



Deep Smarts: How to Cultivate and Transfer Enduring Business Wisdom

By Dorothy Leonard, Walter C. Swap

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Deep smarts are the engine of any organization as well as the essential value that individuals build throughout their careers. Distinct from IQ, this type of expertise consists of practical wisdom: accumulated knowledge, know-how, and intuition gained through extensive experience. How do such smarts develop? And what happens when people with deep smarts leave a particular job or the organization? Can any of their smarts be transferred? Should they be? Basing their conclusions on a multi-year research project, Dorothy Leonard and Walter Swap argue that cultivating and managing deep smarts are critical parts of any leader's job. The authors draw on examples from firms of all sizes and types to illustrate the connection between deep smarts and organizational viability and continuous innovation. Leonard and Swap describe the origins and limits of deep smarts and outline processes for cultivating and leveraging them across the organization. Developing an experience repertoire and receiving strategic guidance from wise coaches can help individuals move up the ladder of expertise from novice to master. Addressing a topic of increasing importance as the Boomer generation retires, Deep Smarts challenges leaders to take a hands-on approach to managing the experience-based knowledge shaping the future of their organizations.

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About the Author

Dorothy Leonard is a highly respected professor at Harvard Business School and is considered a leading expert on technology transfer, knowledge management, and innovation.

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