

Turning Numbers into Knowledge: Mastering the Art of Problem Solving

By Jonathan G. Koomey PhD

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Full of tools, tricks, and tips for solving problems in the real world, this book serves as an ideal training manual for those who are new to or intimidated by quantitative analysis and acts as an excellent refresher for those who have more experience but want to improve the quality of their data, the clarity of their graphics, and the cogency of their arguments. In addition to containing numerous updates to the contents—references, URLs, and reading lists—this second edition includes a new foreword, revised chapters, and an epilogue. Mastering the art of problem solving takes more than proficiency with basic calculations; it requires understanding how people use information, recognizing the importance of ideology, learning the art of storytelling, and acknowledging the important distinction between facts and values. Intended for executives, professors, and students, this guide addresses these and other essential skills.

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Editorial Review

Review

"There is nothing else like this book out there. Nobody who deals with problems where numbers matter — and everybody in today's world really needs to — should be without it." —John P. Holdren, past president, American Association for the Advancement of Science, from the Foreword

"A lively, well-written, attractively packaged book on the art of critical thinking." —*Skeptical Inquirer*

"Dr. Koomey's book deserves to be widely read and shared, especially by those who take seriously the fragile yet critical role of an informed citizenry in increasingly complex democratic societies." —Professor Michael Maniates, Allegheny College

From the Author
This book grew out of my experience in training analysts whom I've hired in the past decade. It is written for beginning problem solvers in business, government, consulting, and research professions, and for students of business and public policy. It is also intended for supervisors of such analysts, professors, and entrepreneurs (who may not consider themselves analysts but who need to create analyses to justify their business plans to potential investors). Finally, it covers many topics that journalists who focus on scientific or business topics will find useful.

I've included cartoons and other amusing graphics, as well as quotes and examples galore. The chapters are short and to the point, with plenty of further reading in the back for readers who want to explore further. I hope that any person who takes an intelligent interest in the world will enjoy it and find it useful.

From the Inside Flap
Mastering the art of problem solving takes more than proficiency with basic calculations: it requires (among other things) understanding how people use information, recognizing the importance of ideology, learning the art of story telling, and acknowledging the important distinction between facts and values. "Turning Numbers Into Knowledge" is the first comprehensive guide to these and other essential skills. Full of tools, tricks, and tips for solving problems in the real world, it will prepare you well to make independent judgments about the numerical assertions of others and to generate cogent and compelling analyses of your own.

Users Review

From reader reviews:

Steven Holt:

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