



Human Dymensions Quarterly Newsletter Culture, Learning and Risk

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Human Dymensions June 2013 Newsletter

Enjoy the following Quarterly Newsletter. Feel free to pass it on or copy

Tacit Knowledge, Intuition and Risk

We often talk about making decisions 'on the spare of the moment' or sometimes walk out of a shop with something we didn't intend to buy. Sometimes, something 'catches out eye' and we just buy it or we make a gut decision or buy on impulse. These are all examples of decisions made by what is known as 'tacit' or 'implicit' knowledge. Tacit knowledge sits in our unconscious, we have it but most often are not aware of it. This form of knowledge was first introduced into philosophy by Michael Polanyi in 1958 but was made popular by Malcolm Gladwell in his book Blink. We don't often know what our tacit knowledge is until we observe our own behavior. We exercise tacit knowledge often 'without thinking'. For example: riding a bike, playing the piano or any host of activities we undertake on 'automatic'.



Our tacit or gut knowledge is acquired over time (thorough experience) and is the foundation of many of our intuitions. Most of the time we commit to actions and daily activities using our intuition and tacit knowledge rather than use slow systematic processes. Many of our habits and routines are performed this way. We get up in the morning, make breakfast, shower, do our teeth and get ready for work without thinking about it. Similarly, at work, we do many tasks by intuition and tacit knowledge. This is why over time we get bored with work routines. We also accept risk in the same way. We really don't get into a car to drive to the shops less than 5 kms away, intentionally thinking about risk. We are probably thinking about the shopping, despite the fact that the majority of accidents happen close to home.

Our intuition is our mental model of the world and these models are certainly not shared in common. We make sense of the world according to our intuition much more than we are conscious of it. When we think about risk we are often taught that we should analyse the problem, carefully weigh the options, consider the options on the basis of common criteria, prioritise the best option and then decide what to do. This kind of decision making prioritises a rational approach but it's not how we make most of our decisions each day. The rational proposal for decision making advocates a mathematical/scientific process but it is generally slow and impractical. The majority of the time our decisions are made with fast intuition rather than slow rational conscious processes. So, if the majority of our decisions are made by intuition and the unconscious, why is there so little interest and research in this when it comes to the management of risk? Further, read Gary Klein's latest work The Power of Intuition. Some useful links: <http://www.lifehacker.com.au/2013/05/how-to-use-intuition-more-effectively/>

Post Graduate Studies News



The first Winter School in the Social Psychology of Risk commences 17-21 June 2013 at the Australian Catholic University Canberra. The first student cohort is over-subscribed with the next intake available for 16-20 September. The four units in the Grad cert and an overview of the program are available at: <http://www.humandymensions.com/post-graduate-studies>
The 4 Unit Post Graduate Certificate is structured in 2 face-to-

face units and 2 online units. If you your interested in being part of the next student cohort please email admin@humandymensions.com

Human Dymensions Sponsors the Canberra Knights



For all those interested in ice hockey, Human Dymensions are now proud sponsors of the Canberra Knights. You will see our sponsorship hoarding at the game and hopefully at live televised games on Fox Sports. Rob's son-in-law Matti Luoma (from Finland) is the coach for 2013.

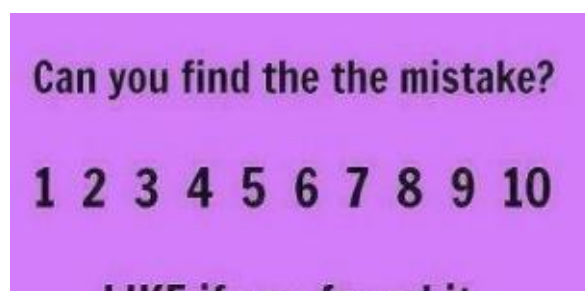
The Hot Hand, Regression to the Mean and Safety Culture

The Hot Hand, Regression to the Mean and Safety Culture

It is strange how we attribute the 'hot hand' to sports players who 'seem' to have a lucky streak. Not dissimilar to gambling addicts who attribute luck to certain machines. Research undertaken by statisticians and psychologists such as Tversky (1972) show that the hot hand fallacy is an example of Fundamental Attribution Error. Nobel Laureate Daniel Kahneman shows in his prize winning book Thinking Fast and Slow that the calculative mindset attributes significance to results without real causal link. The calculative mindset and culture (Prof. Patrick Hudson) is consumed with statistical validity (http://www.pdfdownload.org/pdf2html/view_online.php?url=http%3A%2F%2Fwww.oshsi.nl.ca%2Fuserfiles%2Ffiles%2FExhibitP00209AerosafeSafetyCultureReport.pdf). The calculative mindset has its focus on lost time injury and frequency rates and attributes safety and risk to those statistics as if statistics are a measure of culture. Such statistics are not cultural measures but are attributed by the calculative mindset as 'proof' of poor safety culture.

In Chapter 17 Kahneman explains the notion of Regression to the Mean and how one should be careful attributing cause to statistics. The idea of Regression to the Mean is not new and was first explained by Sir Francis Galton in the late 19th Century. (http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Regression_toward_the_mean) When one doesn't understand Regression to the Mean, one mis-uses statistics to maker points about the worst safety culture in the country (<http://www.slideshare.net/whitecardaustralia/act-has-worst-construction-safety-in-the-country>). When it comes to statistics any convenient attribution of without any causal link to culture seems to be used for political advantage. Further: <http://www.pokerlistings.com/strategy/psychology/hot-hands-real-effect-or-illusion> http://www.pdfdownload.org/pdf2html/view_online.php?url=http%3A%2F%2Fwww.staff.city.ac.uk%2F~sj361%2Fp1369.pdf

Where is the Mistake?



LIKE IT YOU FOUND IT.

How long did it take you to find the mistake?

Safety Leadership Group Facebook



If you would like to chat with others about safety leadership and the psychology of risk, please join us on <http://www.facebook.com/groups/152071534818549/>

Rob's Blog Articles



Dr Long writes blogs at: <http://www.safetyrisk.com.au/category/robert-long/>

Managing the People Side of Risk

The following article is an excellent read and endorsement of the fundamental approach to risk at Human Dymensions.

http://www.mckinsey.com/insights/risk_management/managing_the_people_side_of_risk

Find the Cat Competition



The first 3 correct entries to this competition will receive a complimentary copy of Rob's second book For the Love of Zero.

Instructions: You must copy the picture, locate the cat, circle the location of the cat and then email back to admin@humandymensions.com with your name and postal address.

You will only be notified of your success in the competition. If it is anything like last time, the prizes went off in less than 5 minutes of posting the newsletter.

On a Building Site this Week



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