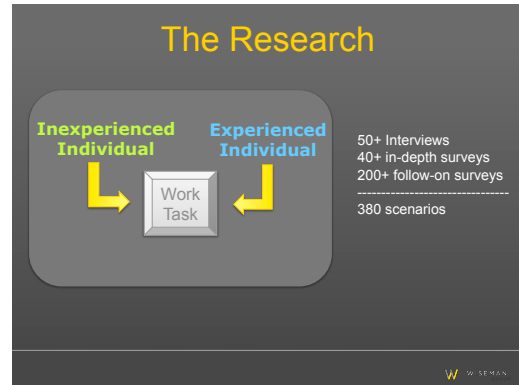


Rookie Smarts Research Findings Summary

By Liz Wiseman

The Research

We conducted over 50 interviews with managers, asking them to identify a piece of work (work task) and then analyze that work task using a structured framework for how a particular inexperienced individual (new to the work task) approached the work and then analyze how a particular experienced individual approach the work.



We then conducted a similarly structured analysis with over 40 managers via online survey, digging into greater depth on the behaviors and mindsets of inexperienced professionals vs. experienced professionals performing the same work task. In both of the above scenarios, managers were asked to rate the performance level of each person.

Next we conducted an online survey of over 200 professionals, asking them to analyze how they approached work in a scenario where they were inexperienced versus one where they were experienced.

We then analyzed the data, contrasting the work approach of inexperienced professionals and experienced professional by performance level.

The Findings

The following is a summary of the key attributes of inexperienced versus experienced professional for the top and bottom performing categories. The correlation analysis, from which the following conclusions are taken, was completed by an econometrician (MA in Financial Economics from Oxford University and MBA from Stanford University).

Newcomers	Veterans
<ul style="list-style-type: none">• 2X higher learning orientation• 2.5X higher self awareness• 2X more likely to seek experts• 3X more likely to collaborate• Reach out to 3-6 experts• 4X more likely to seek help• 4X more pressure to impress	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• 1.5X higher political savvy• 2X higher likelihood of solving right problem• 2X higher seeking clarity• 2-3X more likely to feel intense pressure or minimal pressure
<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Attribute success to making connections	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Attribute success to marshaling resources
<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Higher performing at innovative work	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• More often rated as top performers

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1. Rookies are surprisingly strong performers, performing on par with experienced colleagues in many situations and at higher levels in innovative and urgent work.
2. Rookies have a unique success profile, with top-performing rookies operating very distinctly from their top-performing experienced colleagues.
3. Rookies operate in a number of ways that counter conventional logic.
4. Experience can create several blind spots. As habits form, people often stop seeing new possibilities, seeking new perspectives and going down new paths.
5. The **most impactful factor of success** for a rookie is already being in the role of an **executive**. An executive in rookie mode taking on a new task is highly likely to succeed. In opposition, we found that the **most impactful factor of failure** for a rookie was being in a **manager role**. A new manager is much less likely to be successful in a new and difficult task.

MOST IMPACTFUL FACTOR OF SUCCESS	MOST IMPACTFUL FACTOR OF FAILURE
Rookies Role	Rookies Role
Executive	Manager

The Model

The Rookie Smarts model was developed as a summary of these findings and seeks to present the findings in a simple, memorable framework).

	VETERANS	ROOKIES
TOP PERFORMERS	Veteran Savvy	Rookie Smarts*
	Simplifying & Clarifying	Alert & Seeking
	Agile	Cautious & Fast
	Persistent	Hungry & Relentless
BOTTOM PERFORMERS	Resourceful	Unencumbered
	Veteran Blinders	Rookie Blinders
	Feeling invincible	Feeling invincible
	Defending a reputation	Something to prove
	Questioning own capability	On autopilot

ROOKIE SMART MODES AND MINDSETS

Mode	Mindset
Backpacker	Unencumbered
Hunter-Gatherer	Alert and Seeking
Firewalker	Cautious and Quick
Pioneer	Hungry and Relentless

The Implication & Messages

It is **not** the case that:

- Rookies always outperform veterans
- Experience is useless
- Experienced people should always be “playing the rookie”

The **key messages** and assertions are:

1. There are many circumstances in which inexperience is more valuable than experience.
2. The rookies who perform at their best (and often outperform their experienced counterparts) share similar mindsets. Our research has uncovered these. Some people already have these mindsets. Perhaps they were born with them, or they were learned at their mother’s knee. But each of these mindsets is learnable and can be developed and cultivated. It is a matter of intention and work.
3. This rookie mindset is a state that we should be able to conjure, to toggle to when we need it.
4. The most experienced people can learn something from this breed of top-performing rookies. Instead of asking what these newcomers and relatively young people can be learning from those of us with years of experience, we should also be asking what we can be learning from the rookies.