

Mental Models: The Key to Making Reality-Based Decisions



Presented by Diana Durek, M.S.



Objectives

- Define mental models and describe how they influence the workplace.
- Identify your own mental models.
- Recognize the assumptions in your mental models.
- Reveal hidden assumptions.
- Avoid typical mental mistakes.
- Implement strategies to adjust inaccurate mental models.

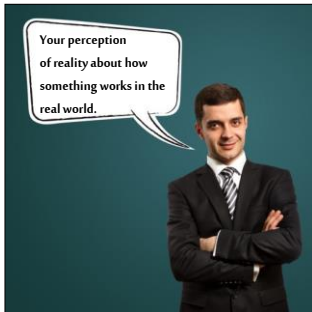
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Activity

- What do you expect this webinar to be like?

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Definition of a Mental Model



Benefits and Drawbacks

+	-
<i>Serve as information filter</i>	<i>Not always based on facts</i>
<i>Make you more efficient at processing information</i>	<i>Blind you to ideas that challenge deeply held beliefs</i>
<i>Predict behaviors, decisions and actions</i>	<i>Divert your attention from important cues</i>
<i>Eliminate internal confusion</i>	<i>Not always accurate when you generalize</i>
<i>Simplify complicated strategies</i>	<i>May limit you to familiar ways of thinking</i>

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What Do You Predict Will Happen?



- Established mental model: Hand will burn
 - Hand will not burn (induction cooktop)
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Activity: Driving a Car

- Pros of a mental model
- Cons of a mental model

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Origins of Mental Models



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Comparing Mental Models

Reading requires a physical book

Fine dining happens sitting down

High quality requires a local agent

Reading can take place in audio, digital, and hard copy formats

Gourmet food can be created in a truck

High quality is achievable online

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Companies That Adjusted Their Mental Models

Nintendo

TIFFANY & Co.

intel

LG
Life's Good

GAP

xerox

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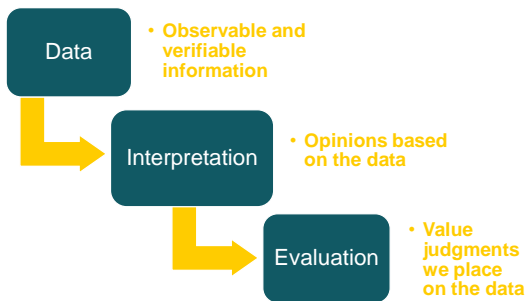
Activity: Adjusting Mental Models



Public library

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Separate Facts from Opinions



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Clarify Assumptions

- What are my assumptions?
- What are your assumptions?
- What do we really know and what are we assuming?



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Reveal Hidden Assumptions



- What do you believe that others do not?
- What things in your daily life do you take as a matter of fact?
- How do you explain the actions and decisions of others?
- How do you predict what others are going to do?

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Case Study: Polaroid

Mistaken assumptions



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Assumption Traps



- Noticing what supports your mental model and ignoring what doesn't
- Remaining attached to what made you successful
- Not trying what you believe is bad or impossible
- Focusing on current situation, not anticipating

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Assessing Accuracy

- What data do you have or can you collect that will support (or refute) your mental model?
- What assumptions, interpretations, or evaluations are included in your mental model that may or may not be accurate or valid?
- What predictions or expectations have you made based on mental model? How can you determine their accuracy?
- What missing information do you need to assess the accuracy of your mental model? In other words, what are you guessing at?

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Be Willing to Change

- What would happen if you didn't change your mental model?
- How important is changing your mental model to the success of the organization?



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Open Your Mind



- Tune in
- Look for opportunities
- Challenge yourself

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Creative Swiping



- Do different things in the same way
- Do the same thing in different ways
- Do different things in different ways

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Reverse Your Assumption

- State your assumption.
- Reverse the assumption and write the opposite.
- Consider the actions/behaviors/consequences of the opposite assumption.
- What information does that provide about the accuracy of your assumption?

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Practice Thinking in New Ways

$$X = | + XI$$

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Practice Thinking in New Ways

What word goes with “garage”?

- a. Sun
- b. Bake
- c. Star

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Creating New Mental Models



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Creating New Mental Models

- What industry can you study for ideas?
- What can you adapt from that industry?
- What level of service can you add or subtract from your current mental model?
- What can you add or eliminate from your existing mental model?
- What other uses can you find for your existing products and services?
- How can you combine them to come up with something new or different from your competition?
- Describe your new, more accurate mental model.

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Thank You

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