



Resilience Building Resource Hub *A Shilp Initiative*

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HOW DO YOU INVOLVE YOUR TEAM/ COMMUNITY TO MAKE DECISIONS?

Do you have difficulty reaching decisions that your team/community agrees with? Do you want to create a clear process for making decisions with your team?

The decisions leaders make every day present countless opportunities to positively (or negatively) impact their organizations. There are numerous variables that go into making business decisions, so how can leaders truly distinguish a “good” from a “bad” decision? Many times it is only after the decision has been made that the true impact shows; and whether a decision was right or wrong can’t always be determined from the outcome alone.

However, by bringing people into the conversation with different backgrounds, you can enhance creativity and gain a fresh perspective on the task or problem at hand. There are techniques that you as a leader can adopt to perfect your team/community’s decision-making process and increase the likelihood that their decisions will lead to a positive impact.

This section will help you understand:

- the types of decision-making styles
- methods to make effective decisions with your team/ community
- additional resources to help you get to an expert level
- self-reflection and action planning
- some DIY tips to get you started on this journey

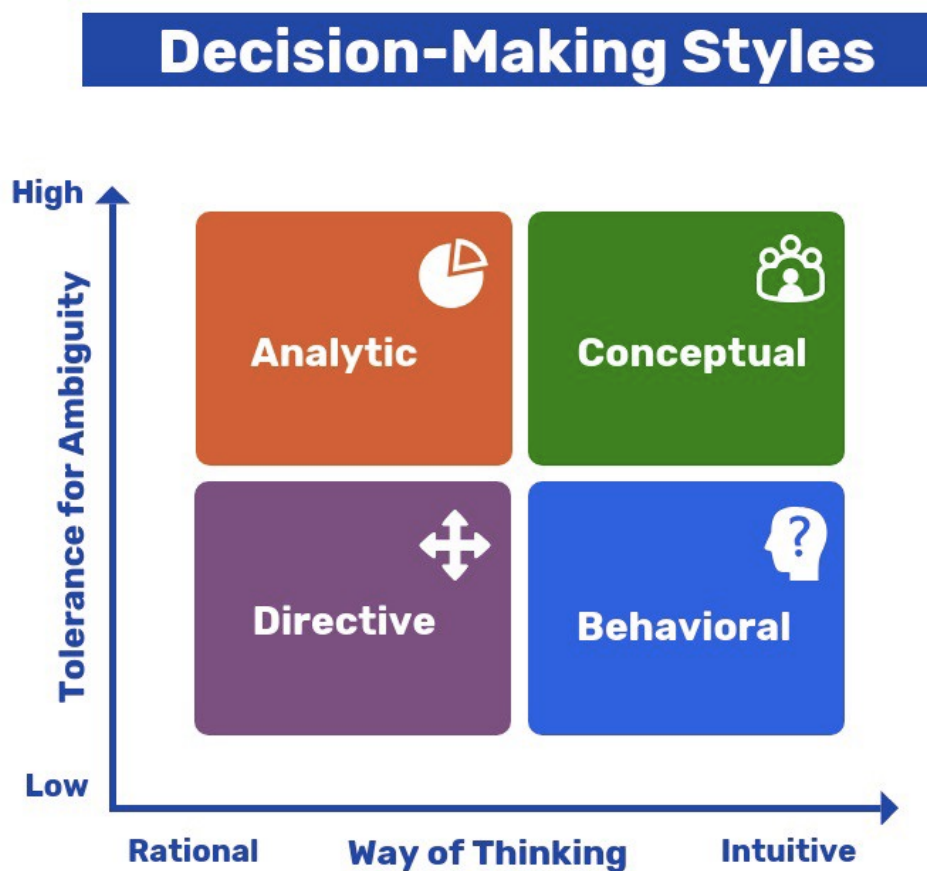
So, let’s get started!

Decision making styles

The job of a manager is, above all, to make decisions. At any moment in any day, most managers are engaged in some aspect of decision making: exchanging information, reviewing data, coming up with ideas, evaluating alternatives, implementing directives, following up. But while managers at all levels must play the role of decision maker, the way a successful manager approaches the decision-making process changes as he or she moves up in the organization.

There are four main styles of decision-making - Directive, Analytic, Conceptual and Behavioral. Getting to know the four decision-making styles will help you understand your own process and the way others make choices in the workplace. When you identify your own decisive style, you can learn how to manage the outcomes of a situation when you need to provide a solution.

Although no one fits completely into just one style category, you should have characteristics that fit, more or less, into one or two styles. Each decision-making style is characterized by either a task or social focus and a high or low tolerance for ambiguity. Styles with a high tolerance for ambiguity can work with unknown variables as they come to a conclusion. Those with a low tolerance for ambiguity want as much clarity as possible in all the circumstances and information that lead to their decisions. Decision-making styles also vary in a social or task-driven focus. Social-driven decisions consider the behaviour of others involved in the outcome. Those who are task-driven make decisions based on how to best achieve a goal.



Directive Style

The directive decision-making style uses quick, decisive thinking to come to a solution. A directive decision-maker has a low tolerance for unclear or ambiguous ideas. The typical directive style decision maker takes charge of a situation, makes quick decisions and expects those “under” him/her to carry out those decisions immediately, with no questions asked. They rely on their own information, knowledge, experience and judgment. The directive style decision maker tends to follow the rules and is an excellent verbal communicator. On the negative side of things, directive style decision makers act quickly and often don’t have all of the facts. They can be rash and fail to consider other options when addressing a problem. Directive decision makers focus on short-term results instead of long-term solutions.

This decision-making style is great for:

- Situations when a swift decision is required and there isn’t time for collaboration and consensus
- Situations when there’s only one answer or way forward, as evidenced by rules, processes, and previous events

Directive decision-making can be challenging when:

- Teams or groups want to contribute their opinions to the decision-making process, rather than having directions handed down from on high
- Navigating a situation you haven’t been in before, as there aren’t existing processes or past experiences to lean on

Analytic Style

An analytic style decision maker is innovative and likes to analyse large amounts of data before making a decision. They are adaptable and can function well even under unique or challenging situations. Unfortunately, this style of decision making can be very slow and time consuming. An analytic decision maker wants to use direct observation, data, and facts when coming to a decision. They also tend to want to control every aspect of the process.

Analytical decision-making is great for:

- Situations where there could be a lot of different right answers, so there’s room for creativity to find the best solution
- Situations that require perspective and information from a variety of sources

Analytical decision-making can be challenging when:

- A quick decision is required, so there isn’t enough time to gather large amounts of information
- There isn’t a ton of information available, so leaders need to rely on their gut instincts over analysis

Conceptual Style

Those who make decisions with a conceptual style are big picture thinkers who are willing to take risks. They evaluate different options and possibilities with a high tolerance to ambiguity. They are social-oriented and take time to consider big ideas and creative solutions. Conceptual decision-makers look forward to what could happen if the decision is made. Their conclusions come from visualizing different opportunities and outcomes for the future. They are strong in making long-term decisions.

Conceptual decision-making is great for:

- Situations where there's a lot of uncertainty and not one defined outcome
- Situations when you don't need an immediate answer or instantaneous results, and you have some wiggle room to experiment

Conceptual decision-making can be challenging when:

- There isn't a lot of room for trial and error, so you need to pursue the "safest" option
- Your culture doesn't provide a lot of psychological safety and team members fear risks and potential failures
- Time is limited, so you can't pursue a big-picture project and need to focus on a short-term solution first

Behavioral Style

A behavioral style of decision-making focuses on relationships more than the task. It evaluates the feelings of others as part of their decision-making process. Behavioral decision-makers have a low tolerance for ambiguity and a social focus as they evaluate solutions.

Behavioral decision makers like working with a group. Together they attempt to reconcile differences and negotiate a solution that is acceptable to all parties.

Behavioral decision-making is great for:

- Situations that have low possibility for conflict and disagreement
- Situations where there isn't one right decision and you can easily opt for the most popular and agreeable solution

Behavioral decision-making can be challenging when:

- A popular decision is impossible, so conflict and disapproval are inevitable
- You're so focused on harmony that it overshadows any opportunity for creativity or out-of-the-box thinking

Decision making methods

Ask yourself before your next group decision meeting: what method will help get the most out of the group and leave people feeling the best about the results? Just asking for a consensus often isn't enough. While it is important to identify the type of decision you want to be made in your meeting, you need to match this with a suitable group decision making method. Here's a list with a few decision making methods:

Voting

In situations where the decision will be the direct result of a majority answer or scoring available options, a straightforward vote may be the simplest solution. This tactic can be an easy way to resolve small issues or determine the best course of action for basic questions. As the team manager, it will be up to you to decide when a basic vote is all that will be needed.

Brainstorming

Brainstorming involves group members verbally suggesting ideas and alternative courses of action. This happens in a relatively unstructured brainstorming session.

If a large number of ideas can be generated, then it is likely that there will be a unique and creative idea among them. All these ideas can be written on a black board or chart so that everybody can see every idea and try to improve upon such ideas.

Brainstorming technique is very effective when the problem is comparatively specific and can be simply defined. A complex problem can be broken up into parts and each part can be taken separately at a time.

Nominal Group Technique (NGT)

Nominal group technique is similar to brainstorming except that the approach is more structured. Members form the group in name only and operate independently, generating ideas for solving the problem on their own, in silence and in writing. Members do not interact with each other so that strong personality domination is avoided. It encourages individual creativity.

The group coordinator either collects these written ideas or writes them on a large black board for everyone to see or he asks each member to speak out and then he writes it on the black board as he receives it.

These ideas are then discussed one by one in turn and each participant is encouraged to comment on these ideas for the purpose of clarification and improvement. After all ideas are discussed, they are evaluated for their merits and drawbacks and each participating member is required to vote on each idea and assign it a rank on the basis of priority of each alternative solution. The idea with the highest aggregate ranking is selected as the final solution to the problem.

Delphi Technique

When a team truly struggles to reach a consensus for a major decision, you may need to step in and narrow down the options for them. The Delphi Technique takes all the ideas and compiles them for the manager of the group to break down into a smaller amount of possibilities. He or she then takes the remaining options back to the group for their consideration.

If the team continues to grapple over the resolution, the manager will condense the choices even further until they can make a decision. It gets easier for groups to reach an agreement when there are fewer outcomes available.

Additional Resources

WHY MANAGERS SHOULD INVOLVE THEIR TEAM IN THE DECISION-MAKING PROCESS

Some managers might shy away from integrating their team into the process to avoid additional complexity or a potential clash of opinions. Yet the ideas that could come out of that dialogue are often far more valuable and critical to business success. Here's a closer look at some of the benefits of involving your team in decision-making.

Duration: 15 mins

Blog

<https://online.hbs.edu/blog/post/team-decision-making>

Models and Methods of Decision-Making

Decision-making can be one of the most challenging aspects of a manager's job. You want to empower your team, but worry about whether they'll make a decision that derails the project or negatively impacts your stakeholders. Finding the right balance is easier than you might think once you have a model for determining which decisions should be delegated and a clear method for identifying who will be engaged in the decision-making process and how. Listen to this podcast to learn about different decision-making models that should help give you some frameworks to apply to your decision-making

Duration: 18 mins

Podcast

<https://the-modern-manager.castos.com/episodes/88-models-and-methods-of-decision-making>

The decision-making process is a team sport

Decision-making can sometimes feel like a magical, mystical process, but it's actually a science. If your own team struggles with group decision-making, take comfort in the fact that you're not alone. Read this blog to learn how to make good decisions as a team along with a few tools for group decision making

Duration: 20 mins

Blog

<https://slack.com/intl/en-in/blog/collaboration/decisionmaking-process-team>

Decision-Making Techniques for Community Groups

Community groups often have a problem coming to a decision about projects to undertake. Quite often, resources, both human and financial, are limited; the number of problems seem overwhelming; or there are forceful advocates of a "pet" project. How can a group overcome these difficulties? Read this article to learn more

Duration: 15 mins

Article

<https://extension.missouri.edu/publications/dm463>

Self-reflection and action planning:

Check your decision making skills by recalling an important team decision then answering the following questions.

1. Did you gather adequate data, background, and/or information about the issue?
2. Did you concisely and clearly state the purpose or need for the decision?
3. Did you clearly state the desired outcomes?
4. Did you prepare all team members to consider and discuss the issue?
5. Did you give team members the information and time to reflect on the situation?
6. Did you encourage active and open discussion of the issue?
7. Did you set and explain the guidelines for the decision?
8. Did you manage and focus the discussion?
9. Did you get a clear consensus from team members regarding the decision?
10. Did you clearly outline the action plan and timetable?

DIY Tools:

1. Set the foundation with values: One way a leader can generate buy-in is to first establish an agreement of what the team's shared values are and how that impacts moving forward. Kouzes and Posner present this as the foundation of the practice called Model the Way. Once a team has agreement about what is important, the path of action becomes clear. For example, if the team decides that they value collaboration, then getting everyone to participate in implementation would be a natural expectation.
2. Identify the problem—then simplify it: As soon as a potential problem comes to light, some teams tend to spring immediately into problem-solving mode without knowing at the most

basic level what the problem actually is. What is the underlying issue at hand? What needs to be fixed or changed? Where did the problem originate? What implications does it have? Effective leaders don't overcomplicate or add layers to a problem; they identify it, then simplify it to its most basic form

3. Embrace the Pre-Mortem: Effective leaders take time to consider the potential negative outcomes before deciding what action to pursue. They ask what failure would look like if the resulting outcome went down a specific path. Many teams and leaders wait until the dust settles after the decision has run its course and then conduct a post-mortem. Effective teams take a run at a pre-mortem to explore the reasons why something could potentially fail and what failure would look like. This reframing will keep the team flexible and open to adapting plans as needed.
4. Be clear about the decision being made. What is the problem to solve or choice to make? Who ultimately will be making the decision? How will the group influence and be influenced by the decision?
5. Respect participants' time. Minimize the amount of time required in meetings, start and end meetings on time. Keep any discussions focused on topic. Don't involve people who have no relevance/interest in group decision making process.
6. Be sure all opinions are respected. When facilitating group interactions, do not allow participants to be dismissed, disregarded or disrespected.
7. Don't allow one or two people to dominate all discussion. If some participants cannot be reined in, consider a decision making method that forces equal participation or anonymous interactions.
8. Ask for honest feedback from the team. Effective leaders are those who make positive decisions for their team. To do this, you need to be open to constructive criticism. Ask your team members how you can improve and analyse how you can execute this feedback into better decisions for your organisation.
9. Remember to connect with the end goal. As leaders make countless decisions every day, you may find yourself falling further from the long-term goals of your organisation. Despite this, leaders must keep their long-term goals in check to ensure that they are leading their team in the right direction. As a leader, you need to be able to see the bigger picture, even when making smaller decisions.