

Rookie Smarts

It seems that the job market is full of help wanted ads...many of them offering entry level jobs that require 20 years' experience! Yes, it's been a long-standing joke about the offers one might find on Indeed, or ZipRecruiter, but it reflects the value that recruiters place on experience. Experienced veterans can seem like they are the catch a company needs to move into the future. Veterans have faced many challenges, they know what to do in a variety of situations, they are experts.

Rookies, on the other hand, have some book smarts, but little experience on the street. Every challenge is a new exploration and if they learn by trial and error, that adds up to a lot of errors to learn something that a veteran would already know. This seems to be the logical conclusion of how veterans and rookies contribute to an organization. But what if we are turned around on the subject?

Liz Wiseman's research reveals some surprising information when it comes to rookies and veterans. No, not necessarily someone's level of experience, but their mindset! Rookies bring a fresh look at problems and issues. Rookies are naïve in the sense that they don't know what is impossible so they try it. Rookies bring a hunger and a curiosity to their roles and approaches. What does this all mean to rookies and veterans alike? The shortest answer is that constant learning is far more important than what you know.

While veterans bring experience and know-how to roles and challenges, they also have a tendency to bring a bit of pride, comfort, and reliance on the ways they have applied to their previous achievements. Conversely, rookies are inexperienced, naïve, and new to the challenges they face. Wiseman's research demonstrates that the best of both worlds is found in a mindset. In short, rookies can rely on veterans for guidance and some empirical knowledge, and veterans can rely on rookies for an energetic fresh look at organizational challenges.

Wiseman delineates the mindset and actions of the rookie:

- **Backpacker** who explores
- **Hunter-Gatherer** who seeks experts
- **Firewalker** who moves quickly
- **Pioneer** who builds and improvises

Each of these mindsets is useful in various circumstances, and it seems that rookies are more likely to invoke these practices. Partly because they are not encumbered by what veterans have become entrenched in, namely comfort and unwarranted confidence. These mindsets are invaluable to both veterans and rookies.

Most crucial however, is that rookies have traits that transcend their life and work experience; **Curious, Humble, Playful** and **Deliberate**. If you want to get the best thinking and performance from both rookies and veterans, be sure to read *Rookie Smarts*. **(It's available on Amazon)**

(Credit to Liz Wiseman, Rookie Smarts, Harper Business, 2014)