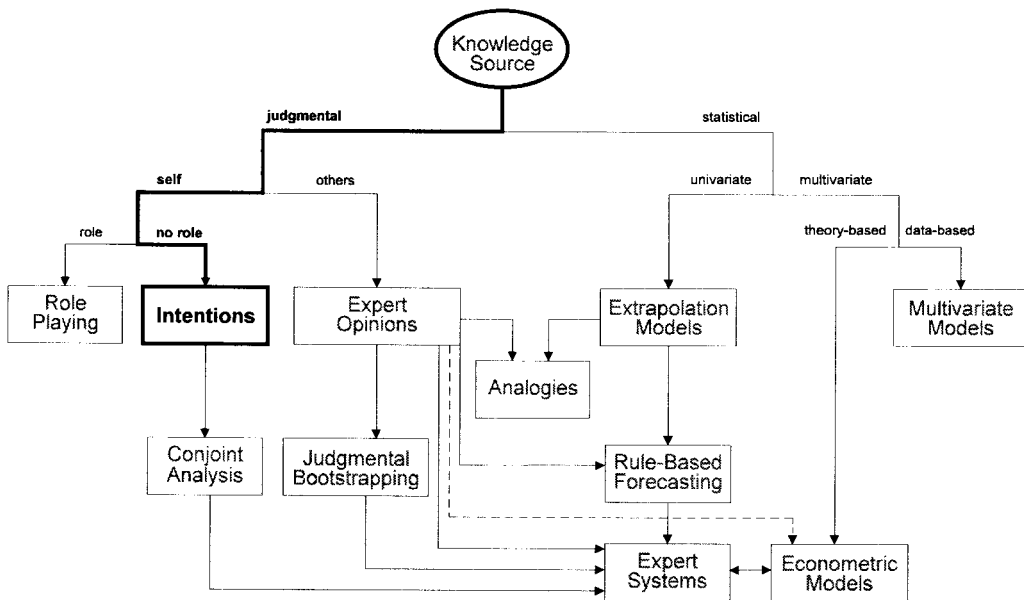


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 INTENTIONS
 

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Suppose you are considering introducing a new product to the market but you are not sure whether there is enough demand for this product. Many marketers in this situation ask consumers whether they intend to purchase the product and use these responses to forecast demand. Do the responses provide a useful forecast? As you might expect, a lot depends on the product, whom you ask, and how you ask the question. This section examines the use of people's predictions about what they will do in the future (i.e., their intentions or expectations).

Research has been done on measuring and using intentions. We now know much about how to administer intentions studies. Pollsters use this knowledge to design accurate political polls.

Marketers use intentions studies as inputs to forecasts. However, people do not always do what they say they will do, and they are subject to biases, such as optimism.

In "Methods for Forecasting from Intentions Data," Vicki Morwitz of the Stern School of Business at New York University discusses principles for using intentions to predict behavior. One principle is

to instruct respondents to focus on their own characteristics when responding to questions about their intentions. Morwitz also develops principles concerning the conditions under which intentions meas-

ures would be useful. For example, intentions yield more accurate predictions of behavior when the respondents have previously engaged in similar behavior.

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