

Should You Trust that Gut Feeling?

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Jane, the former Director of Operations of a Hong Kong-based multinational, was recently promoted to Chief Operating Officer. Besides having to be much more strategic, she quickly realised that the sheer number of decisions she had to make increased significantly. Not only that, the time pressure to make important decisions increased as well.

For example, a new competitor from Japan entered the same industry with a very aggressive pricing strategy. In response, the top management team at Jane's company decided that they would invest more in marketing while at the same time becoming more aggressive in their own pricing strategy. However, to avoid a significant hit on the bottom-line, it became clear that costs had to be reduced and operational efficiency stepped up.

Jane set up a task force to work out proposals for cost reduction and process optimisation. As time was of the essence, it was agreed that decisions would be made at very short notice to ensure rapid implementation.

When discussing this challenge with her coach, it became evident that Jane would need to rely more on her intuition. However, being analytical by nature, she was hesitant to trust her gut feeling.

Intuition is a topic that has been researched quite extensively in recent years and is much better understood these days. Indeed, intuition is not always right. For example, if you have been involved in successfully recruiting people for several years, then it's

highly probable your intuition will give you the “right” answer as to which shortlisted candidate to select. However, if you have been rarely involved in hiring, it’s better not to rely on your intuition to make the final choice. In such cases, you might potentially leverage the intuition of colleagues who have had the necessary exposure.

Once Jane better understood that intuition is a product of our subconscious, based on our past exposure, she was able to better discern when to rely on her intuition and when not, and be a quicker, more effective decision-maker.

Passionate about Progress!

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