

INTUITION AT WORK

Why Developing Your Gut Instincts Will Make You Better At What You Do

GARY KLEIN

GARY KLEIN is the founder and chairman of his own consulting firm, Klein Associates. He specializes in studying how people use experience to make better decisions when under conditions of sometimes conflicting goals or intense time pressure. Dr. Klein has studied how firefighters, soldiers and businesses use intuition. He is also the author of *Sources of Power: How People Make Decisions*.

SUMMARIES.COM is a concentrated business information service. Every week, subscribers are e-mailed a concise summary of a different business book. Each summary is about 8 pages long and contains the stripped-down essential ideas from the entire book in a time-saving format. By investing less than one hour per week in these summaries, subscribers gain a working knowledge of the top business titles. Subscriptions are available on a monthly or yearly basis. Further information is available at www.summaries.com.

MAIN IDEA

The paradox of the business world is that intuition tends to get downplayed as a basis for making good decisions. Yet, studies have shown about 90% of the critical decisions a person actually makes will generally be based more on their “gut feelings” about the right thing to do than hard data. In other words, most people downplay the importance of intuition at the same time as they use it more and more. With that in mind, a smarter idea might be to acknowledge the importance of intuition and become better at using it.

So what exactly is intuition? A good working definition is: *“Intuition is the way we translate our past experiences into decisions about our present actions.”* That means the more experience you have in your own line of business, the more confident you’ll feel about making decisions on the strength of your hunches and feelings rather than requiring extensive analysis of the options available. This is why firefighters and military personnel are able to make life-and-death decisions rapidly. They pick up on the clues of what is happening and know intuitively how they should react without requiring detailed analysis.

To summarize:

- *Intuition is not magical* – it does not require extrasensory perception (ESP) or getting in touch with “the Force”.
- *Intuition is not a gift* – that you are either born with or not.
- *Intuition can be enhanced* – by learning how to use the right tools and by becoming more experienced.
- *Intuition is a natural extension of experience* – rather than something that requires psychic sensitivities.
- *Intuition can and should work hand-in-hand with analysis* – to develop better real world decisions than either intuition or analysis would produce if they were working alone.
- *The tools of intuition can be acquired by anyone* – through effort, practice and a conscious effort.
- *The more you succeed in building your business intuitions, the more reliable this becomes as a method for making sound decisions in the future.*

“I prefer a ‘muscular’ view of intuition that treats our intuition as skills that can be acquired, as strengths that can be expanded through exercise. The more you exercise – the more repetitions or ‘reps’ to borrow a term from the gym – the stronger you get. The same applies to intuition. Intuitive decision making improves as we acquire more patterns, larger repertoires of action scripts, and richer mental models. Remember: ‘Intuition is the way we translate our experience into action’. This approach forms my rationale. Regardless of its limitations, we depend on intuition. Therefore, it is critical that we grow it into a reliable instrument. As with physical exercise, you will get some results if you simply take the time to exert yourself, to do the ‘reps’, but you will get better results if you use proper technique and if you have a smart training program with progressive goals – and especially if you get guidance and feedback on those techniques and goals. Think of it as a fitness program to develop your intuition.”

– Gary Klein

1. How to build your business intuition. Pages 2 - 4

To build your level of business intuition, you can choose from two generic options:

1. Passively wait until you have acquired enough experience that it begins to influence your decisions.
2. Be proactive in building the skill sets of intuitive decision making by:
 - Understanding what intuition is.
 - Learning the methods and disciplines of decision making.
 - Learning how to blend intuition with analysis.

2. How to better apply your intuition. Pages 5 - 6

To learn how to apply intuition more effectively in the workplace:

1. Make some tough choices – it will force you to enhance your intuitive capacities.
2. Spot emerging problems – before they get out of hand and before they become more serious.
3. Become better at managing uncertainty – and develop your intuitions about the optimum approach.
4. Learn how to size up situations – so your intuition can pick up clues and patterns on which to act.
5. Get creative – capture the flashes of inspiration which your intuition will generate.
6. Become better at improvising and adapting – so you can make adjustments on the fly.

3. How to overcome obstacles in applying intuition. Pages 7 - 8

To safeguard your intuitive thinking skills against all potential obstacles and impediments:

1. Become better at communicating your intuitions – so you can present your ideas effectively.
2. Coach and mentor others – so there will be a better understanding of intuition throughout your firm.
3. Make good use of quantitative data – as the metric of the success of your ideas.
4. Use information technology intelligently – rather than letting it filter out intuitive thinking.
5. Commit to being an intuitive decision maker.

Summaries.Com

The Ultimate Business Library



We condense **300+ page** business books into **8-page** summaries.

By reading summaries, you'll get the **key ideas** in **30 mins**, so you can spend more time turning your ideas into **dollars**.

Knowledge is Power — Invest in Your Future

For just **\$2 per week**, you will...

- Learn from the mistakes and success of the smartest people in business;
- Get fresh ideas, strategies & motivation that could be worth millions to you;
- Follow emerging trends, so you can catch the wave before your competitors do;
- Catch up on the classics you always wanted to read.

1,000 Top Business Book Summaries

Our catalog includes summaries on a range of topics for aspiring entrepreneurs, managers, and consultants.

BUSINESS PLANS

MANAGEMENT

PRESENTATIONS

SALES

LEADERSHIP

MOTIVATION

STRATEGY

AND MORE

