

## PSYCHOLOGICAL CHARACTERISTICS AND STRATEGIES OF EXPERT DECISION MAKERS \*

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Previous studies of expert decision makers have concluded that experts, because of cognitive limitations, are generally inaccurate, unreliable, biased, lack self-insight, and gain little with experience. Overall, previous psychological studies have painted a rather bleak picture of the decision-making abilities of experts. The research reviewed here provides a different view of experts in two respects. First, expert decision makers have been found to use strategies, such as reliance on group feedback, willingness to make adjustments, and a divide-and-conquer approach, which help them overcome the effects of cognitive limitations. Second, top decision makers in agriculture, personnel selection, health care, accounting/auditing, and management have been observed to share psychological characteristics such as perceptiveness, communication skills, self-confidence, and creativity under stress. These findings have implications for (1) image and expectations of experts, (2) classifying different types of experts, (3) training and/or selecting novices to become experts, and (4) design of expert systems.

‘Skrebneski has a special *aura*. He makes it appear as though getting this photograph perfect is the most important thing in his life.’ (Comment by socialite Sugar Rautbord explaining why she paid \$5,000 for a portrait.)

This quote illustrates that experts are perceived as different from nonexperts in some potentially important ways. Experts are often seen as having an aura or mystique not possessed by others. The goal of this

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