DECISION FREE SOLUTIONS

MAKING EXPERTISE MATTER.

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ON EXPERTS AND EXPERT ORGANISATIONS

– What Does “Expert” Mean? How To Become One? How Many Types Are There? Which Type Do You Need?

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On experts and expert organisations

— What does "expert" mean? How to become one? How many types are there? Which type do you need?

Content

Note to the reader: This article is a chapter of the manuscript with the work title "Achieve aims with minimal resources by avoiding decision making — in Organisations, (Project) Management, Sales and Procurement (Everybody can manage risk, only few can minimise it)". The article refers to other chapters, but can be read on its own. Other chapters available on the website are "On Decision Making", "The four steps of DICE that will change the world", "The five principles of TONNNO that will avoid decision making" and "How to predict future behaviour of individuals and organisations"

A general introduction to the approach of Decision Free Solutions can be found here.

Making expertise matter

That is what the approach of Decision Free Solutions aims to achieve: to make expertise matter. If expertise matters, including yours, work will become more fun, risks will be minimised, desired outcomes are much more likely to be achieved and against much fewer resources. As with "risk" and "decision", it is important to also define the term "expert" before describing the principles and steps of the approach.

The Oxford Dictionary definition of an "expert" is "a person who is very knowledgeable about or skilful in a particular area". This definition sounds reasonable enough, but it is also non-specific. When is someone to be considered "knowledgeable", let alone *very* knowledgeable? As this book is all about "expert" and "expertise", a more comprehensive definition is warranted.

Next to providing a comprehensive definition this chapter will also address other questions, such as "how, using what skills, does an expert minimise risk?" "Can anybody become an expert?" "Are there different *types* of experts?" And also, "What type of person would be ideal to help create a culture which *allows* experts to use their expertise?"

A comprehensive definition of the word 'expert'

In the context of the concept of Risk Minimisation a comprehensive definition of the word 'expert' is the following:

> The term 'expert' (noun/adjective) denotes the minimisation of risk in achieving a desired outcome through:
> - The substantiation of choices made, and/or
> - The substantiation of assumptions made in coming to a decision, and/or
> - The identification of decisions made.

This definition:

- Is broad in its use, as it applies not only to an individual or collective of individuals (noun), but can also be used as an adjective to indicate that a certain entity is able to minimise risks in achieving a desired outcome (e.g. ''an expert organisation").
- Ties the use of the word expert to achieving a desired outcome: an expert is always an expert in-relation-to-something that is to be achieved.
- Identifies those as experts who are capable of substantiating choices (and thus able to avoid decisions).
- Also identifies those as experts who may not be able to entirely avoid decisions (because not all information is available or accessible), but are able to substantiate the assumptions made in coming to a decision.
- Identifies those who are able to *identify* decision making whenever and wherever it occurs as an expert (as this is a pivotal and required first step to avoid decisions and or to manage the associated risks).
- Is still in accordance with the Oxford Dictionary definition (an expert needs to be"very knowledgeable about or skilful in a particular area" to be able to substantiate choices and or assumptions made).

The expert and the specialist

So how does the proposed definition of "expert" differ from the commonly used one (as also found in the Oxford Dictionary)?

From the definition in the previous section follows that anyone able to minimise risk is an expert. Those who *only* identify decisions are also experts. They may direct others to come up with substantiations or request that the associated risk will be adequately managed. In this way board members, managers, project leaders and others without any specific in-depth knowledge of the field they work in can be experts.

Those who are able to minimise risk *in a particular area* generally are knowledgeable and or skilful in this area. They make substantiated choices, and when a decision can't be avoided they will substantiate the assumptions they make in coming to the decision.

But not everybody who is knowledgeable and or skilful in a particular area will also automatically minimise risk. A specialist — "a person highly skilled in a specific and restricted field" — may also be able to minimise risk, but many a times doesn't. Often specialists fail to oversee the entire process or project (they do not perceive enough information relevant to achieve a desired outcome), or they use technical terms and details in the communication with non-experts.

Experts typically are in need of specialists, ensuring the specialists substantiate clearly why they make the choices they do.

Organisations typically are in need of — and should employ — experts, whereas specialists are to be consulted or may be hired only when needed.

The word "expert" as used in this book differs, thus, from how the word is commonly used. In the approach of DFS any so-called expert who is unable to substantiate choices will not qualify as one. Any one who is able to identify decision making whenever and wherever it occurs would.

"Someone who is able to minimise risk in a particular area is generally also knowledgeable and or skilful in this area." An expert plumber and an expert project leader may be examples of this. But what about *expert* consultancy firms, investment bankers, sport scouts, politicians and or historians (not to mention "expert decision makers", the ultimate contradictio in terminis as far as this textbook is concerned)? Do these experts also minimise risk? Are they able to predict an event's outcome? There is overwhelming evidence that they cannot. Hiring these experts — unable to demonstrate in an unambiguous way they were able to consistently achieve or predict outcomes — may very well be sensible, but it doesn't minimise risk. Something some of these so-called experts may vehemently disagree with. If only because the combination of common sense/ intelligence and knowledge is to account for something. That this is not the case has been irrefutably demonstrated by the works of Daniel Kahneman and Amos Tversky, who started their collaboration in the early 70's. Their first scientific paper, published in the journal 'Cognitive Psychology' in 1972, was titled "Subjective probability: A judgment of representativeness". It describes the first of many so called "heuristics" or "simple rules governing judgment or

decision-making". In short, when something appears similar in characteristics to some known population, people (in general) tend to make the mistake of equating "more similar" with "more likely". The fact that someone looks like a certain sport icon does not, in fact, make it more likely he or she will turn into one. The ability to spot similarities (i.e. based on accumulated knowledge) does not result in better predictions of what will happen. Another heuristic proposed by Kahneman and Tversky which is commonly found with experts is what has become known as hindsight-bias. In 1972 Irving Biederman, an associate professor of psychology at Stanford University, invited Amos Tversky to give a series of different talks, each aimed at a different group of academics [5]. "In his talk to the historians, Amos described their occupational hazard: the tendency to take whatever facts they had observed (neglecting the many facts that they did not or could not observe) and make them fit neatly into a confident-sounding story." In Amos words: "This 'ability' to explain that which we cannot predict, even in the absence of any additional information, represents an important though subtle flaw in our reasoning. It leads us to believe that there is a less uncertain world than there actually is, and that we are less bright than we actually might be. For if we can explain tomorrow what we cannot predict today, without any added information except the knowledge of the actual outcome, then this outcome must have been determined in advance and we should have been able to predict it." Which is what we generally can't. And all the historians who attended Amos' talk realised they had falsely prided themselves of exactly this ability: to construct, out of fragments of information, compelling explanations of events which then, in retrospect, seemed predictable. "And they left [Amos' talk] ashen-faced". In his quote Amos Tversky actually points out the difference between "experts" as defined by the Oxford Dictionary and "experts" as it used in this textbook: experts who can minimise risk *can*, to a certain extent, predict the outcome of an event.

The Event model and what it says about experts

What are experts made of?

An expert or an expert organisation minimises risks by substantiating choices and assumptions and identifying the decisions which cannot be avoided as risks for further risk management. But how do you become an expert? What does it take? What are experts made of? How can they be identified? To begin to answer these question the Event model is used again.

Event conditions and universal rules

In the Event model an event is defined as "anything that happens which takes time" [1]. It can last a second, it can last years. Letting go of a helium filled balloon and a project to put people on the Moon are both events. The conditions at the end of the event are called the "outcome".

Repeating what was said before, the Event model (see Figure 7) states that, at any point in time, an event:

- Has unique event conditions
- Is governed by unchanging universal rules which regulate how the event conditions change using a predictable logic.
- Has a unique outcome, which is the result of the application of universal rules on the event's conditions.

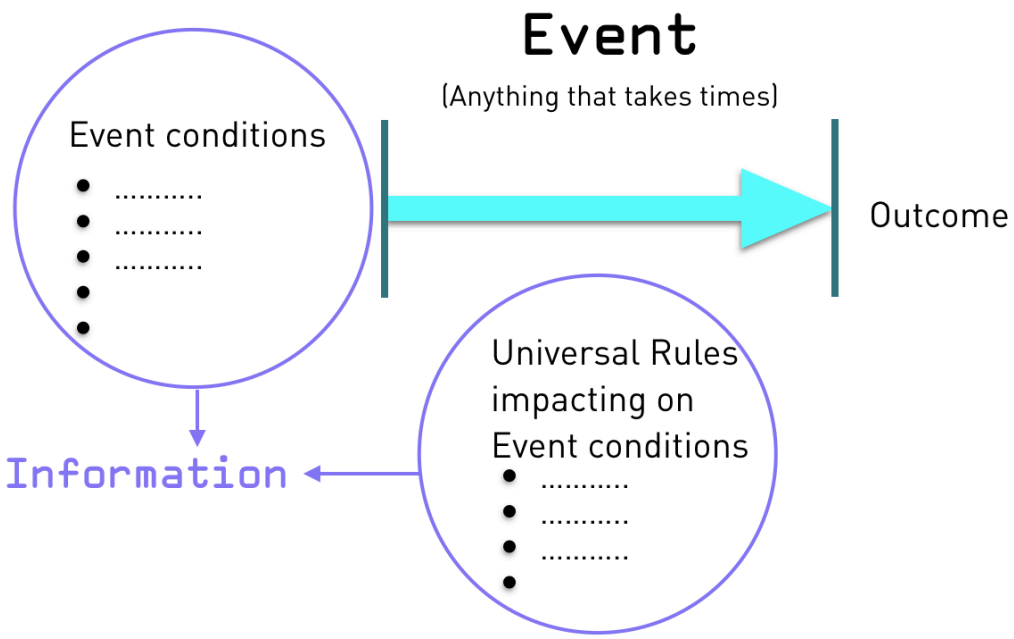

Figure 7. *The Event model including the definition of 'Information'.*

At any one time and in any one location there is a unique set of event conditions. Examples of event conditions are available expertise, financial resources, political chaos, tensions between colleagues, the weather. In short, anything that simply "is" at the time an event commences.

These conditions will be impacted upon by universal rules. Universal rules always exist and never change, and apply to everything (e.g. people, organisations, environment). These rules include the laws of physics as well as anything else which defines the change of a physical environment over time.

If you sow some seeds then, given the right conditions, something will grow out of it. This is a universal rule. There are countless universal rules. Over time food will perish. If somebody hasn't changed his/her abusive behaviour for twenty years, then regardless of environment this behaviour will persist in the near future. If a politician skilled at manoeuvring him or herself to gain control or power becomes the chairman of the board of directors, then the focus of strategy will shift from the long to the short term. If you appoint cabinet positions based on loyalty rather than merit then desired outcomes will no longer be achieved. If a company lacks discipline and is run by a first-class jerk this will impact the quality of provided solutions.

It will be shown in the chapter "Predicting future behaviour" that many characteristics of a person or an organisation are linked, and that by observing certain characteristics other ones (which may be harder to observe) can readily be assumed. This too is a universal rule.

In the chapter "Risk" John Aaron (flight controller during the Apollo Program) was quoted as saying that "a unique set of circumstances" resulted in the success of the Apollo program, meaning that this outcome could not be simply reproduced today by giving something enough priority and money. A crucial event condition mentioned before was the particular culture of the Langley Research Center, which resulted in a range of creative solutions to challenging problems. Another example of the importance of the right event conditions in achieving an outcome concerns the mere *availability* of the ingenuity and engineering skills. Something the Apollo program needed in abundance. Turns out many of these kills simply happened to be available because of unrelated events. One event was the missile-based nuclear arms race between the United States and the Soviet Union which had already started during the Second World War. The United States obtained much needed expertise simply through capturing German missile technology as well as their personnel. This technology and personnel went on to play a crucial role in the Apollo program. As did more than a thousand highly skilled Canadian engineers. They had been working on the most advanced interceptor aircraft: the Avro Canada CF-105 Arrow. The Arrow is considered to have been an advanced technical and aerodynamic achievement for the Canadian aviation industry, holding the promise of near-Mach 2 speeds at great altitude. It was intended to serve as the Royal Canadian Air Force's primary interceptor in the 1960s and beyond. Until their government abruptly halted the project in February 1959 and many of its engineers ended up making invaluable contributions to the Apollo program. *Source: Wikipedia, [2]*

Information

From the Event model — and in line with the principle of causality — follows that the outcome of an event is predetermined (fixed) by the combination of the event's conditions and universal rules. This combination of event conditions and the universal rules impacting on these conditions is called "Information" (see Figure 7).

IMT states that there are no "random" processes at work (nobody is throwing dice), and that "information" is simply always there. It only has to be perceived. And if you are able to perceive all an event's information, then you predict the outcome of an event: you can look into the future.

We all can look into the future. If someone is holding a balloon filled with helium and lets go of it we know what will happen. When asked to catch it we will quickly reach for it and try to get hold of it before it is too late. That is because we can oversee all the event's conditions and we are all experts in gravity and helium-filled balloons. Ergo, we perceive all the event's information.

Experts achieve desired outcomes

In everyday situations which are more complex, there will be no one who can accurately perceive all an event's information. But those who perceive a lot of an event's information, and who are thus able to foresee, with a certain degree of likelihood, what the outcome is going to be, are "experts". Risks are further minimised by the expert by acknowledging when certainty stops and assumptions need to be made. In such a case the expert will substantiate assumptions made and identify the decision as a risk to be considered for Risk Management.

As stated before, in a worldly context, we are often interested in achieving a particular *desired outcome*. An expert has been defined as someone who is able to minimise risk in achieving a desired outcome. An expert is not merely able to perceive the current event's information, but will also know how to alter the event's conditions so that the desired outcome can be achieved. The better the expert, the higher the probability — and the fewer additional resources will be required — to achieve this desired outcome.

When I became the project leader of the Amsterdam Proton Therapy Center (APTC) I had more than a decade of experience in both project management and proton therapy. What I didn't have any experience with was the configuration of two university hospitals and a comprehensive cancer center — with no history of successful collaboration — collaborating. The project had to take many hurdles, and it took them one by one. Then, about two years into the project, the most transparent, forward-thinking and sympathetic board member was about to retire. In his last steering group meeting he mentioned that, for his hospital, getting the green light from all of the various councils and supervisory boards to agree with the financial proposals would be problematic. This was stating the obvious, and true for all of the hospitals. But the fact that *it was him* who now used the word "problematic" — instead of "challenging" or "difficult" — makes me remember this moment to this day. It was an ominous word, indicating a change in the hospital's position that was to result in the unilateral and unexplained suspension of the project one and a half year later. I had perceived this one bit of crucial information, but I was still clueless about the universal rules that were at work in the background and which had resulted in this change of the event's conditions. With the departure of this board member the hospital had replaced the entire board within a short period of time. But perhaps more crucially, the new chairman of the board who had been appointed only a few months before was a former politician. Someone with a very public profile, a columnist in a major newspaper, and with a regular presence on national television. Someone, too, who had no qualms with taking credit when it wasn't due, who had left his previous work circles behind in disarray, who shunned commitment and accountability, and whose focus was strictly short-term. In the role of project leader I was to learn that politicians are likely to be poor managers in organisations in need of long-term strategies, and that they are perfectly able to present the irrational as common sense. Without support in the one hospital's new board — which saw no value in upholding prior commitments and shifted its focus to achieving short term gains — the project's desired outcome could no longer be achieved. Eighteen months of trying, pulling, pushing, and even one of the other hospitals proposing to absorb *all* of the project's financial risk, couldn't change this new outcome. The universal rules distilled from the event are that an entirely new board is likely to re-prioritise an organisation's ongoing activities (and is thus to be considered a project risk). That a politician-board member with a history of non-commitment will not feel bound by the organisation's prior commitments (not even when they align with the organisation's strategy). And finally, that given a (new) set of event conditions, and given the universal rules at work, you can't manage, control or influence the event's outcome into something else.

How to become an expert

Perceptiveness and Experience

To become an expert an event's conditions and the relevant universal rules have to be perceived. It takes a combination of "perceptiveness" and "experience" to be able to perceive this information.

With regards to **perceptiveness**:

- Perceptiveness is the ability to, in a given situation, see new information that wasn't perceived before.
- Someone's degree of perceptiveness (someone's ability to perceive new information) may not be a constant, but from a practical perspective, for most events that occur in an organisation, *a person's or an organisation's perceptiveness may be considered constant*.
- Perceptiveness is rarely event-specific but generally applies to a broad range of related or similar events.
- Perceptiveness is qualified: some people perceive certain types of information better than other types. E.g. some have a high degree of e.g. "social perceptiveness", others a high degree of "cognitive perceptiveness", still others may have both, or different types of perceptiveness.
- Someone who is a "perceiver" is an observer who is interested (curious) in the principle of causality — interested in discovering the condition or the universal rule at the root of the newly perceived change. Not all observers share this interest. Not all observers, hence, are perceivers.

With regards to **experience**:

- "Experience" relates to how often someone has been in a particular situation (the totality of identical or similar events lived through in the past). It is a measure of the number of opportunities had to perceive information and to learn universal rules in a particular field.
- Experience can be gained slowly or rapidly, based on the type of event. There are events which happen several times during the day (e.g. dealing with customers), and there are events which take months or years (e.g. projects).
- Some events may be unique occasions, for which no or only partial experience can be gained. When experience plays a lesser role, perceptiveness becomes all the more pivotal in minimising risks.
- Experience in itself does not communicate anything without outcome data.
- Experience in itself does not communicate expertise.

The Cycle of Learning

How much information we perceive is the product of someone's perceptiveness and experience. This process is explained by the Cycle of Learning as introduced by Kashiwagi in IMT [1].

The Cycle of Learning is based on the proposition that for people or organisations to change they must first perceive information, process this information, and once this information is understood apply it (see Figure 8). This application of newly perceived information causes change, and this change allows for the perception of new and thus still more information.

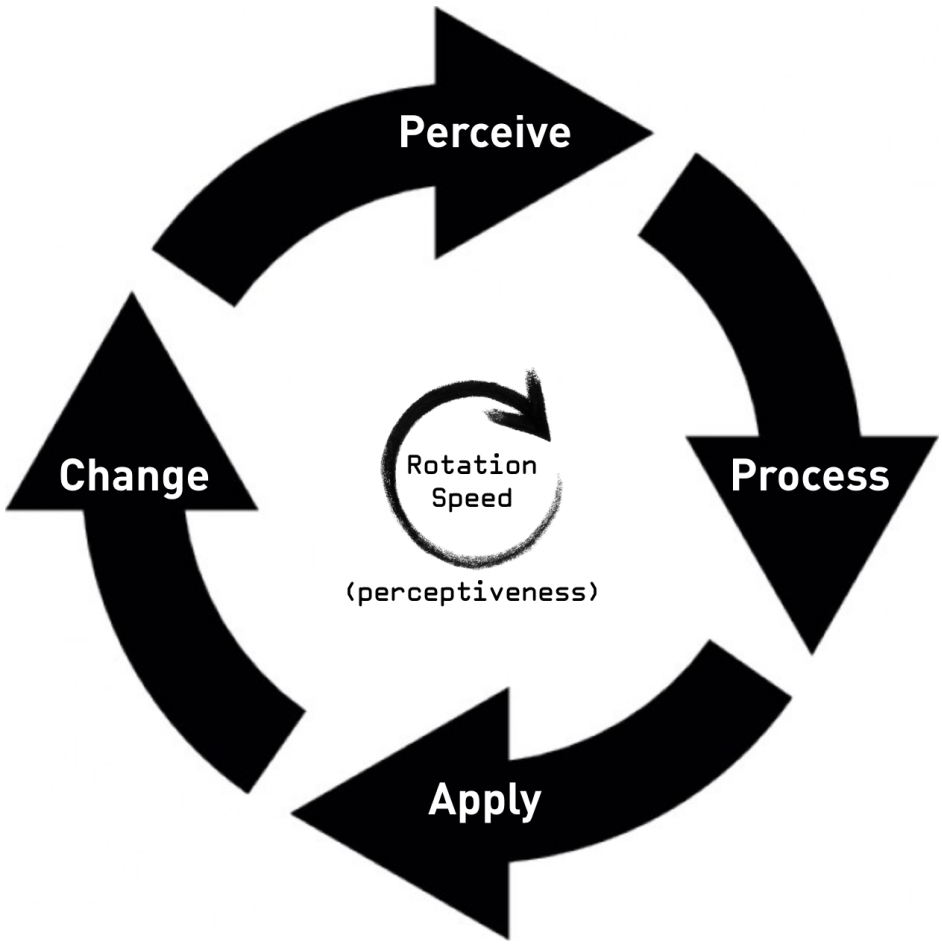

Figure 8. *The Cycle of Learning. The more circles have been completed, the greater the experience. The greater the degree of perceptiveness (the better "new information" is perceived in a situation), the greater the rotation speed.*

This cycle may be completed in a flash (e.g. an observation is instantly linked with existing insights and readily results in a change), or it may take years (e.g. failing to identify the universal rule that explains the observation, changing a behavioural aspect of an organisation).

Either way, the greater the ability to perceive new information, the more often information can be processed, applied and result in change. The ability to perceive new information is here linked to the ability to combine this new with existing information and to distill new universal rules out of it (a.k.a. "processing"). The greater someone's perceptiveness, then, the quicker the cycle of learning is rotating, and the more universal rules can be identified. A higher degree of perceptiveness results in a quicker build up of expertise.

Summarising, someone's *expertise* is a function of someone's perceptiveness and someone's experience:

- Someone with a high degree of perceptiveness will be able to minimise risk already after experiencing a few events (little experience).

- Some with a low degree of perceptiveness will be able to minimise risk only after having experienced an event many times (much experience).

This combination of perceptiveness and experience gives rise to different "types of expert".

In his book "Holacracy" [19], Brian Robertson talks about "the human capacity to sense dissonance in the present moment and see the potential for change." This is born from "our restless, never-satisfied, creative spirit that keeps us always reaching beyond where we are". He calls this dissonance a "tension", which he defines as "the perception of a specific gap between current reality and a sense of potential". He observed that organisations are notoriously bad in processing these observed tensions (by anyone anywhere in the organisation) into meaningful change. In his book he proposes a solution, elements of which will be discussed in the chapter "Decision Free Organisations". Robertson's starting point is very similar to the one introduced here: meaningful change starts with the perception of new information. This ability to perceive is a prerequisite to become an expert (to be able to minimise risk). The challenge Robertson took on — how to structure an organisation such that it will fully utilise the available expertise (of those who are able to perceive, to sense a tension) — is also central to the method of Decision Free Organisations.

Types of Expert

The Types of Expert Diagram

Different organisations operate in different circumstances and will have a need for different types of experts. The ability to distinguish between these types is thus generally of great interest. What type of expert an organisation needs most depends on the type of "Information environment" an organisation operates in, as will be discussed in the next section. In this section four types of expert are distinguished between.

Those who are very perceptive of new information require less experience to become an expert than those who are less perceptive. This relationship is shown in Figure 9, which introduces the "Type of Expert" diagram (ToE-Diagram).

Any one person or organisation can be positioned somewhere on the ToE-Diagram. Over time this position will change. This change will be predominantly from left to right (with gained experience), as indicated by the arrows, and to a much lesser extent in an upward direction.

The position and the shape of the "Expert-threshold" line is arbitrary. The line only indicates a link between perceptiveness and experience, and that for a given combination of the two someone is able to minimise risk. Beyond this line, with greater perceptiveness or increasing experience, more risks can be avoided, and fewer risks have to be managed. At the top right corner of the graph, perceiving everything and having immense experience, all risks can be totally avoided.

Inexpert, the Perceiver, the Experienced Perceiver, and the Skilled

In the ToE-Diagram four "Types of expert" are identified. There is the "Inexpert", who is unable to minimise risk and thus, as the name implies, not an expert at all. The "Perceiver", who has an above average perceptiveness and thus needs relatively little experience to become an expert. The "Experienced Perceiver", an expert who combines an above-average perceptiveness with considerable experience. And finally, the type called "Skilled", who combines a moderate amount of perceptiveness with plenty of experience.

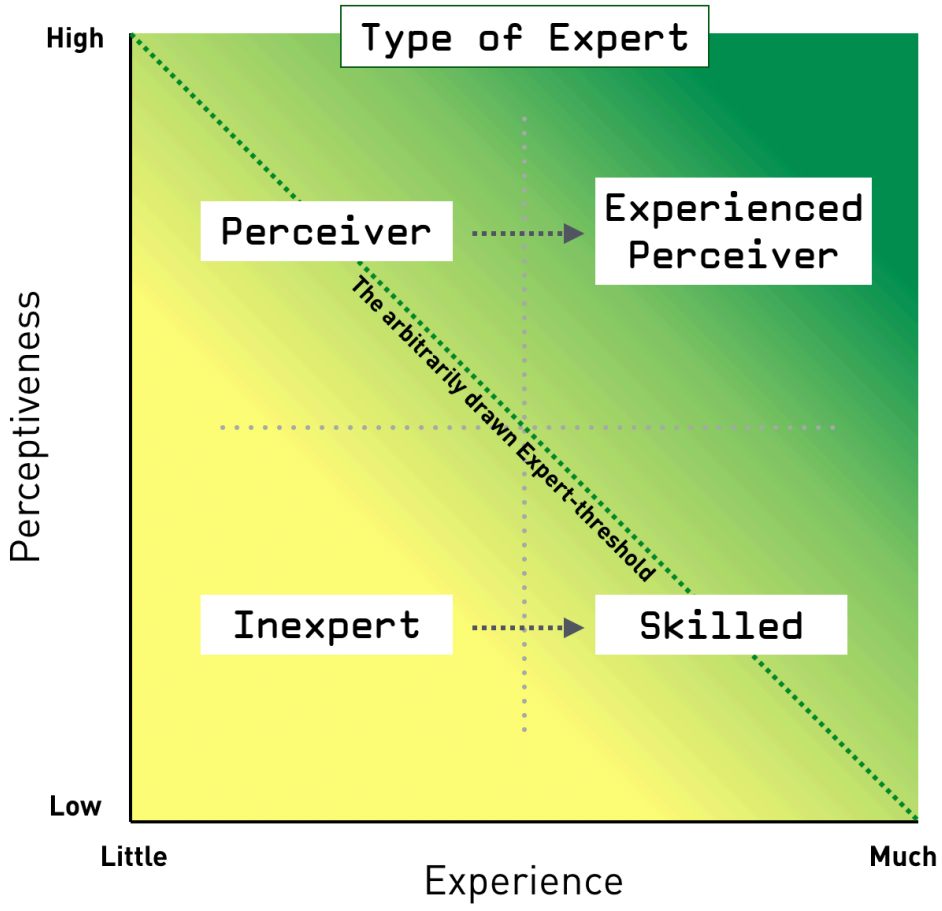

Figure 9. *ToE-Diagram: the various types of expert based on perceptiveness and experience.*

By December 1961 the hardware contract for the Apollo spacecraft had been let, the facilities at Cape Canaveral were being laid out on the drafting tables, but the Office of Manned Space Flight (O.M.S.F.) still didn't know how they were going to the Moon: direct ascent, earth-orbit rendezvous, or lunar-orbit rendezvous. To make this pivotal, all-determining choice, the director of O.M.S.F was looking for a specific kind of expertise in systems engineering. Someone with technical

expertise, with pertinacity and ego, and with "the capacity to make the many pieces of Apollo interlock both at the grand managerial level and down in the trenches." At the end of 1961 Joe Shea was thirty-five years old. In 1943 Shea entered a special Navy program, discovered engineering, and was subsequently sent to M.I.T. and from there to the University of Michigan, where he would eventually obtain his engineering doctorate. At the age of twenty-nine, Shea was named systems engineer for a radio guidance project connected with the Titan I, the United States' first multistage intercontinental ballistic missile. By 1959 he had acquired enough of a reputation in systems engineering for General Motors to hire him to run the advanced development operation for one of its divisions. He was in charge of preparing a proposal for a contract concerning the Titan II, the proposal won, and when, in September 1960, the contract was six months behind he was called away to rescue it. Shea pulled it off, making up the six months and bringing in the contact on budget and time. When NASA in December 1961 approached him, offering a high-pressure job to accomplish great things with the request to "rescue the whole unwieldy, out-of-control mess", Joe Shea simply couldn't resist. Joe Shea, as will be shown in these text boxes time and again, was an archetypical "Experienced Perceiver". *Source: [2]*

Types of Information Environments

The Information Environment-Diagram

The information an expert is to perceive are an event's conditions and the universal rules which impact these conditions. Organisations operate in environments where "event conditions" and "universal rules" are known to a greater or lesser degree.

In Figure 10 the Information Environment-Diagram is introduced. Four types of information environments are identified: Stable, Dynamic, Chaotic and Complex. Each organisation can be positioned somewhere on the Information Environment Diagram. Based on its position it is best served by an employee with a certain combination of perceptiveness and experience.

For example, an organisation operating in a well understood environment where event conditions change rapidly, or where a quick response to any change in the event conditions is crucial, will be best served with employees with a high perceptiveness (Dynamic). Experience counts less in this situation (as the environment is well understood), but of course greater experience still has benefits (more risks will be completely avoided).

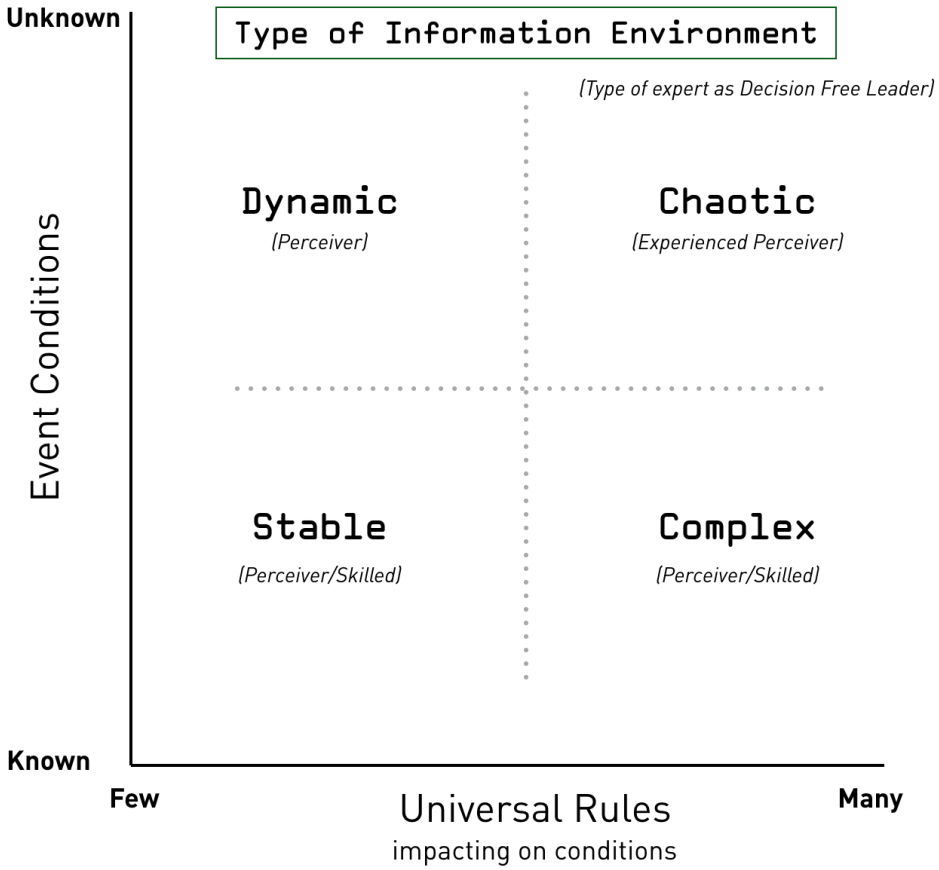

Figure 10. *Type of Information Environment Diagram. Four types of Information Environments and the corresponding 'type of expert' most suitable to be the Decision Free Leader in a given environment.*

The landing on the Moon and the subsequent safe return to Earth took place in a "chaotic" Information Environment. Nobody oversaw it all, nobody had a clue which would turn out to be the important event conditions, let alone how, by what rules, these event conditions were going to change and contribute to landing on the Moon. When President Kennedy made his announcement on May 25, 1961, there was no plan. The Russians had sent Yuri Gagarin into outer space and had him complete an orbit of the Earth six week earliers. All that NASA was capable of at the time, as demonstrated 20 days prior to Kennedy's speech, was to shoot an astronaut (Alan Shepard) into space like a cannonball. The rocket technology powerful enough to go to the Moon still needed to be developed. There were no suitable computer systems. There was no concept of how to bring people to the Moon *and back to Earth* other than building simply a very powerful rocket like in the Tintin cartoon adventure "Destination Moon" (Hergé, 1953). Nobody ever considered the need for "manned orbital rendezvous", let alone to let this take place almost 400'000 km from Earth with zero room for error. The entire field of systems engineering, which would turn out to be pivotal to manage the complexity of bringing together all of the countless elements being developed across the country by numerous companies, was in its infancy. NASA itself, as an organisation, was still to

balloon. In Houston there was no one to share your problems with, but only, for some years to come, an outstretched barren plot of desert. To, in this type of Information Environment, have *any* chance of pulling off the feat Kennedy had envisioned, the Apollo program was in need of an Experienced Perceiver. Joe Shea became the deputy director of the Office of Manned Space Flight in December 1961, taking over the Apollo Spacecraft Programme Office in October 1963.

To utilise expertise an organisation needs "Decision Free Leaders"

Every organisation operates in a certain type of Information Environment. The right type of experts will be able to minimise risk for such an organisation, as long as they are able to fully utilise their expertise.

In order to actually minimise risk it does not suffice to have access to experts. The organisation is also to have a culture which provides the conditions to maximally utilise expertise. This culture is put in place, maintained and promoted by so called "culture bearers". The single common denominator of the various culture bearers throughout the organisation (managers, project leaders, team leaders, whoever is responsible to achieve a desired outcome) is that they have the ability to identify any type of decision making.

The culture bearers which are to avoid decision makers are labelled "Decision Free Leaders" (DFL). The DFL is not a new staff position, but rather an ability that is required on specific positions in the organisation to minimise risk. In every method described (Management, Sales, Procurement, Project Management), there is always a role (e.g. manager, procurement officer, project leader) which is in need of this ability to create or sustain a culture that allows for the minimisation of risks.

In the chapter "The Decision Free Leader" it will be discussed how to identify the right type of expert to be the DFL, what the DFL needs, what its responsibilities are, and more.

How to identify the expert?

In this chapter it has been described what it is that makes someone an expert, and that there are different types of experts. But how do you identify one? How do you identify an expert or an expert organisation in something when you know little to nothing about the particular field? How to recognise the type of expert? What are the characteristics of someone able to identify decisions and contribute to a culture of minimising risk?

The answer is a combination of the use of metrics — communicating performance — and observations of a range of both behavioural and non-behavioural characteristics. Whether someone (or some organisation) is able to minimise risk can indeed be observed. This is because the ability to perceive shines through in all types of characteristics and behaviours. This is the topic of the next chapter.

Are you an expert?

One characteristic of experts is humility. All experts tend to be modest, and many are humble to the point they don't consider themselves to be one. When a situation is transparent and fully "logical" to

you you don't perceive a skill. On the other hand, people who see challenges everywhere tend to be more vocal — to the point of self-admiration — when they perceive something. "Boasting" a quick-fire way to identify someone who is likely to (have to) make many decisions. After reading the next chapter you will be able to tell what you are with more certainty.

The ability to "make it simple" is the most obvious characteristic of an expert. When you make something simple, simple to execute, simple to build, simple to understand, risk is automatically minimised. Simplicity makes everything transparent and avoids decision making. Following the disintegration of the Space Shuttle Challenger on January 28, 1986, which cost the lives of 7 people and left the world in shock, a Presidential Commission was charged with the investigation of the disaster. On this commission was Richard Feynman, a theoretical physicist who received the Nobel Price in Physics in 1965 and who was ranked by his peers as one of the ten greatest physicists of all time. The disaster, de facto caused by NASA's management culture, was attributed to a failure in the so called O-rings sealing, which resulted in pressurised hot gases to come into contact with an adjacent tank (a scenario NASA engineers had warned for, requesting for a delay of the launch the night prior). A contributing factor to the failure was the unusual low temperature (below freezing) at the day of launch. It took Richard Feynman less than thirty seconds and a simple experiment showing the effect on the cold on the sealing material (by putting it in a cup of ice water) to make it transparent to the entire world what the problem was. *Source: Wikipedia*

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