

Management and Intuition

Why Intuition in the Age of Management Science?

Two reasons: First, intuition is a prerequisite for real *insight*, meaning a fresh understanding of the situation, seeing a reality that you hadn't noticed before. "Wow, our company is just not living up to its potential!" Insights like that are pure gold.

Second, intuition is the primary ingredient of *creativity*. If you want your organization to truly *thrive*, and not just be me-too, you need a continuous stream of innovation in your products, marketing, operations, hiring, on and on. Otherwise, you'll be banished to the commodity rack at the back of the store!



Van Gogh's *Starry Night*

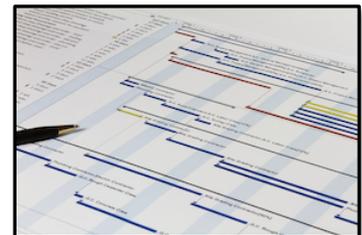
What is Intuition?

Intuition usually starts as a subtle feeling in your body, followed by a pre-verbal stirring, and then you notice a very quiet voice in your head. The whole process is ethereal, way below the radar.

Example: You finish your cup of coffee and your mind feels quietly present. You stroll out onto the factory floor. You see the latest run of product, 50 instruments lined up and ready for packaging and shipping. Then, you feel a little quiver in your gut...you *notice* that quiver...hmmm. Suddenly: "We could promote our product in the industrial refrigerant industry! It's huge, we've never played there, and we would help reduce climate change!" For you and your company, an intuitive breakthrough! Now go check it out.

How Can You Develop Intuition?

Rational thought is not the enemy of intuition. They are actually vital allies. In fact, intuition's mortal enemy is our prevailing compulsion to fill every moment with physical or mental *activity*. We often do that under the banner of efficiency and productivity.



Gantt chart

To cultivate your intuition, begin by setting aside a few moments, several times a day, to do nothing at all! Truly *feel* your body, drop your preoccupations, and let your thoughts go. Open a welcoming space for that quiet little voice to speak up; and when it speaks, listen gratefully. And...just know that intuitive insights aren't always sweetness and light!

Three caveats here: First and foremost, learn to distinguish your biases and old hurts and angers, from something authentically *new*. Just let the old stuff go, without judgment or feeling bad about it. Second, after your intuitive leap, go back to your old friend rational thought. Is this insight really *right*? Doable? Risky? *Think* about it.... Third, studies consistently show that real intuition works best when you have solid knowledge of the underlying field. Even though it can feel good, don't just opine in a vacuum and attribute it to intuition!