

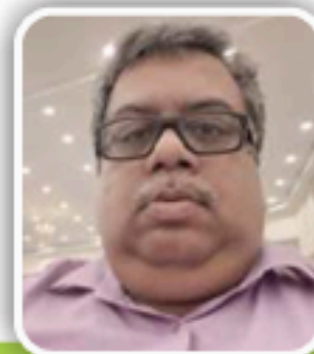


## YOURS RATIONALLY

In this column, every edition we shall focus on one key area, that students must focus on and nurture to enhance their confidence in the modern business scene.

### Rational Thinking Towards Oblivion?

Watching news and debates on TV regularly I believe many of you would agree how the quality of debates has degraded over the years. The debates put even middle school students to shame given the class of rationale and logic at play. As a case, a common refrain from political spokespersons while commenting on acts of violence against women is: "result of 'family issues'" as if family or family issues render entitlement to the use of violence against women as justified. Just like Mr. Common Sense, Mr. Rational Thinking too seems to be all set to steer ahead on the path of oblivion.



**Rajib Chandra Kumar**  
Trainer with Grade 'A'

Director, Knowgen Education  
Services Pvt. Ltd.

Managing Editor, International Journal of  
Cross Functional Business Research

### WHAT IS RATIONAL THINKING?

Rational thinking involves the capacity to identify and evaluate the pertinent factors in a situation, gather and structure relevant information, such as facts, opinions, judgements, and data, and analyse them to arrive at a sound conclusion. In the event of choosing a vendor for material procurement, the buyer is bereft of time that is otherwise

available to him (to choose from amongst received offers based on floated inquiries); under circumstances, facts and data play a crucial role as to who is the best possible vendor for the assignment. We need to see who has done the best work in terms of the said material in the past and who in our panel are best in terms of timely delivery.

### RATIONAL THINKING PROCESS

Successful intelligence fundamentally depends on three key dimensions- analytical, creative and practical. The analytical dimension place emphasis on problem

solving whereas the creative dimension identifies which problems require solutions. The practical dimension, on the other hand, aims to implement solutions effectively with



## YOURS RATIONALLY

the objective of achieving results.

Let's take the case of having a barbecue at home on the rooftop. To make enjoyable barbecued chicken (yield), we require fresh chicken, a yummy sauce, and other ingredients (inputs). We also want to make sure that the grilling (process) is decent enough.

Let's examine the process of rational thinking.

To reach a proper end, we need to consider a sequence of inputs and process them accordingly.

Imagine trying to learn to drive without any guidance. What if you are not acquainted with what "good" driving looks like? What if you had no model on driving; how to get the car on, how to shift gears, or when to use the brake?

### HOW DO WE LEARN TO THINK RATIONALLY?

A similar situation arises in case our children are expected to inculcate a tendency of thinking rationally. Who kind of taught us the fundamentals of rational thinking? Wherever did we learn to make complete conclusions? How will our offspring acquire these skills?

Indeed, we are driven to understand thinking employing trial and error. It is frequently regarded as an approach that is slow and expensive.

Given our limited understanding of the thinking process, it is challenging to instil the learning in others to think rationally. If we lack clarity on how thinking works, how can we effectively provide guidance to others in improving their thinking? What should we teach?

Another impediment to effective teaching and acquiring thinking skills is our inability to accurately recognize the cerebral processes that make up these individual-level skills.

### WHY RATIONAL THINKING IS IMPORTANT

There is no denying that experience is a commanding teacher, however, in a changing that has been witnessing rapid changes, it has its constraints. What we already know quickly becomes outdated, making it sufficient to bank on solely on knowledge or for that matter experience.

We habitually think that we have encountered an exacting situation in the past and therefore, we might draw comparable conclusions. However, later examination often reveals further dissimilarities among the

circumstances that we initially noticed or realized.

When we lack a more convincing way to arrive at conclusions, we at times turn back to "gut feel". Often, people must collaborate as a team to find a solution or make a decision. However, each person has had different experiences. Therefore, the stages in the progression of rational thinking help us pilot diverse thoughts and contemplate appropriate variables and information. Further gut feeling/intuition is open to the prospect of



## YOURS RATIONALLY

error, a luxury, which in today's globalized competitive environment is unacceptable. Why do industry recruiters prefer candidates from similar industries or similar levels of experience? The reason is the same. Such candidates would be able to think contextually.

Having a defined thinking process allows us to successfully apply it in different situations.

If we are not aware of how we think, it is harder to replicate our successes. However, being aware of a rational thinking process qualifies us to make the best use of our likelihood of accomplishment by deliberately making required modifications and consistently bearing in mind the key components of effective thinking.

### HELPING OTHERS THINK RATIONALLY

Viewing thinking as a process permits us to demonstrate to others how to mend their rational thinking. Good thinking was once seen as an inborn quality; individuals were either naturally good decision-makers or they were not. Now, we realize that better thinking and decision-making can be taught for real. By teaching a structured process, we can benefit people by improving their capability to think over through conditions.

The same thing can be said of Communication, which was too was once viewed as something "inborn"; however, it took us some time to realize that communication skills can be improved through systematic training. In my teaching career, I have seen hundreds of students whose proficiency levels in Written and Verbal communication were alarming but backed by their teachers and their own efforts they made significant changes in this area.

---

*Rajib Kumar has been teaching on the side-lines of his consulting and training career for the last 18 years having had more than 1 Lac students under his belt from BBA, MBA, Hotel/Hospitality, and Engineering Streams*