

Blink by malcolm gladwell book review

[Business](#), [Marketing](#)



“ **Blink**” by **Malcolm Gladwell**

In the book “Blink,” Malcolm Gladwell, one of the famous journalists, intends to share the results of psychological research to prove the importance of cognitive thinking in human beings. The book explains the way humans think within a blink of an eye, which is quite difficult. Gladwell explains about rapid cognition, which refers to snap decision-making. He convinces the readers that the snap decisions may be good or bad when compared to the conclusions. Gladwell identifies the circumstances where rapid cognition results poor outcomes. He also analyzes the ways and means to improve the results produced by rapid cognition. In the book “Blink,” in order to prove his thesis, Gladwell provides statistics, anecdotes and theory related to rapid cognition. The secret lies in recognizing which information to store and which to discard from the brain. While the brain has the capability to perform this task unconsciously, in the case of rapid cognition, the situation is different. Upon the breakdown of rapid cognition, the more obvious option seizes the brain. Rapid cognition produces a cognitive response, but lacks cognitive thinking due to the time constraint. On the other hand, articulate thinking, which is the opposite of rapid cognitive thinking, refers to the primitive thought process. Gladwell states the fact that articulate thinking upon habituation turns out to rapid cognitive thinking. He quotes several examples to explain the process of rapid cognitive thinking. One such example is the influence of gender and race on the sales strategy of the car dealers, salaries and promotions in the corporate companies, and unwarranted police charges on the civilians. From the example, Gladwell tries to prove that humans have the capability to modify their unconscious biases, examine numerical

evidence and study the potential facial expressions along with their meanings.

Gladwell argues that his concept of “thin slicing” has a success rate of 95 percent. Gladwell impresses the readers through his conversational style and forthright. With his narrow thought process, Gladwell was able to meet his goals in the book, thereby justifying the title “Blink.” Through the book “Blink,” the author exposes the fact that keen decision makers do not belong to the category of people who process the most. Gladwell confines a major part of the book to making judgments from first impressions. He exemplifies saying that a psychologist has the ability to predict the success or failure of marriages just by viewing the non-verbal videos of women disapproving their partners during confrontations. The author toggles between various fields ranging from literary critique to cultural commentary, marketing to business studies, and brain function to futurology.

In several examples, Gladwell makes use of the concept of statistical discrimination to explain the sales strategies. The book takes the readers through a series of stories related to intuition. One of the examples is the case of the Getty statue. When asked for the authenticity of the statue, while a few individuals identified the statue as a genuine one, a famous art historian declared it as a fake piece. After a series of further investigations, the fact that the statue was a real one that belonged to Rome in 1880 came into existence. Gladwell mentions that in the backstage, the brain sifts huge chunks of data, blends and isolates the data to come up with one final conclusion. By stating the above example, Gladwell mentions his concept of “thin slicing.” Gladwell always tries to establish the fact that rapid decision

making lies above articulate thinking.

In another example, Gladwell narrates about the leadership position of individuals based on height. He argues that tall people receive disproportionately high selections leadership positions due to their personality characteristics, such as self-confidence and superior feelings. Thus, height is a tiebreaker that may sometimes land a tall individual in a position that is not meant for him. Gladwell makes a mention of how the salesmen lose their sales in the blink of an eye by judging the purchasing possibility of the customers based on their personality or expressions.

Quoting the example of students before an examination, Gladwell tries to demonstrate the misconception of stereotypical thinking. “Blink” teaches a lesson to the readers that they should look for ways and means to alter the way they think in order to make the right decisions in life. One should understand that judgments made of context produce negative outcomes in a majority of the cases.

Gladwell wants to prove the fact that the human brain is a comprehensive organ, which knows very well how to process information and derive the optimum solution. Another example that best suits the context is the case of Coca-Cola Company, in which Gladwell describes how a minor change in the look of the packaging of the product attracted several customers. One of the major weaknesses of the book “Blink” is the ruminative-rhetorical style of writing employed by Malcolm Gladwell throughout the book. The book is a succession of anecdotes, but does not contain a developed argument. In the reader, the reader is in a dilemma to arrive at a conclusion whether or not rapid thinking is better when compared to the other ones. Gladwell uses

sarcasm in many parts of the book, especially in the anecdotal details. One of the arguments claimed by Gladwell is that irrelevant information deluges clear thinking; however, he makes the most of the irrelevant part.

Several examples provided by Gladwell are bland and occupied with cliches.

The best example is the case of the Greek statue, which is irrelevant to Gladwell's thesis. Though Gladwell states that the brain is responsible for rapid cognitive thinking, he never mentions how the brain works in this regard. Gladwell disregarded the concept of priming, which disappoints the readers. With the present business scenarios, all the stories narrated in the book do not hold good, but a majority of them are still applicable. To conclude, the book "Blink" written by Malcolm Gladwell is one of the greatest works that states the importance of cognitive thinking within a blink of an eye. Though the topic is a fairly new one, it attracts the readers for the very reason that the book contains several case scenarios and theories that relate to the real life.

The book "Blink" is an informative guide for marketing and sales professionals as they can make use of the scenarios and take decisions in their professions to succeed in life. If one ignores the fact that Gladwell failed to provide a supporting evidence to prove the superiority of rapid cognition over articulate thinking, the rest of the book is interesting and impressive to the readers. The overall concept is new and seems to fall in a fiction genre, though the author claims the book to be a psychological literature. The conscious awareness created by Gladwell in the readers helps to realize whether the brain really functions the way Gladwell claims. Finally, it would

have been better if Gladwell handled the subject in the form of a journal article keeping it short and simple, instead of a long book.