Why 10,000 Experiments Beat 10,000 Hours

Perhaps the most popular current success formula is the 10,000-hour rule popularized by Malcolm Gladwell. The idea is that you need 10,000 hours of deliberate practice to become a world-class performer in any field.Research now tells us, however, that this formula is woefully inadequate to explain success, especially in the professional realm. A 2014 review of 88 previous studies found that "deliberate practice explained 26% of the variance in performance for games, 21% for music, 18% for sports, 4% for education, and less than 1% for professions. We conclude that deliberate practice is important, but not as important as has been argued."This means that deliberate practice may help you in fields that change slowly or not at all, such as music and sports. It helps you succeed when the future looks like the past, but it's next to useless in areas that change rapidly, such as technology and business.What Edison and others (see more examples below) teach us is that we should maximize the number of experiments, not hours. Instead of the 10,000-hour rule, we need what I call the 10,000-experiment rule.Throughout history, the scientific method has arguably produced more human progress than any other philosophy. At the heart of the scientific method is experimentation: develop a hypothesis, perform a test to prove the hypothesis right or wrong, analyze the results, and create a new hypothesis based on what you learned. The 10,000-experiment rule takes this proven power of experimentation out of the lab and into day-to-day life.

The 10,000 Experiment Rule

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