and flexibility to allocate resources to cultivate and capitalise emerging opportunities. Executives who use intuition first sense the problem and then they reason why.

Intuition is an innate quality, in us all. It can be developed and cultivated. Intuition may be seen as a continuation or extension of natural processes, like instinct. Training is available to executives on a personal one on one basis to develop intuition.

Executives could bolster intuition with rational thinking. Recognise that good intuition requires hard work, study, periods of concentrated thoughts, and practice. Executives need to offset tendencies to be rational by stressing the importance of values, preferences, use of imagination and acting with an complete picture of scenario.

In the early 80's, intuition was being strategically used due too little data or information available. Now so much information and data that in order to interpret accurately the use of intuition is integral.

Previously, decisions were made by analysing variables which were fairly predictable. Now in the context of uncertainty. The traditional parameter alone is no longer feasible. The long range for several industries has shortened to about three years.

### **INTUITIVE BENEFITS**

Structured problems which do not lend themselves to conventional analytical treatment such as recruitment, executive selection, acquisitions, mergers and other parameters require the use of some form of intuitive intelligence.

As technological and economic advances increase, so to are visible and invisible opportunities growing at an accelerated pace. The implication is that, frequently, managers find themselves surrounded by almost equally balanced alternatives from which to choose.

It is important to realise that intuition is not the absence of rational thinking, but something outside of logic. For example when Swiss engineer George de Mestral went for a walk in the woods and came back with sticky burrs all over his pants. He wondered what it was about these burrs that made them stick. He put them under a microscope and saw how each tiny blade had a curved end to it.

De Mestral had the scientists curiosity to figure out how burrs have such sticking power. He also had the inventors penchant for taking creative leaps into connectivity when he foresaw that plastic burrs could be used on garments, now known as Velcro.

Once his intuitive flash came and went, it required painstaking logic and research to manufacture and market the product. We now say " it sticks like Velcro", not "it sticks like a burr."

It is the intuitive grasp of the modern global market place which has made modern giants from minor firms such as the pocket radio manufacturer Sony, BMW and Honda, Nike, Reebok and many others.

One example of Sony's reliance on intuition was evident in the development of the Sony Walkman. When the

company was considering the Walkman, a tiny tape recorder that would not record, but just play, there was no history to assist.

In 1978, a small group of Sony engineers had tried to redesign a small conventional portable tape recorder so that it produced stereophonic sounds. They failed. Instead, they produced a small stereophonic tape player, but one that could not record.

Masoru Ibuka, founder of Sony thought the sound the machine made was interesting and linked the "failed" product with an entirely unrelated project where an engineer was working to develop lightweight portable headphones. This was an intuitive leap! Ibuka suggested that the engineers work together to develop a playback machine with headphones, but without a recorder functions.

References to the role of using intuition in decision making are turning up more and more in the most reputable organisations. Businesses today are learning that intuitive intelligence can be developed and evolved into a very high level of performance.

Managers who are trained in intuitive development can often bypass in depth analysis and come up with a plausible solution. Used in this way intuitive intelligence is almost an instantaneously cognitive process.

This quality more than any other may be what separates the successful CEO from their counterparts, as corporations led by highly intuitive execs consistently prove to be more successful.

Sigmund Freud once said "The mind is like an iceberg it floats one seventh of its bulk above the water."

So it is with our intuitive abilities.

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