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Listening to the prophet within you can increase your profits

by FAYE PIETROKOWSKY

Predictions are key components of everyday decision-making. Daily business decisions are made by making educated and sometimes not-so-educated guesses.

Some people are better at the guessing game than others. The ability to glance to the future to make choices today for tomorrow is not something that most people give much thought. Yet most of us make these choices without giving more thought to it than yawning or blinking.

During the course of any business day, busy or slow, countless decisions are made, sometimes with many plausible options. Decision-makers often find themselves in a quandary about having to make these sometimes seemingly blind guesses with little or incomplete information.

You are an intuitive expert

In a dynamic world that is constantly changing and won't slow down to afford thinking and research time, many people feel overwhelmed, stressed and frustrated. Business managers and owners often express a need and a desire to strengthen their decision-making skills to assist in making choices that affect both the present and future.

A powerful, sometimes not recognized, skill is in your midst to do just that. This ally is your intuition. Intuition is the gathering of information through the human senses. You are the gatherer in much the same way as early hunters gathered nuts and fruits to eat. Unlike them however, most of us collect this data unaware that we are even doing so. We squirrel away this information, seldom reviewing the contents that may be vital for making crucial decisions concerning today and tomorrow's marketplace.

Intuition is sometimes called sixth sense, instinct, gut reaction, gut feelings, common sense or hunch. Whatever you call this invisible ally, you are skilled at using it.

Since the day you came into the world and took your first breath, you began using your intuition. After all, you had to rely on your instincts to survive. Instincts told you who would take care of you, who to trust and who not to. You quickly learned to observe behaviors, words and tones and to draw inferences from this gleaned information. In fact, this experience was the beginning of a very specialized career, actualizing the prophet in you.

Actualizing the prophet within

If someone called you a prophet, would you laugh? Is it a foreign concept?

The truth is that you constantly make predictions about people and situations. You predict how they will respond. You forecast from previously held knowledge whether or not they will be interested in a product or service. You may speak in a deliberate tone with carefully selected words to achieve desired results.

Many of these choices may be based upon data that you collect consciously and unconsciously from observing, reading, hearing and then interpreting this collection of data. Often what seems to come out of nowhere is really a synthesis of your experience.

For example, one restaurant manager relies on the restaurant's 20 years of business experience when predicting what dishes to put on the menu. This manager votes with his gut, drawing from his restaurant experience, when purchasing food. Another restaurant manager also relies on his gut. He, too, allows the past experience to befriend him and draws upon a reservoir of data that he attained from observing popular menu items and by reviewing past purchase receipts to assist him in forecasting future trends.

The owner of a luggage store often consults with customers to help predict which products to purchase. He also gets information from other business owners who sell luggage, from sales people and from attending trade shows.

Collecting the data

Others collect their data from surveys or by hiring companies to do research. One such company is Inferential Focus. This New York-based company has a staff that gathers information from more than 300 trade journals, discusses trends and current events, and then bases its predictions from their findings.

Libraries also serve as a source of information for business studies, research and current issues. Although some databases can only be searched with a library card, other sources do not require that the user be a library cardholder. Multnomah County Library in downtown Portland has information in the Science and Business room on the second floor, and has online databases. For more information call (503) 988-5342.

The Fort Vancouver Regional Library also has business databases available to the public. For more information call (360) 695-1566.

Listen to your gut

In addition to collecting information from outside sources – clients, surveys or information purchased from companies – or gleaning information from a variety of magazines, practice listening to your intuition. Ask yourself “What does my gut tell me about this situation? What has been my previous experience?” Past experience can serve as a guidepost for predicting future behavior and trends.

Ignite your curiosity and watch the actions and behaviors of others. The mind records these observations and stores them for future reference. Remember that you are an intuitive expert with many years of experience relying on this skill to interpret and predict. You are truly a prophet!

Faye Pietrokowsky is the owner of Inner Design-Applying Intuition. She assists individuals and businesses in developing intuition for personal and professional development. Reach her at (503) 221-2123 or at faye@inner-design.net.

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